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Relative Clauses and Conjunctive Adjuncts in Syrian University Student Writing in English

by

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To my father and mother

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Abstract

Initial investigations into English essays written by Syrian university students triangulated Syrian and British teachers' evaluations of the essays and the lexico-grammatical features they identified as affecting the overall quality of writing, with text analyses of the sources, types and frequency of all grammatical errors. Following this, and a review of relevant literature, the thesis presents an in-depth study of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts as under-researched features in Arabic speaking university student writing that can enrich their writing syntactically and semantically.

The relative clause (RC) analysis shows that the 'full' form RC occurred much more frequently than the 'reduced' form, and that confusion between these two forms was a prominent source of student error. 'Pronoun retention' errors indicating L1 interference were among the most frequent RC errors – as most studies of RC use by Arab learners find. Moreover, RC constructions with 'head noun' (or antecedent) in the non-subject position and 'gap' (or relativized NP/sentence) in the subject position were dominant, while other, and more complex, construction types were much less common. This supports the AHH and PDH hypotheses on the frequency/difficulty hierarchy of RC types.

Conjunctive adjunct analysis reveals that 'additive' conjunctive adjuncts were more frequent, followed by 'causals'. Despite its informality, the resultive conjunctive adjunct '*so*' was used most repeatedly, followed by '*also*', '*but*', and '*and*'. Causal conjunctive adjuncts were most frequently misused, though in general conjunctive adjunct misuse is not a major weakness.

Contrastive analysis between the L2 (Syrian) and an equivalent L1 (British) corpus of literature essays revealed no significant difference between the total frequencies of RCs, 'full' RCs and 'non-subject-subject' RCs. In contrast, the total frequencies of conjunctive adjuncts in the two corpora were significantly different, with the L2 corpus containing almost twice as many conjunctive adjuncts as the L1 corpus, particularly causals and additives, this latter category being most frequent in both corpora. The British students' employment of relative clause types and conjunctive expressions was generally more diverse than that of the Syrian students. Pedagogical implications conclude this thesis.

Chapter One: Introduction, Context, and Broad Objectives

1.1. Introduction

Contemporary writing methodologies like the process approach and genre approach have been seen as marking a dramatic departure from traditional approaches, which focused almost entirely on sentence-level grammatical form (Muncie, 2002). The process approach which has dominated L2 (second/foreign language) writing research (as well as pedagogy in some parts of the world) since the 1980s seems to relegate grammatical accuracy to a status of less importance, a matter that can be dealt with in the final proof-reading stage of composing. What becomes more important is the composing experience itself, the cognitive strategies involved in composing, content, a sense of audience, etc. Despite this, most would concur that for writing in English to successfully achieve its overall purpose, "it must conform to the conventions of English syntax and usage" (Frodesen and Holten, 2003). What would remain a matter of debate, particularly in L2 writing contexts, is which of these conventions could be attended to at the final editing stage, and which should better be instructed earlier in the writing class (Fakhra, 2004; Weaver, Bush, Anderson, and Bills, 2006).

Perhaps the problem with this last question is that it assumes a linear model of writing – where drafting neatly follows generating ideas, and editing comes at the end – which has been criticized by a number of researchers (e.g. Flower and Hayes, 1981; Perl, 1980; Weaver *et al*, 2006; White, 1988; Zamel, 1983a) for being "inappropriate and unhelpful" (White, 1988: 7), and more conveniently replaced by the view that writing is "cyclical" in nature and that its processes are "recursive, interactive and potentially simultaneous" (Flower and Hayes, 1981; cited in Hyland, 2002: 25). Hence, it would be rather better to assume that editing is often an on-going task, combined with the generation of ideas, drafting, and revising, and not something which can be left until the writing is over. It follows then that

grammatical worries, which are usually linked to the editing process, are going to accompany the whole task of composition with all (or most) of its activities. It is this realization that has led Muncie (2002: 183) to fairly conclude that

> Grammar is just as important an instrument of communication as content, and a text cannot be written cohesively without attention being paid to how meaning is being expressed through the grammar.

This in turn invites us to stress the belief that errors in 'form' can obscure the 'meaning' which the learner writer intends to convey, and that, as announced by Olsen (1999: 203), "especially in writing, communication may fail if there are too many (form/grammar) errors". In fact, it is this belief concerning the effect of grammatical errors on the quality and accessibility of the written text, as well as the desire to improve the standard of formal accuracy in the writing of learners in a particular EFL context, that has given rise to this study.

1.2. Context and statement of the problem

To elaborate, what inspired this study in the first place were the linguistic issues raised by examination of the L2 writing of a number of students in an English Language and Literature Department at a top university in Syria. In this academic context, improving the standard of writing in English is one of the most challenging tasks that face the students and their tutors, especially given that writing (examination) is the only means of assessment in all their course subjects (Dalbani, 1992; Meygle, 1997). In spite of the special attention given to teaching writing[1], particularly the linguistic aspects, graduates of this department, following a four-year English programme, still display written English of a rather poor quality at the levels of grammar and text structure, lexis, and orthography – let alone organization, content, and coherence. Factors contributing to this problem relate not only to the implemented writing teaching and learning methods (Dalbani, 1992; Mouzahem,

[1] Compared with the other skills of reading, listening, and speaking, writing is the only skill that is taught as a separate subject in each of the four years and students get regular instruction in it.

1991), but also to the context and type of writing task (most often exam-timed tasks).

From my own personal experience as a student and teaching assistant in this department, although writing as a skill is, theoretically, well attended to, a process method to writing is very narrowly adopted or instructed; that is, instruction is restricted to some description of how to write a well organized essay with an 'introduction' containing a clear thesis statement, 'body', and summarizing 'conclusion'; how to develop and support ideas; and what linking words and cohesive devices to use – all in accordance with the type of essay in question (argumentative, expository, comparative, *etc*.). Syrian researchers of adopted methods of teaching composition to Syrian university students (e.g. Dalbani, 1992; Mouzahem, 1991) show that such a method, which seeks "to develop strategies for organizing information beyond the sentence level" (Mouzahem, 1991), is ineffective and superficial since it provides "theoretical instruction on only one aspect of the writing process, i.e. rhetorical organization" (Dalbani, 1992: 81). Teaching such "hints" or "formulas", as argued by Dalbani, "might be useful to learners at times, and for certain genres of writing", but "still the whole process of writing is being oversimplified" (ibid). Important processes like planning, generating ideas and meaning, drafting, re-writing, revising, and editing end up not well-handled or appreciated by students, especially with their being not given much chance to practice writing tasks in class and get reasonable feedback due to several serious obstacles, such as the large number of students (ranging between 1500 and 3000) in large auditoriums, shortage of staff, physical lay-out of classrooms, and lack of teaching equipment and facilities like language labs, videos, over-head projectors, and microphones (Dalbani, 1992; Meygle, 1997). Such conditions, among others, have in fact turned most students into mere passive recipients of information rather than active and creative individuals. Hence, it is no wonder that the writing output of students in this educational context is of poor quality, not only because of its inaccurate formulation, but also because of its immature, logically unrelated content; together, making readers lose comprehension and communication.

On the other hand, writing courses in the department are by and large language-centered as teachers focus mainly on the teaching of form, grammatical correctness and avoidance of errors. Moreover, most of them tend to evaluate their students' written work according to how grammatically accurate it is. At the same time, students themselves place grammatical concerns at the forefront of their needs – particularly when they sense that their examination and seminar paper results are affected by their language errors (Dalbani, 1992). As Dalbani comments: "in a classroom where the focus of the teacher is centred around linguistic criteria, it is only natural to find that the students' focus in writing is centred on the production of correct linguistic forms" (p. 55). Despite this, neither do the students seem to have the knowledge or strategies to edit their own work and improve its grammar usage, nor do the teachers find it easy to identify the students' hypotheses about the target language. One important reason for this could be that the teachers do not commit themselves to "selective" error feedback through which they build students' awareness and knowledge of their most serious and frequent grammar problems (a strategy recommended by Ferris, 1999). Another underlying reason could be that both the students and teachers tend to view grammar as a set of restrictions on what is allowed and disallowed in language use – "a linguistic straitjacket" in Larsen-Freeman's words (2002: 103) – rather than as a resource which gives freedom to the language user to manipulate language structures in a variety of ways – "a liberating force" in Widdowson's words (1990: 86) (a concept argued for in Cullen, 2008). Students need to realize "how freeing grammar exploration is": "You control the grammar, the grammar doesn't control you" (Sjolie, 2006: 37).

The points raised above, of course, are not to suggest that students in the English Language and Literature Department do not achieve progress in their writing performance during their four year (or more) period of study. Research conducted by Meygle (1997) in the same context into the development of Syrian undergraduates' writing ability in English showed that the writing of fourth year students demonstrated improvements in almost all aspects of writing but particularly in

syntactic complexity and vocabulary from when they were in first year. Also, Dalbani (1992) in her assessment of the longitudinal development of Syrian student writers reported that students did appear to be progressing as far as grammatical control and coherence of the whole essay are concerned. Nevertheless, and unexpectedly, she found that students from second to fourth year wrote fewer words and did not seem to be making much progress as far as meaning making was concerned. Dalbani's final remark, with which we strongly agree, was that "in spite of the relative amount of development in the proficiency of the language that learners displayed …, learners were still a long way from acquiring anything near native speakers' proficiency, an objective that most teachers in the department aim for" (p. 146). This might be the objective of many teachers of EFL learners from different L1 backgrounds, including Arab EFL learners in general, and an effective commonly suggested procedure towards attaining it is to guide learners to look critically and analytically at English texts written by native speakers of English which in turn supports their own writing (Khuwaileh & Shoumali, 2000) – a strategy totally abandoned by Syrian teachers in the department. Such an objective of EFL writing instruction to lead students to near native speaker proficiency however has been subject to debate, especially with the emergence of some teaching movements like the ELF (English as a Lingua France) (discussed in chapter 3), as well as some process or communicative approaches whose aim might be more towards effective communication and less towards grammatical accuracy.

1.3. Initial investigations and the thesis structure

Through what is said above, we have tried to briefly identify some problematic areas in the specified educational context, which we hope to address, or at least suggest some pedagogical treatments for in this research. Indeed, they are almost the same problems that prompted the current researcher to carry out two other earlier studies, which effectively serve as background studies to the present one. Although the main purpose of each of the two studies was very different – one aiming to understand the possible sources of student errors; the other aiming to gain insights into the teachers'

focus when marking student work – both provide accounts of specific grammatical features that are problematic in the context.

Because of this last significance and the relevance these two studies have to our main research in this thesis, the following chapter (chapter two) will be devoted to introducing them, and discussing their aims, procedures, and results. This, however, will be done only briefly in the case of one of these studies – already fully presented and discussed in Fakhra (2004), but in detail in the case of the other one since it was originally intended and designed to serve as a preliminary study to this doctoral research, and so was conducted during the initial stages of it. Then, in chapter three we shall review literature on 'error analysis' and 'error evaluation' in combination with the two studies as their findings could be compared with those of other relevant research. The synthesis of findings from chapters two and three inspire our focus on two specific grammatical features in the remainder of this thesis, but do not directly lead to this focus yet. In chapters four and five, we resume our literature review, focusing on research and linguistic issues that relate to the use of the two specific grammatical features in English writing; namely, 'Relative clause' and 'Conjunctive adjunct' – each to be dealt with in a separate chapter.

Chapter six introduces the main research context, objectives, and methods of analysis. Besides, it aims to articulate the relationship between the findings of the two preliminary studies introduced in chapter two and the areas of concern in the main research. Above all, it attempts to justify our research concern with the L2 writers' use of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts in particular. The details and results of relative clause and conjunctive adjunct analyses are presented in chapters seven and eight respectively. Chapter nine displays and discusses the results of the final stage of the main research, which involves a similar analysis of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts, yet, in the writing of native English-speaking university students. The purpose of the analysis is to compare and contrast (quantitatively mainly) the non-native speaker students' employment of the two linguistic features with the native speaker students' employment. Finally, chapter ten

provides a discussion of the research findings as a whole, together with the pedagogical implications for the teaching of grammar in L2 writing to academic students in similar EFL contexts (particularly Arabic contexts). The chapter ends with identification of the current research limitations and with suggestions for future research.

To more clearly demonstrate the road map of the research, it can be briefly explained here that the main study of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts in Syrian L2 writing was preceded by initial exploratory studies and investigations which paved the way for it. The first initial study (Fakhra, 2004) was conducted separately not as part of this thesis. It investigated the frequency, types, and sources of grammatical errors in the English writing of four Syrian undergraduate students from the English Language and Literature Department and identified the most salient or serious errors (details in sec. 2.2.1). This study inspired the need to examine more thoroughly students' implementation of grammar features that tend to be problematic for them, as well as have effect on their writing quality in general, which is what the current work mainly attempts to attain.

This led to the first stage in this thesis research, at which a preliminary study of 'student writing evaluation' was carried out (sec. 2.2.2). The aim of this study was to involve a group of native and non-native speaker teachers of writing in the process of evaluating six Syrian university students' texts and investigate the effect of grammatical errors in the texts on these teachers' evaluation, as well as the most serious grammatical errors in affecting the texts' overall quality from the teachers' point of view. This allowed a comparison between the identification of the most serious errors in the first study (Fakhra, 2004) and the second study (preliminary study), which showed many points in common; for example, tense, subject-verb agreement, relative clause, article, and cohesive device errors were classified among the most serious ones in both studies (see chapter 2). A review of relevant literature in chapter 3 emphasized the frequency of these errors in the writing of Arabic-speaking learners in general.

The next step was to build on this knowledge of problematic grammar features in the L2 writing of Syrian and Arab students and select those features to be examined in depth for the main study. However, because the data of the main study consists of a set of texts different from and larger than those of the last two exploratory studies, this feature selection was further guided by another initial investigation into grammatical errors in this data. Based on this investigation's results, a list of 5 most commonly misused grammar features was constructed. Included in this list were relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts, which were determined, on the basis of several considerations, to be the focus of the main study in this thesis.

1.4. Broad objectives, scope and significance of the research

The broad aims of research conducted for this thesis can be identified as follows:

1. To identify salient problems in English grammar in the EFL writing of Arab (Syrian) university students through 'error analysis' and 'writing and error evaluation' research methods.

2. To explore these students' overall use of two problematic grammar features; specifically, 'relative clauses' and 'conjunctive adjuncts', which we assume have a major influence on the maturity and coherence of their written products. Here, relative clause and conjunctive adjunct raw occurrence frequencies, as well as errors/misuses, are investigated in a corpus of student writing.

3. To investigate the frequencies of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts used in a similar corpus of British native speaker university students' English writing in order to compare and contrast with them the frequencies of these features in the non-native speaker Syrian students' corpus; and consequently, measure against them patterns of 'overuse' and 'underuse' in this latter corpus.

4. To draw from the insights of this research and previous research findings some pedagogical implications for improving the teaching and learning of relative clause and conjunctive adjunct use in L2 writing, proposing to contribute by this to the development of the Syrian students' writing quality in certain aspects (syntactic and discoursal).

With our recognition and awareness that Syrian students face problems, and need help, in handling almost all aspects of writing, we have nonetheless chosen in this research to scrutinize problematic features in their implementation of grammar in particular because it is an aspect which both teachers and students give much of their attention in the writing task to but achieve minimum development in students' use of in return, indicating a defect in both parties' (teachers' and students') techniques of grammar teaching/learning and in their perceptions of what is worth focusing on in grammar teaching/learning. Besides, grammar as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter is a vital tool for conveying meaning and mastering it is important for the maturity and variety of expression in text as a whole, a high expectation of academic writing which university students need to know how to live up to. As described by Sjolie (2006: 39), grammar is "the understructure upon which we hang the competently written word".

A further reason for choosing to study the Syrian students' use (and misuse) of grammar features in L2 writing is that previous research into these students' writing has not dealt with such features extensively despite the fact that there is a common need among teachers and students in the context to find out what exactly is going wrong with students' implementation of them and how to improve this implementation. Researchers have been rather concerned with investigating broader domains, such as signs of development in students' writing from first year to fourth year at different levels (grammatical, organizational, and discoursal) (e.g. Dalbani, 1992; Meygle, 1997), difficulties or problems students encounter in their writing – again at different levels (e.g. Dalbani, 1992; Meygle, 1997; Mouzahem, 1991), and

methods employed for teaching and assessing composition, their drawbacks, and needs for reform (e.g. Dalbani, 1992; Mouzahem, 1991). It is true that grammar analyses have occupied a not insignificant part of their research concerns; for example, Mouzahem (1991), in her attempt to find how efficient the most dominant method of grammar teaching in the context was, examined at one point grammatical errors in the performance of a group of Syrian students, and Meygle (1997) measured grammatical complexity in students' writing and examined the frequency of some grammatical features (conjunctives, relatives, passive, and third person pronouns); yet, we realize that certain grammar skills deserve a more thorough examination and larger space to be dedicated to them in research, for grammar pedagogy improvement purposes. In other words, examining grammar in writing in more detail should hopefully yield important insights that might help in the development of the teaching of grammar in general and grammar in writing in particular. Furthermore, although the context and writing teaching methods in the English Language and Literature Departments at all Syrian universities have not changed or improved much, if at all, since the time the writers referred to above conducted their studies, more recent research is needed where things can be viewed and tackled from more recent perspectives.

As for our choice to focus on relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts, this is triggered by the fact that there is little known about their use in the writing of not only Syrian learners, but also Arab learners in general, and that, as far as we know, their employed and misemployed forms, in that writing, have not been dealt with in detail before unlike the case with other grammar points, such as articles and prepositions (e.g. Lakkis and AbdelMalak, 2000; Al-Fotih, 2003; Zoghoul, 2002; Shammas, 1995) (see 6.2.3).

To conclude, in attempting to achieve the research objectives identified in this chapter, we hope that this thesis will contribute to the knowledge about the use of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts in university writing. We would also hope

that any pedagogical implications identified might be applicable in EFL contexts in general, and in Arabic contexts in particular.

Chapter Two: Writing and Error Evaluation Survey

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the intention is to introduce two studies conducted by the current researcher which are conceived as preliminary studies into the main research in this thesis, providing substantial background to it. Following a very brief review of the first study of the two (Fakhra, 2004), this chapter focuses on the second study, which was inspired by the first one and was conducted during the initial stages of this doctoral thesis. It is a survey to investigate issues in relation to grammar in L2 writing. As part of the literature review to be provided in the next chapter, reference will be made to literature on 'error analysis' and 'error evaluation' as the two studies discussed in this chapter will be compared with other researchers' studies in this area of research. By choosing to start this work with the presentation of these preliminary studies and their findings before reviewing the literature, we aim to identify and explore certain linguistic issues in the EFL (Syrian) context we are concerned with; and it is in accordance with this aim that we will use the term "exploratory" to describe the two studies.

2.2. Exploratory studies

2.2.1. MA research

An investigation into the grammatical mistakes in the writing of four adult students in the English Language and Literature Department at a top Syrian university was the major concern of our first exploratory study (Fakhra, 2004). More specifically, the purpose of the study was to identify, describe, and explain the most frequent and persistent morphological and syntactic errors in four essays produced by the four students; of whom two were first year students and two were third year students. After analyzing these essays, the results revealed a set of grammatical features that

were identified as the most problematic in that students repeatedly showed a lack of awareness of the correct use of these features. These features were modals, articles, prepositions, relative clauses, tense sequencing, subject-verb agreement, cohesion, and cohesive devices. Sometimes, students' inaccuracies were related to their 'overuse' or 'underuse' of a particular feature, such as definite article overuse and relative clause underuse. The results also showed that the percentages of the third year students' syntactic and transfer errors were higher than those of the first year students. The main pedagogical implication of the study was the need to find a place for a grammar component in composition courses, adopting a more effective and selective feedback or grammar teaching method that focuses on the most problematic areas for students; and also, to build students' awareness of the importance of developing self-correction strategies. Further findings from this study are included in the discussion of the second study.

2.2.2. Survey

Because the accuracy and quality of the texts in the above study were clearly affected by the students' deficient knowledge of the English language structures and constituents, and because form is recognized as as important as content for attaining the communicative function of text (Muncie, 2002), it was thought that attempting another study which would investigate the role of such grammatical deficiencies in affecting a piece of writing's overall quality would be quite reasonable and would provide an element of triangulation, making findings more valid and less subjective. Such a study suggested the need to involve writing teachers in evaluating some written work produced by EFL learners in the same academic context as before, so that light could be shed, in general, on the different measurements these teachers would apply in their evaluation, and in particular, on the influence of grammar and grammatical errors/mistakes on their judgments.

The decision to involve a group of writing teachers in such evaluation process was based on the belief that there is no one final judgment on a particular writing, and

that different readers of text could perceive it from different angles and could use different criteria in their textual evaluation. They can vary for example according to whether they are native speakers (NS) or non-native speakers (NNS), and also according to whether they are expert language teachers or non-expert (Ellis, 1994). Hence, what was perceived to be a 'serious' error in grammar according to our investigation and analysis of errors in the previous research (Fakhra, 2004) because it was 'frequent' or 'persistent' could be considered a slight error by other readers or judges. Perhaps, these other judges would present a similar categorization of serious errors as ours, but this could be due to considerations or factors other than frequency or persistency, such as their effect on intelligibility, degree of norm violation, degree of 'noticeability', or the amount of irritation they cause (Ellis, 1994; James, 1998).

2.2.2.1. The method, aims, and research questions of the second exploratory study

In accordance with the above, and in an effort to achieve our goal of making findings more objective, we asked 10 writing teachers with a range of experiences and different mother tongues (English and Arabic) to participate in a survey titled 'Evaluation of student writing' in which they had to give scores for six texts written by six students and to provide reasons for the scores they gave. Although some teachers complained about not being given any specific criteria on which they could base their scoring, this was done on purpose in order to examine the criteria they would use in addition to the effect that grammatical mistakes would have on their evaluation of the overall quality of the texts.

One purpose of conducting such a survey was to examine the extent to which the common finding that native speakers are more lenient judges of errors/grammatical errors than non-native speakers (Ellis, 1994; Green and Hecht, 1985; James, 1998) is true. Therefore, the survey was distributed to five Syrian teachers of English and to five native English-speaking tutors teaching in a top English university. The presumption here was that the two groups would reflect different considerations and

different expectations of adult L2 writers at university level, not only due to the difference in their L1, but also due to the various experiences they had.

As for the selection of the six texts to be marked, each two of them were intended to present the same topic and same text-type, but while the first one was written by a first year student, the second one was written by a third year student. However, the informants were deliberately not informed of this difference in students' levels so that we would be able to examine how the scores given by them would vary from the first student to the second one, bearing in mind the results of the previous study (Fakhra, 2004) which showed that there were many recurrent grammatical errors in the analyzed compositions regardless of their writers' stage of study (i.e. the same errors were committed by both first and third year students, such as articles, prepositions, and subject-verb agreement errors).

In general, this evaluation survey was intended in the first place to provide a background study for the main study (of this doctoral thesis), and the basic issues it attempts to investigate can be identified as follows:

1. The role of different grammatical errors in affecting the evaluation by a group of writing teachers of the overall quality of texts written by undergraduate academic Syrian students.

2. What areas of grammatical weakness those teachers notice and identify in their assessment, and how they rank such areas according to their seriousness in affecting the overall quality of texts. The main purpose of investigating this issue was two-fold: a. to examine how the informants' identification and ranking of problematic grammatical features compares with the researcher's own extended grammatical (morphological and syntactic) analysis of the same texts (an analysis that is built on Fakhra, 2004); b. to examine how the ranking of features – in addition to the number of errors – in the latter analysis compares with the overall scores given by the informants.

3. How the assessment criteria used by the native speaker teachers compare with the ones used by the Syrian teachers.

Of these three issues, the second one might be argued against as teachers are required after reading the texts to detect the grammatical errors (i.e. to 'notice' them) and then to rank them. This could possibly affect the results of the study if judges – particularly the NNS judges – fail to notice some errors. In fact, not providing subjects with particular readily identified errors, or with sentences containing errors, to judge is criticized by James (1998: 230), who maintains that NNSs are in no position to assign an error gravity (EG) to an error they fail to spot. However, one could argue that designing the survey in this way is meant to make use of the 'noticeability' of an error as a measure of its seriousness – whether this noticeability depends on the 'frequency' or 'type' of error. Nevertheless, the assumption that "high noticeability of error implies high gravity" is dismissed by James (1998: 219) as being "unsound" since there might be judges who tend to be more interested in the message or its bearer than its formulation, and hence tend to overlook the imperfections of form they might actually have noticed.

The survey (Appendix A) consists of 7 questions to be answered by the informants. Questions (2) and (3) require of them to mark each of the texts, give it a score, and justify that score. Their responses to these two questions have enabled us to formulate two basic tables: the first one is a table of scores, and the second is a table of criteria. In both tables there is a division of participants into native speaker teachers and Syrian teachers so that their responses can be easily compared. Questions (4)-(7) are more specific as they focus on the grammar in the texts, and on attracting the respondents' attention to the existence of various grammatical deficiencies in the texts besides their degree of seriousness in influencing the quality of these texts.

2.2.2.2. Response analysis

2.2.2.2.1. Text scores and ranks

Table 2.1: Text scores out of 20 allocated by native speaker and Syrian teachers

Texts	Scores given by native speaker teachers					Scores given by Syrian teachers				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	6	12	10	8	5 −	5	11	7	0	13
2	9	10	12	12	9	14	13	9	12	14
3	7	11	12	16	8	9	13	6	5	9
4	9	8	10	8	8	9	12	5	7	12
5	16	18	14	15	11	15	15	9	8	14
6	8	16	10	16	9-10	14	16	12	10	17

(−): minus / less

Table 2.1 shows a clear variation in the teachers' estimations of the text scores. This could reflect differences in the criteria they tend to follow in their evaluation. However, an attempt to rank the six texts according to the response of each teacher as shown in table 2.1 sounds quite sensible if the intention is to compare between the informants' responses. Hence, on the basis of the scores in table 2.1, table 2.2 below is designed for the purpose of ranking the texts.

Table 2.2: Text ranks allocated by native speaker and Syrian teachers (1 = top)

Texts	Texts' ranks according to the native speaker teachers							Texts' ranks according to the Syrian teachers								
	1	2	3	4	5	total	rank	1	2	3	4	5	total	rank	Total	Overall rank
1	6	3	4	5	5	23	6	6	6	4	6	4	26	6	49	**6**
2	2	5	2	4	3	16	3	2	3	2	1	2	10	2	26	**3**
3	5	4	2	1	4	16	3	4	3	5	5	6	23	4	39	**4**
4	2	6	4	5	4	21	5	4	5	6	4	5	24	5	45	**5**
5	1	1	1	3	1	7	1	1	2	2	3	2	10	2	17	**1**
6	4	2	4	1	2	13	2	2	1	1	2	1	7	1	20	**2**

In spite of the clear difference among the scores given by the respondents, table 2.2 demonstrates that there are yet some similarities that could be detected in the ranking of those texts. For example, 5 out of the 10 teachers gave text (5) the higher

mark, which is indicated by number 1; but simultaneously, another 4 teachers gave text (6) the higher mark. However, 7 of them agreed upon giving text (1) their lowest mark, but for another four teachers it was text (4) to be classified under the least successful texts. The last column in the table, showing the final ranks of the texts resulted from adding up the total ranks given by both groups, confirms this preference among the teachers of texts (5) and (6) quality over that of texts (1) and (4).

On the other hand, while we can notice few agreements among the native speaker tutors in their ranking, there are more occasions where the rankings of the Syrian teachers match with each other, especially in the case of teachers (3) and (5).

2.2.2.2.2. Judgement criteria

This, despite similarities or differences among the 10 informants, prompted a close examination of the criteria each one of them used to base his/her judgment on, using their answers to question 3 in the evaluation survey as our main source of information. This required the formulation of another table, 2.3 below, where the adopted criteria are identified as they were uttered and referred to by the informants, and where they are organized into three basic categories: 'language', 'organization' and 'content', to investigate the extent to which the 'language', and in particular the 'grammar', of a text influences the teachers' evaluation in comparison to the 'organization' or 'content' of that text. Like tables 2.1 and 2.2, table 2.3 divides the respondents into two groups: the native speaker teachers and the Syrian teachers, which again serves the purpose of comparing the 10 teachers with each other on the one hand, and comparing the two groups on the other – as far as the criteria they have used are concerned. The plus and minus signs are used to indicate that the criteria are applied sometimes positively and sometimes negatively.

Table 2.3: Criteria used by the informants

Criteria	Used by native speaker teachers					Used by Syrian teachers				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Language					- / +					-
use of language						-				
command of language						-				
language used (e.g. spoken/written, formal/informal)			-				-			
the 'academic' use of language						-				
grammar			-		-		+ / -			-
grammatical errors (or mistakes) / 'surface errors of grammar' / grammatical mistakes at sentence and word level / the amount of grammatical mistakes in the text		-	-					- / +	- / +	+ / -
structuring / structure			+							
grammatical structures / familiarity with English structures							-			
range of grammatical structures		+								
repetitive use of grammatical structures / repetition		-					-			
command/control of 'sentence structure' / sentence construction		-		- / +	-					
understanding basic sentence patterns					-					
complex structures							-			
simple sentences				-						-
cutting sentences							-			
division of sentences								-		
connecting sentences							-			
run on sentences						-				
length of sentences	- / +	-	-							
relative pronouns						-				
use of articles	-		-				-			
use of prepositions							-			
use of second person pronoun 'you'										-

nouns (singular and plural)										-
nouns and verbs (confusion between them)							-			
use of imperatives						-				
use of certain verbs						-				
use of tenses	-					-	-			-
switching between tenses						-				
mixing between tenses										-
subject-verb agreement / matching verbs with nouns						-				-
word order	-									
style		+			-					
‘style in relation to grammar’									-	
use of contractions						-				
‘Arabic style’									-	
L1 influence / L1 influence on the whole style of writing							-			
cohesion		-								+
use or choice or control of ‘lexis’/‘words’/‘vocabs’/ ‘vocabulary’	-	+	-	- / +			-			
vocabulary / range of vocabulary		- / +				-				
repetition of words				-		-				
lexical mistakes (their number in the text)								+		
spelling / ‘surface errors of spelling’ / spelling mistakes	-	-		+		-	-		-	
punctuation	- / +			+		-	-	-	-	-
Organization			+	+	**+ / -**					+
structuring / structure / control of structure / structure of essay (as a whole)		+	+	+						+ / -
linking devices	-									
paragraphing	+		+	+				-		
length of paragraphs						-				
Content			**-**				+			
Expressions / phrases				-	+	-				
vernacular expressions						-				
Arabic expressions										-
ideas				/ +	+ / -					

expressing ideas ‘powerfully’ / ability to express ideas clearly or in correct language				+		-				
communicating ideas		+								
structuring of ideas		+								
division of ideas										+ / -
repetition of ideas						-				
sequence of ideas			-							
supporting ideas						-				
choice of examples to support claims / supporting ideas with examples		+		+						
the clarity of thought / expressing thoughts		+								-
clarity of meaning / conveying the desired meaning						-		+		
understandability of text					+					
‘meaning mistakes’									-	
generalization						-				
‘unity of subject’										+
development of thesis				+						
supporting the main topic in the essay’s paragraphs / satisfying the topic (how well the topic is discussed)						-				-
‘effectiveness’ or ‘strength’ of the parts of essay (e.g. introduction and/or conclusion)				-				-		
argument (or discussion) / argumentation / line of argument / attempt to develop argument / strength of argument / validity of argument / level of argument / coherency or logicality of argument		+	+		-	- / +		-		- / +
dispute							-			
plot										-
sense of audience				+						
sense of purpose				+						
readability of text		+	+							
coherency of the text		+			- / +	+				+
amount of content			+ / -							

‘style in relation to meaning’									-	
redundancy									-	
repetition			-	-		-	-		-	

It is evident from this table that the teachers have based their evaluation of the texts on many criteria which are listed here using their different terms and expressions grouped where we thought appropriate. In general, both groups took the three basic criteria of language, organization and content into consideration when justifying the scores they gave. One exception was respondent 1 from the native speaker group, who did not make any reference to the content of the texts, and who was mainly concerned with the language used from its two sides: the 'micro' and the 'macro' (using his own words).

Although the signs used in the table help demonstrate which teachers referred to the categories in the first column, they do not reveal how many times those teachers referred to each category, or which essays they were applied to. In spite of this, they could still provide us with an indication of whether the three criteria counted equally for them or not. To demonstrate this, another table (2.4) is presented here where the signs revealed in table 2.3 are counted so that the two groups’ applications of the three criteria could be easily compared. It is quite obvious in this table that for both groups there were most comments on language and fewest on organization.

Table 2.4: Numbers of plus and minus signs in table 2.3

Group of teachers	**Criteria**		
	Language	**Organization**	**Content**
Syrian teachers	50	4	29
Native speaker teachers	35	10	27

Looking back at table 2.3, one could observe the following specific tendencies within groups:

1. Syrian teachers tended to give specific examples of grammatical mistakes, where native speaker teachers tended to generalize. This accounts for the higher number of language items identified by Syrian teachers.

2. Syrian teachers consistently noted punctuation errors, which all but one native speaker teacher did not mention.

3. All native speaker teachers commented on vocabulary, some both positively and negatively, whereas only two Syrian teachers commented, both negatively.

4. Native speaker teacher comments on Organization were overwhelmingly positive, where Syrian teacher comments were entirely negative.

5. Native speaker teacher comments on Content were overwhelmingly positive, where Syrian teacher comments were more negative (23 negative signs and only 7 positive signs).

6. As might be expected, only Syrian teachers identified specific L1 interference.

There are of course other different tendencies and variations among teachers. In terms of 'grammar', since it is our major concern in this study, there were certain grammatical or structural features whose use/misuse in the texts attracted the attention of some teachers more than others, even though such features seem to be prominent and/or persistent in some cases. For instance, three of the native speaker tutors commented on the ‘length of sentences’ in particular texts, but none of the Syrian group did. Similarly, only a few teachers from the two groups mentioned something related to the use of relative pronouns, articles, prepositions, and imperatives, or to subject-verb agreement (in addition to many other instances illustrated in table 2.3) – which were deficiently implemented on a number of occasions in the texts.

However, this does not necessarily indicate that the teachers who did not articulate such features were not aware of their existence in the texts and what was wrong or right about their application. Rather, it could indicate that those teachers did not consider grammatical features like these as much responsible for the scores they

estimated as other features were, whether at the level of language, organization or content. In other words, the teachers might have noticed their existence but they tended to "overlook" by not reacting to them (James, 1998). Moreover, the informants, as mentioned before, were not given any particular criteria to resort to while evaluating, and so it could be that they were just focusing on what in general affected the overall quality of the texts. Yet, in question 6, through which we tried to attract their attention to the grammatical problems in the essays by asking them to "rank the various grammatical mistakes they have come across in the texts starting with the most serious in affecting the overall quality of these texts", they then showed awareness of additional grammatical features.

2.2.2.2.3. Grammatical mistakes rankings

On the basis of the teachers' responses to question 6, table 2.5 is designed to reveal what grammatical problems were most serious for them, with a number put next to each problem to represent the rank it was given by the informant. The fifth native speaker subject was the only one whose answer to this question didn't contain any ranking to any grammatical mistakes for he thought that "most of the writing is too poor to evaluate in this way", and that "a lot of it is stylistically inappropriate, as well as inaccurate". Therefore, the table displays the rankings of four respondents of the native speaker group only (instead of five).

Table 2.5: The informants' ranking of grammatical mistakes according to their seriousness in affecting the overall quality of the texts.

Grammatical mistakes in the texts	Ranks of the grammatical mistakes according to the native speaker teachers				Ranks of the grammatical mistakes according to the Syrian teachers				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
tenses	1	-	-	1	1	1	2	4	1
subject-verb agreement		-	-	-	2		-	1	
♦*word agreements*	3								
♦*compatibility between nouns and verbs*						2			
♦*matching verbs with nouns*									2
relative clauses/pronouns	-	-	-	2	3	-	1	3	-
articles	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	-
nouns and number (singular & plural)	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
cohesion	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-
the erroneous use of the infinitive	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	6	-
word order	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-
parts of speech	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-
verb structure	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
the faulty use of the third person 's'	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
Overlong sentences (syntax)	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
wrong choice of word (lexical)	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
run on sentences & sentence fragments	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
the use of past participle after the auxiliary verb (e.g. *must used*)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-
to start the sentence with 'because' while the students is continuing the idea of the previous sentence (text 1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-

The dash (-) means that there was no mention of this mistake made by this informant

At this stage, it is obvious that many grammatical deviances attracted the respondents' attention; and that 'tenses', 'subject-verb agreement', 'relative clauses/ pronouns', and 'articles' – among others – were mentioned by teachers who had not commented on them before. The salient point is that 7 out of the 9 teachers included

in the table above referred to 'tense' in their ranking, and 5 of them put it at the top of their lists; something which supports earlier findings (Fakhra, 2004) which classified tense mistakes among the most serious problematic issues in Syrian L2 writing. All in all, as table 2.5 shows, there are 7 features at least mentioned by more than one informant; they are:

1. Tenses (7 informants)
2. Subject-verb agreement (5 informants)
3. Relative clauses/pronouns (4 informants)
4. Articles (3 informants)
5. Nouns and number (singular & plural) (2 informants)
6. Cohesion (2 informants)
7. The erroneous use of the infinitive (2 informants)

2.2.2.3. Analysis of grammatical errors in the texts

All that has gone before, whether in relation to the 'scores' the informants gave, the 'criteria' they adopted, or the 'ranking' they suggested, inspired the need for the researcher to conduct a close analysis of the 6 texts so that the informants' responses could be compared with the results of such analysis. But since our main interest in this preliminary research was to investigate the role of grammatical errors in affecting the quality of L2 writing, the analysis was restricted to the morphological and syntactic deviances in the texts. For the purpose of analysis, six tables (2.6.A–2.6.F) were constructed of these deviances as they appeared in the essays. But because of space limitations, only the first table (2.6.A) of the six will be provided below as a sample while the remaining 5 tables are attached in the appendices (Appendix B). The six essays are given in Appendix A.

Each of the six tables represents each of the 6 students' error profiles, and consists of two columns. The first column classifies errors according to their linguistic categories broken down into morphological errors and syntactic errors, and then further into sub-categories. 'Cohesion errors' is a sub-category that is subsumed

under the basic category of syntax, following James' (1998) method of classifying errors where he considers cohesion errors (or 'intersentence errors') as one type of syntactic error. The second column provides all the instances found in the text of each sub-category of error.

Table 2.6.A: Text 1 grammar error analysis.

Linguistic category	Errors in the text
Morphological errors	
Nominal morphology *Omission of plural -s*	 L2 'many different idea' → '…ide*as*' L7 'many affirmative point' → '…points' L14 'useful for student only' → '…students…' L14 'but the other can…' → 'but others can…'
Verbal morphology *Past tense (-ed overused)*	 L13 'teached them' → 'taught them'
Derivational morphology *Misformation* *Parts of speech misselection*	 L20 'unmoral programs' → 'immoral programs' L20 'aim to destruct…' → '…destroy' L6 'tow edges weapon' → 'two edged weapon' L10 'helps them a lot in learn…' → '…in learning…' L13 'in a simply and fun way' → 'in a simple and funny way' L13 'in a tradition way' → 'in a traditional way' L21 'and slave him' → 'enslave him'
Section total	**12**
Syntactic errors	
Noun Phrase ***Determiners*** *Adding/omitting indefinite article* *Adding(or overusing) definite article*	 L1 'TV is waste of time' → '…a waste…' L4 'a rich programs' → 'rich programs' L5 'a fatile programs' → 'futile programs' L5 'to waste a time' → 'to waste time' L6 'the TV is tow edges weapon' → '…a two…' L8 'a good answers' → 'good answers' L9 'a real examples' → 'real examples' L6 'the TV is' → 'TV is' (repeated in line **7**) L12 'in the school' → 'in school' L14 'but the other can…' → 'but others can…' L16 '…which the scientists provided…' → 'which scientists…' L18 'especially on the students' → '…on students' L8-9 'take the good method in life' → 'take good methods in life' / 'a good method in life'
Verb phrase *Tense*	 L2 'there are many different idea proved that…' → '…which *prove*…'

Voice	L15 ‘what is happened in the world’ → ‘what is happening…’ L16 ‘the inventions which the scientists provided…’ → ‘…provide…’ L5 ‘it use as a machine’ → ‘it is used…’ L12 ‘the lessons which given to them’ → ‘…which are given …’ L17 ‘there are a lot of fatile programs is shown on TV’ → ‘…programs shown on TV’
Prepositions	L12 ‘studying on the TV’ → ‘studying through the TV’ L16 ‘which scientists provided *to* people’ → ‘…provide *for* people’ / ‘…provide people *with*’
Word order	L14 ‘TV is not useful for student only’ → ‘…useful only for student’
Relative clause formation	L1 ‘There are a lot of people believe that…’ → ‘…people *who* believe that…' L2 ‘there are many different idea proved that…’ → ‘…idea *which* proved that…’ L7 ‘there are many affirmative point make TV…’ → ‘…point *that* make …’ L19 ‘there are many channels show…’ → ‘…channels *that/which* show…’ L20 ‘and programs aim to…’ → ‘and programs *that* aim to…’
Missing constituent	L13 ‘whereas in school teached them’ → ‘whereas school teached them’ / ‘whereas in school teachers teached them’
Repeated device	L14 ‘But TV is not useful for student only, **but** the other can…’ → ‘But…only; the other…’
Cohesion *Reference* *Misuse of relative pronoun as a conjunction*	 L10 ‘by giving them a real examples from our life and the best way to process **their** examples’ → ‘…to process them’ / ‘to process these examples’ L11 ‘helps them a lot in learn their lessons **that** the children preffer to learn their lessons by the TV more than the lessons which given to them in the school’ → ? L19 ‘the most dangerous one is the satelite channel, **that** there are many channels…’ → ?
Section total	**33**
Total	**45**

2.2.2.4. Discussion of the relationship between the results of the grammatical error analysis and the survey informants’ answers

The analysis of grammatical errors in the texts in the way exemplified in table 2.6.A gave rise to two kinds of comparison. The first one was between the total number of grammatical errors in each text and the ‘score’ or ‘rank’ that this text was given by each of the informants before (see tables 2.1 and 2.2 above) in order to see whether

there was (or was not) a relationship between them. The second was between the types of error identified in the first column of tables 2.6.A–2.6.F – especially the ones that are more prominent or more frequent – and the grammatical points noticed and mentioned by the informants, and listed either under the criterion of 'language' in table 2.3, or in the ranking of the most serious grammatical errors in table 2.5.

To simplify the first comparison, table 2.7 below summarizes the numbers of errors in the texts, as well as the overall ranks of these texts according to table 2.2 above. (The arrow in texts 3 and 6 indicates that the total number of errors in the text is increased due to the over repetition of particular erroneous grammatical structures; see Appendix B).

Table 2.7: The total numbers of grammatical errors in the texts and the overall ranks of these texts.

Texts	Number of grammatical errors	Overall rank
1	45	6
2	25	3
3	33 → 59	4
4	21	5
5	3	1
6	9 → 19	2

Looking into this table, taking into consideration the detailed information revealed in tables 2.1 and 2.2 concerning the texts scores and ranks, one can see that the texts with the least number of errors (texts 5 and 6) were given higher marks (or ranks) by most of the teachers (but not all of them); and that text 1, with its high number of errors (45) in comparison to the other texts, was ranked the last by also most of the teachers. Nevertheless, the other texts, with their more or less considerable number of mistakes, were scored or ranked variously. For example, while text 3 was given relatively high scores by the third and fourth native speaker tutors, it was given lower marks by the first native speaker tutor and also by 4 of the Syrian teachers, a reaction that was probably to be expected due to the large number of errors in that text.

Overall, one may conclude that the number of grammatical distortions in L2 writing influences the estimation of its receiver, but the question remains: 'to what extent?'. In addition to this, one may ask whether it is the 'number' of grammatical errors or their 'type' that matters for the marker – or could it be both? (see the literature review in chapter three for details on this topic). After all, we cannot say that it is the 'grammar' alone in the outputs of those students that has caused such allocation of scores, for we cannot ignore the many references made as well by the teachers to 'content' and 'organization' besides other 'linguistic' considerations. However, going back to examine the exact reasons mentioned by the informants while justifying their scores might provide answers of some sort to our questions.

First of all, generally speaking, none of the teachers failed to refer to 'grammar' (or 'structure' as expressed in some cases) as one of the major factors that determined their judgments. In other words, their reference to grammar accompanied their reference to many other aspects such as vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, argument, ideas, and paragraphing. Yet, this reference took different shapes. For example, teachers 2 and 3 from the native speaker group, together with teachers 3, 4 and 5 from the Syrian group showed a great concern about the ‘number’ of grammatical mistakes but referred explicitly to only a few instances of such mistakes. Nothing indicated that this aspect was the most crucial for them, except for the two Syrian teachers 3 and 4, who repeatedly and very directly ascribed their scores to the large or small number of grammatical mistakes. The following are the sentences and phrases used by these two teachers reflecting this tendency (‘ST’ is an abbreviation for ‘Syrian teacher’):

ST3: ‘It is impossible to ignore such a large amount of deadly mistakes.’ (text 1)
‘There is a considerable amount of serious mistakes.’ (text 2)
‘numerous deadly mistakes.’ (text 3)
‘Few grammatical mistakes.’ (text 5)
‘very few grammatical and lexical mistakes.’ (text 6)

ST4: ‘He or she is having many grammatical mistakes. Even if he is a first year student he will fail because of the many mistakes he has.’ (text 1)

'Not too many grammatical mistakes.' (text 2)
'A lot of grammatical and spelling mistakes that cannot be tolerated.' (text 4)

On the other hand, teacher 1 from the native speaker group and teachers 1 and 2 from the Syrian group were also highly interested in grammar and grammatical deficiencies, but they tended to be more specific by pointing at 'types' or 'forms' of such deficiencies, rather than their 'number' in each text.

Apart from this, when the informants were asked in question 4 about whether the different grammatical mistakes/errors made by the students had influenced their evaluation of the overall quality of the essays, all the answers were affirmative. But when they were asked "to what extent have these different grammatical mistakes influenced your evaluation in comparison to other deficiencies in the texts?", the answers were generally divided into three reactions (the illustrating quotations of these reactions are presented in the next chapter). The first one, which was reflected by the third native speaker teacher and the third Syrian teacher, was that they tried to take a balanced approach by focusing on all deficiencies or aspects equally. The second reaction, which was hinted at by the native speaker teachers 1, 2, 4, and 5, and the Syrian teacher 1, was that although such grammatical mistakes did affect their judgment, they were less important for them than other considerations or categories of error. The final reaction, as understood from the second, fourth and fifth Syrian teachers, was a kind of affirmation that grammatical mistakes affected to a great extent their whole view of the texts' quality or of the students' level of linguistic proficiency, and consequently affected the scores they placed.

The other point that should be touched upon here has to do with the various categories of grammatical errors that were identified in the six error-profiling tables (2.6.A – 2.6.F). These tables are actually similar to the ones that were presented in Fakhra (2004) for the purpose of analyzing the first four essays of the six essays that are subject to study here. In that paper, a detailed description and explanation was provided of the most prominent and frequent inaccurate grammatical forms in the

four essays. Hence, we can point here at the final results of Fakhra (2004) as they accord with what appears on the six analysis tables in the preliminary study.

In Fakhra's (2004) attempt to trace the deviances in the writings of the Syrian undergraduate students, it was found that there were certain areas in the English syntax that caused them much trouble; these were modals, articles, prepositions, relative clauses, tense sequencing, subject-verb agreement, cohesion, and cohesive devices. Contrary to one's expectation, a number of these areas were found to be a source of confusion for third year students as much as they were for first year students; a matter that led us to classify them among the most serious errors which needed to be dealt with. Interestingly, the survey informants were not aware of this difference in the students' level, and it happened that in many cases they gave a third year student a lower mark than that of the first year student who wrote on the same topic. This strengthened the finding that not all students at higher levels of learning showed better quality writing than that of their counterparts at lower levels (ibid).

On the other hand, although these most persistent grammatical violations did not attract the attention of all the informant teachers equally, almost all of them – in addition to other less frequent errors identified in the six tables – were included in the criteria table (2.3) and the error ranking table (2.5) above or in either of them. Yet, it can not be ignored that some teachers did not mention (or notice) at all what caused others much irritation or distraction, such as relative clauses and articles. However, it was quite striking that although Fakhra (2004) considered the proper use of 'modals' and 'prepositions' as one of the most problematic issues in L2 writing, none of the respondents mentioned the misuse or underproduction of modal verbs in some of the texts, and only one of them (Syrian teacher 2) made reference to the wrong use of prepositions in one of the texts, even though they were misused in at least three texts.

In conclusion, this brings us back to the notion that writing teachers vary in the considerations they bear in mind while evaluating the product of L2 writers. In the

following chapter, we intend to shed more light on this notion of variation among judges by reviewing some of the literature on Error Evaluation where errors are distinguished and categorized variously according to different viewpoints on error gravity (EG).

One last point that is worth mentioning here about the two studies reviewed in this chapter is that they complement each other, and together, they represent a good illustration of the well known approach of ‘Error Analysis’ with its four basic research procedures; namely: ‘identifying errors’, ‘describing errors’, ‘explaining errors’, and ‘evaluating errors’. In the first study, a framework of error analysis was developed where the first three procedures were employed; and in the second one, a survey was designed in which the fourth procedure, error evaluation, was adopted. The usefulness and relatedness of Error Analysis to the goals of such studies lies in its being a linguistic theory that is concerned with both: learners’ production of errors and teachers’ reaction to and estimation of such errors. Accordingly, a review of literature on Error Analysis (EA) will also be provided in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Error Analysis and Error Evaluation

3.1. Error Analysis (EA)

Since the 1950s, errors have been viewed as a significant phenomenon in learner language that deserves to be examined. French (1949), for example, provided a comprehensive account of common learner errors. Lee (1957), on the other hand, tried to analyze and categorize about 2,000 errors in the writing of Czechoslovakian learners, and argued that such an analysis put the teacher in "a better position to decide how teaching time should be spent" (cited in Ellis, 1994: 48). Later on, at the end of the sixties, there was a shift in pedagogical focus from 'preventing' errors to 'learning' from errors; and by the mid-1970s, the view that errors are a natural and integral part of the L2 learning process had become the prevailing one (Hendrickson, 1978). At present, the significant role of errors as "opportunities for learning", borrowing Saddler and Preschern's term (2007: 8), continues to be espoused by modern theorists. In the field of writing, for instance, it is perceived that "writing maturity develops through practice and trial and error. We must first challenge our writing to improve it. Safe writing allows no room for growth" (Sjolie, 2006: 39).

In his early seminal paper, Corder (1967) presented what has been described by James (1998: 12) as "a very positive assessment of EA" in which he pointed out the significance of errors (1) for teachers in informing them about the learners' needs and progress, (2) for researchers in telling them how learning proceeds and what learning strategies are adopted, and (3) for learners in helping them discover the rules of the target language and compare them with their hypotheses about the L2. These imply the 'pedagogical' role of EA, as well as the relationship it has to studies of 'second language acquisition'.

However, it was language teaching which remained the major concern of many researchers who carried out error analysis, and, as stated by Ellis (1994: 48), even "the attempt to discover more about L2 acquisition through the study of errors was itself motivated by a desire to improve pedagogy". Indeed, the results of many studies in first and second language acquisition, as argued by Hendrickson (1978: 389), "have important implications for teaching foreign languages efficiently and for developing effective instructional materials".

Thus, studying students' errors, in addition to its utility in providing useful insights into the process of language acquisition, and in indicating students' progress in language learning, has practical applications for foreign language teachers. This has been argued for by a number of researchers. Corder (1973), for example, extended the discussion of error significance in his seminal article (1967) by claiming that

> Errors provide feedback, they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques, and show him what parts of the syllabus he has been following have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. They enable him to decide whether he must devote more time to the item he has been working on. This is the day-to-day value of errors. But in terms of broader planning and with a new group of learners they provide the information for designing a remedial syllabus or a programme for reteaching. (Corder, 1973: 265)

A relevant more recent argument for the potential contribution of error study to EFL pedagogy, particularly in improving the quality of teachers' error feedback, is that of Salem (2007) in her study of written errors made by Hebrew-speaking EFL learners:

> [learner error] enables us to reflect on our attitude to learner language, and provides 'raw material' for sharpening our linguistic awareness. My experience as a high school teacher and researcher has shown that the study of EFL learner error can lead teachers to modify their feedback on their students' output. (Salem, 2007: 211)

But EA application is not confined to teachers only, as learners as well can and should make use of it. For some researchers such as Ellis (1992), the significance of error analysis is even more evident for learners than for teachers. His argument is

that it is more desirable for the learner to do EA since it is the learner who is usually engaged in a process of comparing his/her 'interlanguage' (IL) (i.e. what they actually say) with the target language (TL) and noticing the discrepancies between the two. In other words, it’s a comparison led by learners themselves between the linguistic features they have noticed in the input with what they currently produce in their own output and that is their 'mental grammar', registering by this the width of the gap between the input and their output.

However, we tend to believe in the usefulness of Error Analysis equally for both teachers and students. In general, error analysis as an approach used for pedagogical reasons is, as put by Olsen (1999: 192), "aimed at giving pedagogical advice on how to deal with different types of error in learners' language". For this reason, the approach is central to the present study in which the intention is to point out problematic areas in a group of learners’ use of English grammar to be focused on in teaching. At this point, it should be made clear that by the mid-1970s there was a realization that errors are but one aspect of the learning process, and that they are just one aspect of learning difficulties which can manifest themselves in other forms such as 'avoidance' and 'overgeneralization'. This realization was one of the major reasons that led EA to lose popularity among some scholars (e.g. Corder, 1975a; Hammarberg, 1974; Schachter and Celce-Murcia, 1977) due to its being reserved for "the study of erroneous utterances produced by groups of learners" (Corder, 1975a: 207, cited in James, 1998: 3), neglecting by this the description of the 'non-errors' or errors that learners somehow manage to avoid committing.

The first point that teachers can make of this criticism of EA is that as an approach for studying learners’ language, it should provide us with a picture of what learners do correctly as well as what they do wrongly so that we would get information that we could put to good use; information, for example, about the strategies used by good learners so that these same strategies can be taught to not-so-good learners. The second point is that attending to students’ errors should not mislead us to evaluate students' writing with fewer errors as better than students' writing with

more errors as students may 'avoid' TL items they are not sure about, and so do not commit errors which they would be expected to commit (Schachter, 1974). For instance, when we analyzed the grammatical distortions in the texts employed in the two studies described in chapter two, we found that the writers employed avoidance in two ways: 1. under-using certain grammatical constituents or structures such as, modal verbs, relative clauses/pronouns, and cohesive devices in contexts where they might have been expected; 2. writing very simple language containing well known words and short simple sentences, reducing by this the chances of making lexical or grammatical errors. In some cases, students compensated for their linguistic ignorance by repeating the same words and structures many times. This limited and repetitive use of vocabulary and grammatical structures was commented on by many teachers who were involved in answering the evaluation survey (see table 2.3). One of the responses was ('NT' and 'ST' are abbreviations for 'native speaker teacher' and 'Syrian teacher' respectively):

> **NT2:** 'Repetitive use of grammatical structures suggests that structures are not readily available to the writer'. (text 3)

And in another place:

> **NT2:** 'Text 3 in particular is repetitive in terms of sentence structure and vocabulary. Writer seemed to be trying to fill up the page with correct language rather than say anything meaningful.'

Another response was:

> **ST1:** 'There are lots of repeated expressions. Students could have resorted to pro-forms in order to be more succinct and coherent.'

This second type of avoidance is also noticed by Olsen (1999) in her study of the compensatory strategies that a group of Norwegian EFL learners resorted to in their writing. She argues that the overproduction of short simple sentences that are not linked well is a sign of avoidance of complex sentences with subordinate clauses – a feature characterizing the writing of many students in our two previous studies. For

her, such texts are acceptable, but the 'interlanguage' of their writers "is not as developed as it would be with a greater variety of sophisticated vocabulary and complex sentences" (Olsen, 1999: 194).

One related research finding that would seem to support our argument about error rate not being always an accurate measure of student writing quality is that of Dalbani (1992). In her attempt to assess the longitudinal development of various aspects of writing of Syrian university students majoring in English Language and Literature and following a four-year English program, she found that students in the fourth year, as might be expected, made the smallest number of errors; a sign of development. At the same time, however, contrary to expectation they wrote fewer words and shorter T-units and clauses than in previous years. In her account of this, Dalbani suggests that students in year four "might have been extra careful. They might have been writing fewer words and shorter T-units and clauses just to avoid error making" (p.145). Students' tendency to become more and more cautious not to make errors as the course progresses is a natural result of the teachers' focus in that context on grammatical correctness in their writing teaching and assessment, a matter highlighted in chapter one of this thesis. Such a writing course, as Dalbani claims, "might be impeding the intellectual growth of learners because it is discouraging them from putting their ideas forward" (p. 145), and therefore, is not helping them develop the spontaneity and fluency necessary to become skilful writers (p. 143).

In his in-depth discussion of Error Analysis, James (1998) defines it as the study of linguistic 'ignorance' as far as the ultimate cause of error is, as he contends, the FL learner’s ignorance of the TL item aimed at. In other words, EA is "the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance" (1998: 62). James claims that learners compensate for their ignorance in two ways: either they reduce the original message by leaving out what is problematic – which is usually referred to in literature as 'avoidance' or 'reduction'; or they try to find in the L2 or L1 some approximative way of expressing their meaning by using

alternatives for the words or structures that they do not know – a strategy for which the term used is 'achievement' (Færch and Kasper, 1984 in Olsen, 1999; Medgyes, 1989 in James, 1998). The important point that James wants to raise by this argument is that by studying 'avoidance' alone, we, as error analysts, would learn very little since errors are not easily detectable where this strategy is deployed. Therefore, it is the study of 'achievement' strategies (called 'substitutive' language or 'interlanguage (IL)'), where committed errors are more traceable, which constitutes the heart of EA.

However, the importance of 'avoidance' as one of the main strategies used by learners cannot be ignored. Although it might not be as easily spotted in writing as in oral production, and although it is easier and more interesting to look for 'achievement' strategies when analyzing written work (Olsen, 1999), it is one of this study's areas of concern to look for patterns of L2 avoidance in L2 writing. Ellis (1994) perceives avoidance as an important issue for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research in particular since many studies (e.g. Dagut and Laufer, 1985; Kellerman, 1977; Kleinmann, 1978) testify to its prevalence in the process of L2 acquisition. Thus, he maintains the view that EA, as long as it focuses exclusively on what learners do, and has no way of investigating avoidance, is then "seriously limited".

As a result, the concept of 'Interlanguage' (IL), propounded by Selinker (1972), emerged to embrace "the study of the whole performance data from individual learners" (Corder, 1975a: 207; cited in James, 1998: 3). Accordingly, Corder has suggested the label 'performance analysis' to describe this IL as an attempt to distinguish it from the term 'error analysis', which is restricted to the study of errors produced by groups of learners. The term interlanguage has been defined by a number of linguists. Selinker (1972) was the first who defined it as the language used by learners at any stage of learning a new language (in Olsen, 1999: 191). James (1998), on the other hand, has defined it as "the learner's internalized description of his L2" (p. 6), or simply as "the learners' version of TL" (p. 3). His

claim is that in teaching, we need a description of this "learners' version of TL", and that teachers are routinely called upon to arrive at such a description when they decide whether the learners have produced something that is right or wrong. We tend to agree with James on this point for we have witnessed how the teachers who were involved in the process of evaluating students' writing in the survey have engaged themselves, without being asked to, in assessing the performance of the writers as a whole by commenting on both the negative and positive aspects in their writing; on what they did as well as what they did not, without focusing on one particular side such as the erroneous structures they produced. Moreover, some of the teachers (e.g. ST1, ST2, ST3, and NT4) were able to spot certain elements that were 'avoided' or 'reduced' in the texts (such as relative pronouns, cohesive ties, and the use of pro-forms instead of repeating words) as illustrated in the quotations below; whereas others were attentive to the 'achievement' strategies deployed by some students – whether this avoidance or achievement took place at the level of language, content, or organization.

> **ST1:** 'there is a lack of knowledge of the use of relative pronouns. They are generally missing specially in text 1'.
>
> **ST3:** 'The omission of relative pronouns'.
>
> **NT4:** 'Weak relative clauses in 2, 3, and 5'.
> 'Weak cohesive ties'.

Generally speaking, as we saw in the previous chapter, the evaluating criteria the subjects used, as well as their reception of errors varied in important respects – a matter to be discussed in the next section.

3.2. Error evaluation

Most studies of Error Analysis have been conducted while taking three main aspects into account: 1. 'identification' of errors in a collected sample of learner language; 2. 'description' of errors by categorizing them in accordance with TL's norms; and 3. 'explanation' or 'diagnosis' of errors by inferring their sources and accounting for

them. None of these procedures considers the response or role of the persons who are going to deal with errors; how they will comprehend, tolerate, or evaluate the learners' utterances that contain the errors. If error, as rightly claimed by James (1998), signals non-learning and the need for somebody (usually the teacher) to help the learner put things right, then this somebody should be at the center of error analysis studies' concerns.

Considerations of the effect that errors have on the persons addressed have usually been handled separately in studies of 'error evaluation'. But with the development of EA in the 1970s and 1980s, motivated by a desire to improve pedagogy, such studies have been acknowledged and presented as part of error analysis studies (Ellis, 1994). Corder (1974), for example, considers the 'evaluation' of errors as a major step to follow the three steps of EA research mentioned above.

3.2.1. Criteria for error gravity (EG)

3.2.1.1. Grammaticality and comprehensibility

Roughly speaking, studies of error evaluation have been established to examine what degree of seriousness (or 'gravity') certain errors represent in comparison to other errors and what criteria could be used to decide on that degree. This entails that the viewpoints of the judges who are called upon to evaluate learners' errors and to make such decisions are also examined and compared. The pedagogical purpose sought to be accomplished by studies of that type is to provide teachers with a set of identified criteria of error gravity (EG) through which they "can be guided in what errors to pay more attention to" (Ellis, 1994: 67). So, questions like whether a certain error should be treated as a serious one because it infringes a basic rule of grammar, or as a slight one because it does not impair the meaning of the sentence containing it have been a matter of great concern.

A straight choice of criteria for error gravity: 'conformity' or 'comprehensibility' was offered early to teachers by scholars such as Quirk (1968). Whereas the first criterion is based on the 'grammaticality' of a learner's utterances, the second has to do with the 'accessibility' of the content – as opposed to the form – of these utterances (James, 1998). Later on, with the shift in FL teaching methodology away from form-focus towards a focus on 'functional-communicative proficiency', the second criterion of comprehensibility has gained more weight in EG ratings (ibid). Consequently, the general conclusion reached by most research on error evaluation – in spite of the different criteria used by different judges in assessing error gravity – is that "teachers should attend most carefully to errors that interfere with communication (i.e. semantic and global grammatical errors)" (Ellis, 1994: 67). Semantic errors usually represent errors at the lexical level of language. What is meant by 'global errors' is discussed in the coming passages.

As part of the attempts to understand how and which errors affect the comprehensibility (or intelligibility) of whole sentences so that teachers could be provided with a hierarchy of errors that would potentially guide them when correcting students' mistakes, Burt and Kiparsky (1972) were the first who classified students' second language errors into the two categories of 'global' and 'local' errors. They used the first term to refer to errors that cause a listener or reader to misunderstand a message or consider it incomprehensible, and the second term to refer to errors that cause little or no difficulty in understanding the intended meaning of a sentence, and so do not significantly hinder communication of the message (cited in Hendrickson, 1978 and in Ferris, 2002). Burt (1975: 58, in Hendrickson, 1978) has further argued that this "global/local distinction is the most pervasive criterion for determining the communicative importance of errors". This perhaps was what made Hendrickson (1978) suggest the terms 'communicative errors' and 'non-communicative errors' to replace Burt and Kiparsky's 'global errors' and 'local errors' respectively. He also used the term 'linguistic errors' to refer to 'non-communicative/local errors' since although they might not affect meaning, they still make a form or structure in a sentence appear 'awkward'.

In general, in accordance with such attempts to identify a scale for evaluating errors, many studies have testified to the notion that lexical errors are more serious than grammatical errors for the results have shown that unintelligibility is most often closely related to the former type (Johansson, 1978; Burt, 1975; Tomiyana, 1980; Khalil, 1985 in Ellis, 1994: 63; Dagut, 1977; Hughes and Lascaratou, 1982; Gass, 1988 (all cited in Llach, 2005); Olsson, 1972 in Hendrickson, 1978; Green and Hecht, 1985). An example of these studies is Olsson's (1972) experiment which revealed that nearly 70 percent of 1,000 deviations in passive voice sentences produced by Swedish learners were understood (i.e. not misinterpreted) by native English speakers, and that generally, semantic errors blocked communication more than syntactic ones (cited in Hendrickson, 1978). The same result has been further supported in another study conducted by Green and Hecht (1985) to analyze the performance of EFL learners and that of comparable native speakers of English in addition to the evaluation of such performance by native and non-native speaker teachers. After asking markers to indicate where they failed to understand the writer's intention, Green and Hecht found that relatively few errors (only 108 or 10 % of 1045 errors) affected understanding and caused a breakdown of meaning, and that only 24% of them (i.e. of the 108 errors) were grammatical errors, whereas 76% of them were errors of vocabulary or style.

In accordance with such common realizations among researchers and teachers of the less significant effect grammatical errors have on intelligibility, one may come across linguists such as Page (1990), who asserts that "Grammatical accuracy is not always essential for accurate communication"; that is, as long as we can achieve communication, wrong grammar is not serious (cited in James, 1998). There are still however other viewpoints, like that of James (1998), who insists on "the intelligibility of learners' language in terms of its textual well-formedness" (p. 217). This seems to accord with Frodesen and Holten's (2003) claim – referred to in the introductory chapter – that for many scholars, the writing task cannot achieve its overall purpose successfully unless it conforms to "the conventions of English

syntax and usage" (p. 141). Perhaps we could agree with Page's point of view as far as local errors are concerned; yet, we still believe that effective communication needs grammatical accuracy. Attempting to decide which type of errors interferes most with communication remains an unresolved question, for studies on comprehensibility of errors have provided a variety of conflicting results (e.g., Chastain, 1980; Gynan, 1985) (Katayama, 2006: 1253). Ferris (2002) reports that Hendrickson (1978) includes some errors of the same categories as examples of both local and global errors, which illustrates Ferris' argument that the dichotomy of global and local errors, while intuitively appealing, can be hard to operationalize for research or pedagogical purposes. Illustrating this further, she refers to Ferris and Hedgcock's (1998: 205) note that it appears that "the globalness or seriousness of particular linguistic errors varies from writer to writer and possibly even within a single student text" (Ferris, 2002: 22).

These views can be compared with those of the teachers involved in our evaluation survey. In that survey, one essential aim was to investigate the 10 respondents' estimation of the degree of seriousness of the grammatical errors they noticed in the writing of the students. This took place through asking them whether they thought that errors of morphology and syntax had an effect on their evaluation of the 'overall quality of the texts', and whether such evaluation was influenced more or less by other error levels (e.g. lexical, orthographic, coherence and organization). They were also required to 'rank' these grammatical errors starting with what they conceived to be the most serious ones in terms of their effect on the texts' overall quality. They all answered that 'yes', grammatical errors did affect their evaluation, but their responses regarding the degree of this effect in comparison to that of other error types, though varied, reflected that half of them (5 teachers) perceived grammatical mistakes to be of less significance. This perception is manifested in the following extracts taken from the respondents' answers to question 4 of the survey (see Appendix A).

> **NT1**: 'To some extent, perhaps 25% - they are a part of the micro level of language. The macro side of things is as important as the micro'.

> **NT2**: 'Yes, grammatical errors do affect my judgment of the essays, although the most important consideration as far as I am concerned is the **communicative** effect of the essay'.

> **NT4**: 'Yes – but to a lesser extent than the latter category of error'. (He/she meant the categories mentioned in the question: lexical, semantic, spelling, coherence and organization deficiencies).

> **NT5**: 'Grammatical mistakes matter, of course, but what I am looking at here is the essay as a vehicle of **communication**'.

> **ST1**: 'Of course, the more grammatical mistakes I see the lower the mark I give would be. These different grammatical mistakes are less problematic than semantic and coherence deficiencies. Sometimes the sentence is grammatically correct but the **meaning** is vague and confusing'.

On the other hand, in their answers to the same question, two other teachers made it clear that they bore in mind all considerations equally, and that grammatical deficiencies were as significant for their evaluation as other deficiencies:

> **NT3**: 'I tried to take a balanced approach'.

> **ST3**: 'Yes. Frankly, I focused on both grammatical and meaning-affecting deficiencies'.

The remaining three teachers showed high concern with grammatical mistakes in particular as their answers were restricted to explaining why and in what way such mistakes were so serious to them, without making any reference to other considerations or error categories:

> **ST2**: 'Yes, they make the reading unpleasant. They distract the attention from the content. They spoil the overall cohesion'.

> **ST4**: 'Yes, you will notice that grammatical mistakes, particularly syntactic show me the level of the student's language competence and awareness of the second language – very simple and basic grammatical rules'.

> **ST5**: 'Yes, grammatical mistakes have influenced my evaluation. Grammatical errors and mistakes changed my view to the overall text and therefore affected the score. Grammar, for me, is 50% of the overall evaluation'.

These ten different responses, in addition to the results presented in table 2.3 (informants' judgment criteria) in the previous chapter, demonstrate a higher concern among most of the Syrian teachers with grammatical errors than that of the native speaker teachers. It demonstrates a general tendency among the latter group to give more weight to the communicative properties of the texts, or to stigmatize other deviations (e.g. lexical, spelling, coherence, organization) more than the grammatical ones. In particular, the students' choice and control of vocabulary has been a major concern to the native speaker teachers (see table 2.3). Much of the research into error evaluation has pointed out the relationship between miscommunication or unintelligibility and lexical errors in L2 learners' output. In addition to this, a common finding has been that due to such considerations of intelligibility, NS judges tend to judge lexical and global errors as more serious than grammatical errors because the former type is more likely to interfere with comprehension (Burt, 1975; Tomiyana, 1980; Green and Hecht 1985; Khalil, 1985; Sheorey, 1986 cited in Roberts and Cimasko, 2008; Salem, 2007). On the other hand, studies showed that non-native speaker teachers of FL tend to be more influenced by accuracy in their judgement of error gravity, and therefore, they evaluate grammatical errors, particularly morphological errors, more severely than NS judges (James, 1977; Hughes and Lascaratou, 1982; Davis, 1983; Sheorey, 1986 in Salem, 2007; Green and Hecht 1985). Researchers such as Hughes and Lascaratou (1982) and Green and Hecht (1985) have tried to explain this variation between NS and NNS judges in the criteria they use:

> Native speakers are more concerned about errors affecting meaning than those affecting accuracy… They are concerned about meaning because they approach learners' language in the way native speakers are conditioned to approach any sample of their own language: they expect it to tell them something. Non-native teachers of the language…are conditioned to approach learners' language in the way they have usually taught it: they focus mainly on form, and communication of meaning is secondary and often simulated. (Green and Hecht, 1985: 88-89)

With regard to non-native speaker Syrian teachers in particular, evidence of the emphasis they tend to give to correctness in form when marking students' composition papers was provided by researchers such as Dalbani (1992) and Mouzahem (1991). Findings in Dalbani (1992), for example, showed that the Syrian

teachers (or examiners) mainly corrected surface level features, and that it was mainly student's grammatical errors – and to a lesser extent lexical errors – that most often determined the mark given to a paper, indicating that "writing proficiency was equated with language proficiency". Hence, our survey results, showing that the Syrian teachers were more concerned with grammatical errors than with deviations at other semantic, rhetorical, and stylistic levels, confirm such findings. An extensive critical description of such a trend towards students' writing assessment followed by Syrian university teachers, revealing its inefficiency and arguing for the need to reform it, was presented by the above two researchers.

Overall, it seems that the common findings in literature in this area are supported by the results of our survey. We have noticed how the issue of meaning or content accessibility was raised through many reactions of the informants, particularly native speaker teachers, even though they were not asked to estimate the EG of grammatical errors in terms of such criteria (i.e. communicativity / comprehensibility). This interest in meaning was further illustrated when they had to rank grammatical errors (question 6) according to their seriousness in affecting the 'overall quality of texts' – rather than in affecting their 'intelligibility' of the parts containing these errors – and when they had to justify their way of ranking (question 7). Although not all the 10 teachers answered the latter question, we got responses like the following:

> **NT1:** 'The more they interfere with **meaning**, the more important they are'.
>
> **NT3:** '**meaning** – the reader needs to be able to take the **meaning** at first'.
>
> **ST2:** 'It is important, to form correct and **comprehensible** English sentences, to choose the right tense and establish a good connection between the words and their position in the sentence'.

3.2.1.2. Other criteria for error gravity

3.2.1.2.1. Frequency

In the literature, intelligibility is not the only criterion to determine EG. There are, as discussed in the previous section, judgements based on 'linguistic conformity' to the formal features of language, where 'grammaticality' is a principal concern (Quirk, 1968). Moreover, there are other measurements of error gravity such as the 'frequency' of error-making, which refers to "the number of times that a particular learner commits the error in question", and which helps indicate the degree of 'consistency' with which the learner commits this error, informing us by this of its gravity and what sort of attention it requires (James, 1998). That is to say, the more opportunities the learner creates for making an error, the higher the degree of confidence he/she exhibits to their evaluators in being consistently wrong, and hence, the more he/she needs to be informed to adjust their hypothesis about the language feature in question. James (1998) uses the term 'production frequency' to describe this form of error frequency, where the 'same' error is repeated over a certain part of the text, and to distinguish it from 'error density'; a term used to refer to the number of 'different' errors that occur per unit of text. He also points out that "high error density presents the listener-reader with a greater problem than production frequency" (p. 211), since one can accommodate the error if it is repeated once or twice and make adjustments in one's reading, but it is difficult to deal with a variety of errors, since each new error presents a new problem to which one cannot apply the same solution as the previous problem.

We saw in chapter two how some of the survey informants (NT2, NT3, ST3, ST4, and ST5) showed a great concern about the 'number' of grammatical errors, and how some of them repeatedly ascribed their scores to the large or small number of grammatical mistakes, even though none of them made any particular reference to, or distinction between, cases of 'production frequency' or/and 'error density'. Some extracts from the informants' answers were quoted in chapter two to exemplify this concern with the number of errors in the texts; these are:

ST3: 'It is impossible to ignore such a large amount of deadly mistakes.' (text 1)
'There is a considerable amount of serious mistakes.' (text 2)
'Numerous deadly mistakes.' (text 3)
'Few grammatical mistakes.' (text 5)
'Very few grammatical and lexical mistakes.' (text 6)

ST4: 'He or she is having many grammatical mistakes. Even if he is a first year student he will fail because of the many mistakes he has.' (text 1)
'Not too many grammatical mistakes.' (text 2)
'A lot of grammatical and spelling mistakes that cannot be tolerated.' (text 4)

The importance of examining frequent errors in general is suggested by research that attempts to identify scales of error evaluation or error gravity (Olsson, 1977; Gunterman, 1978; Zola, 1984, all cited in James, 1998; Lennon, 1991 cited in Ojeda, 2004), as well as in research that attempts to establish priorities of error correction (Holley and King, 1971; George, 1972; Dresdner, 1973; Bhatia, 1974; Allwright, 1975, all cited in Hendrickson, 1987), suggesting that high-frequency errors should be among the first errors that teachers should attend to or correct in students' oral and written communication. Indeed, it was the desire to investigate which errors (grammatical ones in particular) occurred most frequently in the writings of a particular group of Syrian academic students at various stages of English language learning that led us to conduct our previous study (Fakhra, 2004), where all grammatical deviations in their writing were analyzed. In that study, it was found that despite the different stages of study those students belonged to, and despite the variability in their production, they exhibited some similarities in terms of error types and error frequency – such as, the over-use of definite article, the underproduction of relative clauses, the misuse of prepositions, and tense sequencing errors. Consequently, our assessment of these particular forms of ungrammaticality as being 'serious' or of relatively high degree of EG was based on the criterion of 'frequency' and/or 'persistency' rather than that of 'intelligibility'/'comprehensibility'; and accordingly, they were made the focus of our considerations while also implying the sort of grammar instruction needed in a particular educational context – a matter that would be of great relevance to the present study as well.

Apart from being frequent, errors, by being 'persistent' along different stages of learning, reflect the fact that learners are not responding to corrective input throughout their course of study. However, one limitation in Fakhra's (2004) study, as well as in the survey presented in chapter 2, is that although they analyze the writings of students who belong to different stages of learning in an attempt to highlight any features of error persistency in these writings, they resemble 'cross-sectional' studies of Error Analysis, where the samples of learner language are collected "at a single point in time", more than 'longitudinal' studies of Error Analysis, where the samples are collected for the same learners "at successive points over a period of time" (Ellis, 1994: 50). Longitudinal studies of learners' errors have advantage over cross-sectional studies in that the former "can show in what areas of language errors persist over time" (p.55); and so, they can determine more accurately the different errors that learners produce at different stages of their development. Because most of the studies of EA are cross-sectional in nature, the theory has been criticized as limited and not very effective "in helping us understand how learners develop a knowledge of an L2 over time." (p. 68).

3.2.1.2.2. Irritation

Another criterion that could be used to decide on the gravity of error is 'irritation'; a term used to describe the emotional response experienced by the addressee upon encountering certain erroneous features in the learner's output. Identifying which types of error are the most irritating has been a major concern for some researchers (e.g. Hairston, 1981; Gynan, 1985; Beason, 2001, all cited in Roberts and Cimasko, 2008; Johansson, 1975; Derwing, Rossiter and Ehrensberger-Dow, 2002), on the top of whom is Johansson (1975), who observed that linguistic nonconformities (errors) can "affect the relationship between the speaker and the listener (e.g. make the listener tired or irritated or draw away his attention from the contents of the message" (cited in James, 1998: 222). However, his attempt to establish a hierarchy of error with respect to irritation has been challenged by the claim that "all errors are equally irritating", which is based on the findings of Albrechtsen, Henriksen, and

Færch's (1980) study of NS judges' ratings of the errors made by Danish learners of English in oral interviews. For these authors, it is the 'number' of errors (i.e. their 'frequency'), rather than their 'type', that would help us predict the degree of irritation on the part of judges (cited in Ellis, 1994).

It is worth mentioning here that in addition to the interest that the teachers in our survey showed in the grammaticality and/or communicative properties of the texts, some of them touched upon the criteria of irritation while explaining the effect of grammatical errors on their evaluation (question 4), or while justifying their ranking of the most serious grammatical errors (question 7):

> **ST1/Q7:** 'Switching between tenses is very confusing and affects the flow of the argument. It is most serious because it reflects the ignorance of the student of the distraction it causes. Missing correspondence between subject and verb is **irritating**'.

> **ST2/Q4:** 'Yes, they make the reading unpleasant. They distract the attention from the content. They spoil the overall cohesion'.

In the first quotation, the teacher was trying to explain why he/she ranked 'switching between tenses' and 'missing correspondence between subject and verb' as the most serious grammatical errors; it was because they were 'confusing' and 'irritating' for him/her. So, it was the 'type' of those errors which gave him/her that feeling while marking rather than their frequency in the texts. The other teacher in the second quotation did not specify whether it was the type or the number of grammatical errors that was responsible for his point of view; hence, it could be either or both of them. Although these two examples are not sufficient for us to draw a conclusion, they invite us to reconsider the claim made by Albrechtsen, Henriksen, and Færch (1980) that all errors are equally irritating and that it is the number of errors, rather than their type, that would help us predict the degree of irritation they might cause to judges. Actually, we tend not to agree with them in this claim. This tendency on our part is further inspired by the findings of an experiment designed by Derwing, Rossiter and Ehrensberger-Dow (2002) to investigate differences in the reactions of three distinct groups of listeners (NS experts, NS non-experts, and advanced

proficiency NNSs) to grammatical errors of three types: NNS, egregious NS, and high frequency NS errors, where they had to rate them for gravity and 'annoyance' in aural and written tasks. The results of this experiment revealed that all the three groups of raters – even though more remarkably in the case of the NS experts and non-experts than in that of the NNSs – considered both NNS and egregious NS errors to be more serious and more annoying than high frequency NS errors – hence refuting Albrechtsen *et al*'s argument.

None of our native speaker informants expressed their being distracted or irritated by the number or type of grammatical mistakes as the above two Syrian teachers did. This may again support the common finding that native speakers are less severe judges of errors, particularly grammatical errors, than non-native speakers (James, 1977; Hughes and Lascaratou, 1982; Davies, 1983; Green and Hecht, 1985; Sheorey, 1986; Schmitt, 1993; McCretton and Rider, 1993; Derwing *et al*, 2002). More robustly enhancing for this general claim is the finding of Derwing *et al* (2002) in their aforementioned experiment which showed that in terms of seriousness and annoyance, the NNS judges rated the grammar errors significantly higher than did the native speakers. As reported by these researchers themselves, this finding is "reminiscent of the findings of other annoyance studies, in which non-native speakers generally treated errors more harshly than native speakers did (Fayer& Krasinski, 1987; Gynan, 1985; Johansson, 1973; Piazza, 1980)" (p. 91). Native speakers tend to be more tolerant of errors because, as most results show, relatively few errors do affect 'meaning'; and usually, NSs seem to be more influenced by meaning in their judgments than by accuracy (Green and Hecht, 1985). There is some evidence in the literature however that they balance their attention to all features of rhetoric, ideas, and language – as far as written composition is concerned – more evenly than NNSs, who attend more extensively to language (Cumming, Kantor, and Powers, 2002)**.**

Talking about errors specifically, the position that errors should be perceived as serious or important only when they get in the way of effective communication of

meaning appeals to many (but not all) researchers and teachers (Halstead, 1975; Wall and Hull, 1989, both cited in Beason, 2001). Beason's (2001) comment on this position is that – aside from how 'nonacademic' readers may respond to errors – "perhaps this is the way it should be, with errors being relatively low-level concerns unless they impede understanding of a text" (34). Nevertheless, one of the main implications of his study of 'how business people react to errors' is that "students should understand the diverse ways errors can affect a particular reader in a given situation" (p. 59).

3.2.1.2.3. Native speakers' error stigmatism

Native speakers' measurements and expectations have been adopted as criteria for evaluating learners' language. Hendrickson (1987: 391) mentions that "a number of language educators suggest that errors that stigmatize the learner from the perspective of native speakers should be among the first corrected (Johansson, 1973; Richards, 1973; Sternglass, 1974; Corder, 1975[b]; Hanzeli, 1975; and Birckbichler, 1977)". This entails that the stigmatized errors are of relatively high EG. Hendrickson, in support of this point of view, asserts that

> Researchers need to investigate the degree of stigma that native speakers attach to lexically, grammatically, phonologically, and orthographically deviant forms and structures that nonnative learners produce frequently in their speech or writing. (Hendrickson, 1987: 392)

Thus, for this author, if we are to correct frequent, or even 'fossilized', errors, this should be based on their degree of incomprehensibility and unacceptability as judged by native speakers.

However, this error stigmatism on the part of native speakers might be significant in ESL contexts, but in an EFL context, such as the one this research is concerned with (i.e. the Syrian context of university students), it would not be sufficient, nor even logical, to base our estimations and correction of the language of NNS students on native speakers' assessment and considerations only, regardless of how non-native

speaker teachers would approach it, and how they would react to the different errors it contains. Certainly, since this study is carried out on Syrian students, and for the purpose of improving the writing of these students, the views of NNS teachers from the same context would be more significant in many respects. First, NNS teachers share the same L1 with their students, and so, they are able to detect and correct interference errors more than NS teachers. Second, NNS teachers' stigmatization of errors is significant because it reflects the expectations these teachers have of their students' output which should match what they have been taught, their stage of learning, and their learning objectives. These two reasons probably justify a 'strict' approach to grammar correction on the part of NNS teachers. In accordance with this, we think that if the criterion of native speakers' stigmatism is to be adopted in such an EFL context, it should go alongside the criteria that non-native speaker teachers give weight to while marking.

An interesting compromise of this so-called 'native-speakerism' (James, 1998); that is, the tendency to impose the norms of native speakers, is the one suggested by Page (1990), who insists that the right (or fair?) perspective to take on error is that of the 'sympathetic native speakers'. This is to testify to the usefulness of NSs, provided they are 'sympathetic'. A clarification of what Page means by this concept is provided by James (1998: 219):

> Sympathetic native speakers are people who are more interested in the message or its bearer than in its formulation, people who overlook imperfections of form. Notice, though, that we are not claiming that these sympathetic souls are not *noticing*, but that they are not reacting to what they have noticed. They notice but overlook.

This notion of 'sympathetic native speakers' calls us to reconsider the responses of some native speaker teachers in the evaluation survey. Overall, the native speaker teachers were not as elaborative in their comments and in the illustrating examples they provided as were the Syrian teachers, and therefore it seemed that many grammatical distortions in the students' essays went unnoticed by them. One might interpret or justify this obliviousness on the part of the NS teachers in different

ways, one of which is that they might be representative of that sympathetic type of native speaker judges, who might notice formal inaccuracies but choose to overlook them (or some of them) in preference for focusing on other aspects of writing while evaluating.

In general, what one may conclude from this discussion is that, whether it is the views of sympathetic native speakers or those of ordinary native speakers that are believed in, both cases assume a priority given to native speakers to judge and decide about learner language. An interesting recent counterargument of this is that of Seidlhofer (2004), in which she argues that because of the wide spread of English and its global role, accompanied by the linguistic consequences this spread has caused, language judgments should not be tied to and controlled by its native speakers as before.

In this respect, Seidlhofer, in a discussion of empirical research into the 'lingua franca' use of English, suggests that if advances in the pedagogy of English teaching are to be achieved, a description of salient features of English as a 'lingua franca' (ELF), alongside English as a native language (ENL), is needed since "the majority of the world's English users are now to be found in countries where it is a foreign language" (2004: 209). Thus, control over the norms of the language should not remain that of speakers for whom it is the first language:

> The teaching of English is going through a truly postmodern phase in which old forms and assumptions are being rejected while no new orthodoxy can be offered in their place. (Seidlhofer, 2004: 228)

As changes in teaching are expected to bring with them changes in assessment, it is also argued that:

> Typical 'errors' that most English teachers would consider in urgent need of correction and remediation, and that consequently often get allotted a great deal of time and effort in English lessons, appear to be generally unproblematic and no obstacle to communicative success. These include

- Dropping the third person present tense –s
- Confusing the relative pronouns *who* and *which*
- Omitting definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in ENL, and inserting them where they do not occur in ENL
- Failing to use correct forms in tag questions (e.g., *isn't it?* or *no?* instead of *shouldn't they?*)
- Inserting redundant prepositions, as in (*We have to study about*…)
- Overusing certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do, have, make, put, take*
- Replacing infinitive-constructions with *that*-clause, as in *I want that*
- Overdoing explicitness (e.g. *black color* rather than just *black*).

(Seidlhofer, 2004: 220)

Finally, according to this perspective, the debate over whether to approach learner language from a 'native speaker' or 'non-native speaker' point of view should be solved and improved:

> The language teaching profession has too long been obsessed with the native speaker teacher-nonnative speaker teacher dichotomy. The work on ELF described here offers the prospect of abolishing this counterproductive and divisive terminology which hinges on a negative particle, and which has had correspondingly negative effects on English language pedagogy. (Seidlhofer, 2004: 229)

3.3. Error analysis and error evaluation studies in Arabic contexts

3.3.1. Studies in Arabic non-Syrian contexts

Studies on error analysis and error evaluation have been carried out all over the world, and the Arab countries are no exception. Like most learners of English as a foreign or second language, Arab learners, even at later stages of learning, do not seem able to reach an English language competence level like, or near, that of native English speakers, and their written and verbal performances in English are never void of errors of various types; grammatical, lexical, stylistic, rhetorical, spelling, and/or punctuation (Salebi, 2004). Several researchers have attempted to explore and classify sources of errors they observed Arab learners making – with special attention given to L1 (Arabic language) interference – and many have investigated

their impact on native speakers of English (e.g. Emam, 1972; Scott & Tucker, 1974; EL-Hibir, 1976; Ibrahim, 1978; Tadros, 1978; Kharma, 1981; Mukattash, 1981; El-Sayed, 1982; Shaheen, 1984; Smith, 1984; Khalil, 1985; Abd-El-Jawad, 1986; Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989; El-Hibir & Al-Taha, 1992; Khuwaileh, 1995; Khuwaileh & Shoumali, 2000; Mohammed, 1992, 2000; AbiSamra, 2003; Salebi, 2004; Myhill & Amer, 2004). Upon examining major and minor findings of these researchers' studies, there is a considerable degree of consensus among them concerning the identification of the most serious errors made by Arab learners (e.g. subject-verb agreement and tense errors) – though they have used different measures of gravity, such as error frequency and error intelligibility. In what follows, a brief review is presented of some research findings that relate to Arab learners' grammar errors only (particularly in writing), as this class of error is the one we are specifically interested in in this work.

Arabic-speaking learners of English have been commonly reported to make errors which result from L1 interference, being misled by either the differences (Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzic, 1983) or partial similarities (Mohammed, 2000) between the two languages. Moreover, such interference errors (also termed 'negative transfer' or 'interlingual' errors) were found to account for the majority of Arab learners' errors in a number of error analysis studies. Kharma (1981), for example, studied article errors committed by Arab students and found that a great number of these errors were due to mother tongue interference. Also, El-Sayed (1982) examined syntactic errors made by Saudi students and, like Kharma, found that interference from the first language was the major cause of errors (both cited in Pongsiriwet, 2001). Furthermore, a number of researchers, such as Tadros (1978), Thompson-Panos and Thomas-Ruzic (1983), and Smith (1984) (all cited in Meygle, 1997), assigned Arab learners' frequent errors in the use of English relative clause/pronoun largely to the impact of the relativization system in Arabic, which is different from its counterpart in English in some respects. For instance, they all explained the error of 'pronoun retention' commonly produced by Arab students in terms of the discrepancy between the Arabic relative clause sentence where the

personal pronoun referring to the antecedent is retained (e.g. *'The knife he cut with **it** is sharp'*) and its English equivalent where this pronoun is dropped (or 'conflated' with the relative marker) (e.g. *'The knife he cut with is sharp'*). Smith (1984) in addition to this related the Arab learners' interchangeable use of 'who' and 'which' to the fact that in Arabic, no human/non-human distinction is carried by the relative pronouns.

The source of this prevailing problem of L1 interference errors lies in the Arab learners' tendency to rely on 'literal translation' from Arabic into English, ignoring the linguistic (and cultural) side in their translation. Khuwaileh (1995; cited in Khuwaileh & Shoumali, 2000: 182) found that when writing in English, "Arab students usually think and prepare their ideas in their native language and then translate them into English". No doubt, this strategy, as commented by Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000), results in negative transfer, and consequently in unsatisfactorily written samples. What Khuwaileh (1995) observed was that the writing errors of Arab learners resulted in serious confusion in the eyes of native speakers of English.

The heavy reliance of Arab learners on literal translation was also reported by Mohammed (1992; 2000), who focused on the English writing and errors of Sudanese students. As noted by him, literal translation is the interlingual strategy that is most frequently employed by the Sudanese learners of English due to the lack of the requisite knowledge of the target language, and at least 50% of their errors could be attributed to this strategy (Mohammed, 1992). Findings of his studies indicated that Arabic-speaking students transferred various features from both modern standard Arabic as well as non-standard Arabic depending on the distance between these varieties and English. He rightly argued that most foreign-language learners tend to fall back on the interlingual transfer strategy, "especially in acquisition-poor classroom situations where exposure to the language is confined to a few hours per week of formal instruction" – as is indeed the case in most Arab educational contexts. In such situations, students transfer from their L1, the most

readily available linguistic knowledge, to solve their learning and communication problems in English (Mohammed, 2000: 134). Mohammed's main pedagogical suggestion was to present learners with contrastive comparisons of Arabic and English to make them aware of the differences and similarities between the two languages and also help them recognize when to transfer from their native language and when not to – taking into consideration both varieties of Arabic (modern standard Arabic and non-standard Arabic) when presenting such contrastive comparisons and when analyzing and correcting students' errors (ibid).

As is the case with other EFL/ESL learners, not all Arab learners' errors are interlingual (i.e. L1 based); many of them are intralingual / developmental (i.e. L2 based). This latter type of error is, as simply defined by Salebi (2004: 214), "the result of the students' linguistic competence", and as more precisely defined by Richards (1971), the result of "the difficulty of the target language which is reflected in the general characteristics of rule learning such as wrong generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to realize the conditions under which rules apply" (cited in Salebi, 2004: 217-18). In error analyses carried out by Mohammed (1983, 1992), it was found that most of the intralingual errors made by Arab (specifically Sudanese) learners of English were due to overgeneralization (cited in Mohammed, 2000). Salebi (2004) studied errors in the exam writing of Saudi fourth level university students, classifying them into two comprehensive types, developmental and interference, according to their causes and sources. In contrast to the findings of the studies reviewed in the previous passages, the results of his study revealed that the percentage of developmental errors (76.8%) was significantly higher than that of interference errors (23.2%). Because the student participants in his study were, as he described them, "somewhat advanced", he perceived this big difference between the two error types as supporting "Swain's (1971) and Dulay and Burt's (1972) conclusion which states that as second or foreign language learners progress in their learning of the target language, their reliance on their native language decreases" (p. 215-16).

As far as the frequency of grammar errors in Salebi's study is concerned, the 'omission of the indefinite article' error constituted the majority of interference errors (81.25%), while 'subject-verb agreement' errors were the most frequent of all developmental errors (44.03%), followed by 'wrong tense' errors (27.05%). Other frequent developmental grammar errors detected – though of less occurrence frequency – were 'omission of relative pronouns' errors (07.45%). By examining the perceptions of the students involved in the study of their own errors, and on looking into their performance in other texts they wrote under conditions other than test conditions, such as homework texts, Salebi reached the conclusion that the unexpected high frequency of subject-verb agreement errors in the writing of such advanced students was possibly due to factors other than the students' linguistic competence, especially as the same students did not produce the same errors in their other written output. These factors were test anxiety and worrying about the test results, students' concentration on content rather than form, and the limited time allotted to the test which prevented them from going over their performance to correct whatever errors or mistakes they made.

On surveying other researchers' findings with regard to frequent grammar errors in the writing of Arab students, a considerable degree of similarity among them can be observed. In other words, the same grammar features were reported by different analysts to be repeatedly misused by Arab students. For example, Myhill and Amer (2004), examining the characteristics of the writing of Egyptian students from the English Department in a University Faculty of Education, detected frequent errors in subject-verb agreement, tense, number, articles, pronouns, prepositions, and verb deletion. Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000) examined the writing weaknesses of Jordanian students in both Arabic and English, and noticed that the lack of cohesion and coherence, tense errors, and disagreement between verbs and subjects were the most obvious and serious linguistic weaknesses in the Arabic and English compositions alike. Such association between L1 and L2 performance made the researchers conclude that "deficiencies in writing English are not solely the responsibility of the English teachers. The problem already exists in L1" (p. 181).

Mohammed (2000), who focused on interlingual grammar and vocabulary errors in Sudanese university students' free compositions, discovered that "most of the grammar errors were made in the area of prepositions (64%). The other grammar areas where errors were made included tense (16%), adverbs (12%), pronouns (4%), and word order (4%)" (p. 132).

Referring to earlier studies, first, Scott and Tucker (1974), who studied fourteen grammar error types Arabic-speaking students made in their speech and writing, found that verbs, prepositions, and articles were major sources of errors. In general, errors were explained in terms of performance mistakes, mother-tongue interference, or false intralanguage analogy. Second, Kharma (1981), who focused on errors in the use of English definite and indefinite articles, confirmed that the use of articles was a serious source of difficulty to Arab students, with indefinite articles 'a/an' being the source of the greatest number of errors, followed by no article and definite article 'the' respectively. Causes of errors provided by Kharma were first language interference (primarily), wrong learning strategies, overgeneralization, and inadequate teaching. Third, El-Sayed (1982), who investigated the frequent syntactic errors in Saudi students' compositions, categorized errors into verbs and verbals, articles, pronouns, nouns, adjectives, and prepositions, and found that verbs and verbals were the major source of errors. His findings supported the claim that mother tongue interference was the prime cause of student errors (the three studies are cited in Pongsiriwet, 2001).

3.3.2. Studies in the Syrian context

All the studies reviewed in the above section (3.3.1) have particular significance to the current research since they are all conducted in Arabic-speaking contexts, and so our findings can be compared and contrasted with theirs much more relevantly and adequately than with those of research targeting other EFL/ESL contexts. Yet, still of larger relevance and significance to this research are studies involving Syrian EFL learners in particular. Thus, we briefly refer in this section to certain findings in

relation to grammar errors from two studies carried out in the Syrian context (specifically, in the English Language and Literature Department at Syrian universities) by Mouzahem (1991) and Meygle (1997), in addition to the earlier study conducted by us in the same context (Fakhra, 2004).

In the first study, Mouzahem (1991), the researcher's analysis of grammar errors in the writing of Syrian university students indicated that, at the level of 'sentence types', students showed failure to deal with negation and questions, and that, at the level of 'parts of the sentence', they made verb, noun, article, and preposition errors. Specifically, verb errors traced were of five categories: 'verbless sentences', 'subject-verb agreement', 'finite and non-finite forms of the verb', 'verbs and the past marker (ed)', and 'the copula'; while noun errors detected fell within three categories: 'subject missing', 'plural', and 'relative pronouns' – as all identified by the researcher. In her explanation of these errors, Mouzahem suggested that they resulted not only from mother tongue interference; other factors like mixing up functional items in L2, overgeneralizing or misapplying L2 rules, and unfamiliarity with L2 rules were also the cause of repeated errors.

In the second study, by Meygle (1997), native speaker teachers of English evaluated aspects of development in the writing of Syrian students at different stages of their university learning (year one & year four). On the basis of the teachers' comments, Meygle classified 'sentence structure' and 'the use of cohesive devices' among the most frequent aspects of writing improved in the students' essays, but 'tense confusion' and 'the use of articles' among the aspects that had not improved. This indicates that students' problems in tense and article use are persistent, and consequently, serious ones. Recalling the responses of the teachers who took part in our survey (chapter two) for comparison, tense errors were identified and ranked by most of them as the top most serious grammar errors in terms of affecting students' overall text quality, followed by subject-verb agreement, relative clause/pronoun, and article errors respectively (see section 2.2.2.2.3 and table 2.5).

The last study is Fakhra (2004), which as reported in chapter two (section 2.2.1) set out to analyze grammar (morphological & syntactic) errors in essays written by four (first and third year) Syrian university students. On the basis of error frequency and error persistency criteria, the researcher identified a set of grammar features as most problematic for students. These features were modals, articles, prepositions, relative clauses, tense sequencing, subject-verb agreement, cohesion, and cohesive devices. Errors were classified into 'L1 transfer' and 'non-transfer' errors, and the analysis results (similarly to the ones in Salebi's study) showed that the percentage of the second error type (70.7%) was significantly higher than that of the first one (29.2%).

3.4. Conclusion and implications for the main research

All that has been discussed so far – whether it relates to the two exploratory studies introduced in chapter two, or to research reviewed in this chapter on error analysis and evaluation, suggests that when dealing with students' errors in the use of specific grammar features, two important factors should be simultaneously considered: first, how these errors compare with their corresponding incidences of non-errors, avoidance, underproduction, overgeneralization, etc.; second, what effect these errors have on the comprehensibility and accessibility of the content of sentences containing them. Whereas the first consideration asserts the importance of appreciating and examining the performance (or 'interlanguage') of students as a whole – as far as the specific grammar features are concerned, the second consideration represents an attempt to cope with the greater value most raters of writing tend to ascribe to meaning rather than form.

By reaching such understanding and appreciation, we would suggest that 'correctness' is not, and should not be, the only measure of writing 'quality' or writing 'maturity'. Rather, there are other linguistic (e.g. sentence structure and mechanics) and rhetorical (e.g. content, organization, and lexical choice) factors that raters should attend to when they make holistic judgments about students' essays. Yet, judges, as noted before, do not all give the same weight to the same criteria.

However, when it comes to composition classes, teachers, although they should pay close attention to their students' most prominent problems in writing, are supposed to focus on all features of writing involved in evaluating a paper:

> Skillful teachers, aware of the implications of the linguistic background of their students, know that they have to adopt a balanced approach; they know that they must pay attention to all aspects of writing, varying the emphasis in accordance with the students' needs. Maturity of expression involves much more than grammatical correctness (Tyndall, 1991: 201).

This is not to deny that grammatical correctness is still, as Tyndall himself asserts, a prerequisite to mature writing.

In conclusion, we could perhaps summarize the issue which we are interested in raising in this research as follows: which grammatical features in the writing of EFL learners should we as teachers notice and build good awareness of so that we manage to offer a useful selective kind of grammar instruction in composition classes, which would, hopefully, meet the learners' needs and interests and improve their language ability? We have already been introduced to the sorts of grammatical deficiencies characterizing the writing of Arab students in general and Syrian university students in the English Language and Literature Department in particular. We have also gained some knowledge of how such deficiencies could be perceived and how the degree of their gravity could be estimated through engaging a group of teachers, with different experiences and educational backgrounds, in the process of evaluating the writings of a small sample group of Syrian students from the same above mentioned department (chapter 2 and section 3.2 in this chapter).

In the current research, the intention is to build on the knowledge gained regarding the grammatical errors of Arab learners of English, in particular of Syrian university learners, as well as on responses to these errors, and to conduct another exploratory investigation into grammatical deficiencies that permeate the written products of another, larger, sample of Syrian students who belong to the same academic context (i.e. The English Language and Literature Department) where we are interested in

improving the quality and method of grammar teaching. An investigation like this – the method and results of which are presented in chapter six – is actually aimed as a further step for paving the way into the main study of this work, the data of which is this larger sample of Syrian students' written products. More precisely, this investigation helps to limit the main study focus to only specific patterns in grammar which prove to be among the most frequently problematic patterns for students, and which at the same time are conceived to be of special importance to text quality and coherence, bearing in mind the weight 'content accessibility' is often given over other criteria. The specific patterns that will be under focus in the main study are 'relative clauses' and 'conjunctive adjuncts'; and it is the students' overall performance on these features that is examined including their correctness. In chapter six, we will see in detail on what basis these patterns have been selected.

After the specified grammar patterns have been analyzed in the Syrian data (chapters 7 & 8); the stage that constitutes the heart of this research, a further analysis is carried out on written work produced by native speaker students, to provide us with a knowledge of how the grammatical patterns under scrutiny are employed by them, and how often, so that we can then compare this – quantitatively mainly – with that of the Syrian non-native speaker students (chapter 9). Such comparison is aspired to convey some suggestions and implications for grammar teaching in our EFL academic context.

In the following two chapters, the second part of the literature review is presented, focusing the discussion on perspectives and research in relation to relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts, with each being dealt with in a separate chapter starting with relative clauses in chapter 4.

Chapter Four: On Acquiring Relative Clauses

4.1. Relative clauses

The relative clause is one of the most familiar types of subordinate clause in English, and primarily serves, like conjunctive adjuncts and other cohesive ties, to provide "textual linkage and cohesion" (Swales, 1981; cited in Master, 2002: 206). 'Relativization' is a technique for combining sentences or ideas where one sentence is used to modify or further describe another. Suh (2003: 132) explains that:

> Since relativization occurs when a noun phrase (NP) in a main clause is modified by a subordinate clause (i.e. relative clause), it is a combined structure formed by two independent sentences, and requires language users to process two differing kinds of information simultaneously in production and comprehension.

Such complexity in processing English sentences containing relative clauses has been reasonably expected to cause learners much difficulty learning these L2 constructions and accurately using them for communication (Suh, 2003). Because of this, and due to the realization of their frequency and usefulness in the everyday use of language, relative clauses have become of particular interest for many researchers who recognized the various implications these structures hold for language acquisition and teaching research. As expressed by Ito and Yamashita (2003: 247) "research on relative clauses has been one of the most active areas in language acquisition studies. Various aspects of relative clauses have been classified in order to clarify what features make relative clauses more difficult and to study the relation between the type of relative clause and its difficulty".

4.2. Definitions, classifications, and issues in the acquisition of relative clauses

First, in terms of definition and classification, linguists like Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999: 195), in their Grammar of Spoken and Written English, have described a relative clause (also called 'adjectival clause' in some grammars) as being "characteristically a postmodifier in a noun phrase. It is introduced by a wh-word, which has a grammatical role in the relative clause in addition to its linking function". This wh-word is the relative pronoun, which these authors call the 'relativizer', and its function is to "point back to the head of the noun phrase, which is generally referred to as the **antecedent**". To illustrate these elements in the structure of the relative clause, Biber *et al* provide these two examples:

1 We have 30 men **who are working from 6am to 11 pm** and most of the extra payments we would expect to receive may go on overtime.

2 He warned the public not to approach the men, **who are armed and dangerous.**

(Biber *et al*, 1999: 195)

4.2.1. Restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses

Through the example sentences above, we are also introduced to the two major types of relative clause; namely, 'restrictive' (1) and 'non-restrictive' (2). The first type is "used to establish the reference of the antecedent", while the second "gives additional information which is not required for identification" (ibid). In writing, and as the examples above demonstrate, non-restrictive relative clauses are usually separated from the head noun by a comma, while no punctuation is used with restrictive relative clauses (Biber *et al*, 1999: 602).

The implication of the explanation presented by Biber *et al* accords with what most other explanations and definitions of the function and form of restrictive and non-

restrictive relative clauses imply, a very early one of which is Jesperson's (1927: 82), in which he distinguished between:

(A) restrictive or defining clauses, which give a necessary determination to the antecedent, and thereby make it more precise, and
(B) nonrestrictive clauses, which might be discarded without serious injury to the precise understanding of the sentence as a whole.

(Cited in Bache and Jakobsen, 1980: 246)

Lyons (1977: 761) also tends to have a similar understanding as far as restrictive clauses are concerned. For him, these clauses "are used, characteristically, to provide descriptive information which is intended to enable the addressee to identify the referent of the expression within which they are embedded" (cited in Bache and Jakobsen, 1980: 248).

Bache and Jakobsen (1980) see such distinctions between the two types as problematic for they tend to heavily rely on the concept of 'identification', implying that restrictive relative clauses 'define' whereas nonrestrictive relative clauses do not. The two linguists have discovered that distinctions like these "are not very helpful when applied to a wide range of examples" (p. 248). In sentences like the ones given below, they assert that the nonrestrictive relative clause "in fact defines", and is used "not redundantly, as is sometimes claimed, but exactly to secure a 'common ground' between the interlocutors".

1 Dogs, *which are carnivorous*, are expensive to feed.

2 She was careful not to step on vipers, *which are poisonous*.

(ibid)

In the same way, Bache and Jakobsen find that in sentences like 3 below, restrictive relative clauses identify as little as the corresponding nonrestrictive relative clauses (e.g. sentence 4) do. Hence, in such cases, the restrictive relative clause "may be deleted with no harm done to our understanding of the sentence than if the corresponding nonrestrictive clause had been deleted" (p. 247).

3 Under the willed roughness of his manner lay a love of the east *which seemed sometimes to string him tighter than he could stand, so that there were months when he would disappear from sight altogether, and like a sulky elephant go off on his private paths until he was once more fit to live with.*

4 Under the willed roughness of his manner lay a love of the east, *which seemed sometimes to string him tighter than he could stand, so that …*

(Bache and Jakobsen, 1980: 247)

In short, Bache and Jakobsen are apparently against the common distinction made between the two types of relative clauses by authors such as Biber *et al* (1999), Jespersen (1927), and Lyons (1977), in addition to many others (see for example Halliday, 1994: 188, 227, 243). Bache and Jakobsen conversely, and rightly, tend to believe that it is the 'communicative function' of the relative clause which gives us the 'intuition' whether to classify it as restrictive or non-restrictive regardless of its 'formal characteristics'. They agree that "restrictive relative clauses are often indispensable", but only "if the appropriateness, or even intelligibility, of a construction is to be preserved" (p. 246); otherwise, they could be deleted with no harm to our understanding of the sentence. On the other hand, they assert that "certain types of nonrestrictive relative clauses provide what we consider essential information without which it is hardly possible to preserve the precise understanding of the sentence" (p. 247).

Overall, the difficulty of learning and comprehending relative clauses lies not only in the difficulty or indefiniteness in distinguishing between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses. There are indeed other factors that affect the learners' comprehension and performance of these grammatical structures. To illustrate, there are other criteria – other than the communicative or formal criteria employed in the restrictive/non-restrictive classification of relative clauses – such as the location of the head NP (or the grammatical function of the head noun in the matrix clause) and the original position of the relativized noun (or the grammatical function of the relative pronoun), the consideration of which has resulted in different classifications for sentences containing relative clauses, as well as in different predictions regarding the difficulty order of their types – as we will see next.

4.2.2. Relative clause typology and difficulty according to the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy Hypothesis (NPAH)

Eckman, Bell and Nelson (1988: 6) have noted that the location of the head NP is important "since head position has been shown to be a factor in the degree of difficulty associated with relative clauses in both first language acquisition (Sheldon 1974) and in second language acquisition (Gass and Ard 1980)". Nevertheless, linguists like Keenan and Comrie (1977; 1979), in their hypothesis of the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy (NPAH), which has figured in the SLA literature, have focused on the positions of the relativized noun phrase (NP) – which in English include subject, direct object, indirect object, object of preposition, genitive, and object of comparison. The following examples illustrate these positions:

Subject	: the policeman [*who* arrested John]
Direct object	: the poem [*which* the students had read]
Indirect object	: the colleague [*who* I lent the money to]
Object of preposition	: the bus [*which* we were waiting for]
Genitive/possessor	: the woman [*whose* son was killed]
Object of comparison	: the girl [*who* Susan is taller than]

(Examples are taken from Aarts and Schils, 1995)

This has become one of the typical ways of classifying relative clauses; that is, by NP positions relativized (Suh, 2003). According to Keenan and Comrie's hypothesis, these relativizable NPs (or these grammatical functions) can be put on a hierarchy which defines the ease with which they can be relativized. The Accessibility Hierarchy is thus formulated as follows, from most accessible for relativization to least accessible (> means more accessible or easier to relativize than):

Subject > direct object > indirect object > object of a preposition > possessor > object of comparison

It can be noticed that NPs in 'adverbial' position are not included in Keenan and Comrie's list (e.g. *there are certain cases* ***where students are advised to ask for help****,* and *there are many occasions* ***when customs and traditions should be respected***); nevertheless, they are included in other grammarians' categorizations of RC, such as Biber *et al* (1999) and Halliday (1994).

Izumi (2003) refers to the significance of NPAH as one of the hypotheses proposed "to account for the relative ease and difficulty of processing and acquiring different types of RC (relative clause) sentences" (p. 286). Izumi further explains that

> NPAH reflects the relative psychological ease of relativization. That is, relativization at positions lower on the hierarchy is claimed to be more difficult to process than that at positions higher on the hierarchy. Thus, the NPAH is said to reflect the natural order of acquisition as well. (P. 288)

In respect to this, it has been widely suggested that the teaching or introducing of relative clause types that follows such natural order or 'developmental sequences' of acquisition would be a great help to learners of English (Pienemann, 1984, 1989; Doughty, 1991; Cook, 1993; Hamilton, 1994; Nakamori, 2002 (all cited in Nakamori, 2002: 32-33)). For this reason, the establishment of more longitudinal studies (rather than being restricted to the overwhelming cross-sectional ones in this area) is encouraged so that more information on the developmental aspects of relative clauses becomes available (Suh, 2003). As put by Suh:

> … future research should be undertaken longitudinally to have a better understanding of students' grammatical competence in the learning and use of relative clauses. The findings of longitudinal studies would be valuable and helpful in that they can contribute to the promotion of grammatical competence of those students who are at lower proficiency level, or have difficulty learning relative clauses by providing useful information on how learners of higher proficiency progress stage by stage, and on what they usually do at a given stage of learning of a specific type of relative clause. (2003: 146)

In contrast to this point of view of introducing relative clause types to students in the developmental sequence predicted by the NPAH (see Izumi, 2007), another group of

researchers argue that the learners' acquisition of relatively more difficult (or 'more marked') structures according to the hierarchy will result in what is called 'maximal generalization of learning' in the direction of those structures which are relatively less difficult (or 'less marked') (Eckman *et al*, 1988; Ammar & Lightbown, 2005), "implying that there is no need to go from easier to more difficult and that skipping stages is possible" (Izumi, 2007: 357) (For a detailed discussion on such contradictory claims, see Izumi, 2007). In other words, it is assumed that learners know not only (or more than) what they are taught, and hence, if they received instruction on the object of preposition relativization for example, they would learn to relativize not only this function, but they would also generalize this learning to the easier functions like subject, direct object, and indirect object – without specific instruction on them.

An important study conducted to examine such an assumption is that of Gass (1982), the results from which emphasize that generalization of learning proceeds from more marked structures to less marked structures. She found that the group which was instructed on relative clauses where only the object of preposition was relativized generalized this instruction more than did the group which was taught relative clauses using a standard text (cited in Eckman *et al*, 1988: 5). Also, Gass (1981) found that subjects who received instruction pertaining to object of a preposition type of relative clauses outperformed subjects who received instruction on subject relative clauses, as measured by percent improvement on post- over pretests of grammaticality judgment in most relative clauses categories (in Doughty, 1991: 439).

In an attempt to replicate and extend Gass's (1982) research, Eckman *et al* (1988) conducted a study in which they were looking at whether students across language backgrounds were able to generalize language learning from one structure to another, and further, whether such generalization followed a particular pattern (p. 5). These researchers presupposed that the position of relativization which, if learned, will result in maximal generalization of learning to all other positions is the object of

comparison (or 'object of comparative particle') (p. 4) (e.g. *the girl who Susan is taller than*). In general, the hypothesis underlying Gass's study was supported by the results of their study as the students who were instructed on objects of preposition not only learned to relativize objects of a preposition, in contrast to the other instructional groups, but they also generalized this learning to object structures to a greater extent than did students trained on subjects, and generalized this learning to subject structures more than those students trained on direct objects (p. 12). Consequently, they concluded that if one were forced to choose from these structures only one relative clause structure to teach, that structure should be relativized objects of a preposition (p. 11-12).

In light of the above two mentioned studies by Gass (1982) and Eckman *et al* (1988), in addition to another two later studies in this domain carried out by Doughty (1991) and Hamilton (1994), who all tested the generalization that was hypothesized to result from teaching more marked RC types and who all proved its validity, Ammar and Lightbown (2005) conducted a study targeting Arab Tunisian secondary school students of English with the same hypothesis (among other hypotheses) triggering it. They used Hamilton's (1994) term for this hypothesis, the 'Implicational Generalization Hypothesis' (IGH), meaning that the knowledge of more marked forms implies the knowledge of less marked ones. In their study, the three experimental groups who were taught RC types with different levels of markedness not only showed on posttest measures better command of relativization in general than a control group, but also generalized their knowledge of relative clauses to RC types that were implicated by the ones they were taught, supporting by this the IGH. For example, the majority of students who were instructed on direct object (DO) RC were able to generalize to the implicated and untaught subject (SU) RC. On the other hand, some of those who were instructed on object of preposition (OPRE) RC were able to generalize to all three implicated (less marked) RC types (subject, direct object, and indirect object), and most of them generalized the relativization knowledge acquired from this instruction on OPRE to one or two implicated positions of the NPAH. However, the findings showed that students also

generalized to some RC types that were 'more' marked and unimplicated by the instructed relative clause level, questioning by this the unidirectionality of the IGH. For instance, some students who were taught the direct object RC generalized to all the unimplicated more marked relative clause types except for the genitive type (GEN), whereas nearly all students from the three experimental groups generalized to the most marked RC type, i.e., object of comparison (OCOMP). Interestingly, Ammar and Lightbown suggested that the participants' mother tongue (Arabic) might have provided some help to understand the relativization system in English and to apply it to all the remaining relativizations regardless of their nature, i.e., marked or unmarked. Specifically, as argued by them, it was the similarity between the Arabic and English relativization systems (except for the pronoun retention aspect) that might have reinforced the participants' hypotheses about English relative clauses (Ammar & Lightbown, 2005: 189-190).

In the present study, one basic objective is to focus on the use of types of relative clause in the writing of university Arabic-speaking students of English at different stages of study (third year, fourth year, and Diploma), to help us increase our understanding of their grammatical competence in the learning and use of relative clauses. It is also assumed that comparing the performance of the three groups of students in their different years of study with each other would help to determine whether their supposedly different proficiency levels would reflect differences in the degrees of knowledge of relative clauses (Izumi, 2000, 2002, in Izumi, 2003: 296). However, to gain a fuller insight into the developmental aspects of relative clauses, we would need to undertake a 'longitudinal study', as recommended and emphasized by authors such as Nakamori (2002) and Suh (2003) (see above).

In addition, the study hopes to address the difficulties the students have in using relative clauses. This could be done partly through suggesting: either to teach relative clause types according to the order presented in the Accessibility Hierarchy, which is claimed to reflect the natural order of acquisition, as we have seen above, or to introduce those types according to the 'maximal generalization of learning'

hypothesis (or IGH) supported by researchers such as Gass (1981; 1982), Eckman *et al* (1988), and Ammar and Lightbown (2005); i.e. to teach relative clause structures that are classified in the AH as most marked or most difficult. In any case, to be useful instruction should be directed to students at early stages of language learning (e.g. during school). In fact, the student participants selected for most studies in this field (particularly those examining the IGH) had very little knowledge of relativization (low-intermediate and/or intermediate ESL/EFL students) (e.g. Gass, 1982; Eckman *et al*, 1988; Hamilton, 1994; Ammar & Lightbown, 2005).

It is worth mentioning that, as noticed by Suh (2003: 135), there is no consensus among researchers "as to the difficulty ordering among differing types of relative clause and as to the reason why a certain type of relative clause is more difficult to learn or process than others". For instance, Gass (1980), in her cross-sectional study on relative clause acquisition among second language learners, found that her subjects performed significantly higher on genitives than the NPAH originally predicted (cited in Ito and Yamashita, 2003: 248). Schumann (1980), on the other hand, in a longitudinal study over ten months, showed that irrespective of L1 backgrounds, his subjects preferred to use relative clauses on object position and used them more frequently and more accurately than those on subject, which also was contrary to what the AH predicted (cited in Suh, 2003: 133).

Despite this, a lot of researchers involved in language acquisition research have supported the validity of the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy, not only as a 'difficulty predictor' of relative clauses, but also as a 'frequency predictor' of use of relative clauses in written materials. That is, it is claimed that the NPAH can also predict the frequency of appearance of each relative clause type in written materials (Ito and Yamashita, 2003). It has actually been noted that even before establishing the NPAH, "Keenan (1975) argued that the order of Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy almost directly reflected the frequency order in use from simple written sources (such as Orwell's Animal Farm) to complex sources (such as Woolf's To the Lighthouse)" (Ito and Yamashita, 2003: 248). In support of this claim, Suh (2003:

132) asserts that as far as the six positions allowed to be relativized in English are concerned, relativizations on both subject and object (including indirect object and object of preposition) positions are "more common and more frequent" than those on the positions of genitive and object of comparison "due to their high occurrence in everyday communication (Cook, 1993; Keenan & Comrie, 1977)".

On the other hand, the AH – being a universal approach – claims that "relativization on subject is most common among languages, and thus is easiest to learn while relativization on object of comparison is most unusual, and accordingly, most difficult to acquire" (Suh, 2003: 133). As argued by Suh, it is insufficient to consider the "learner-internal factors (e.g. psychological processing)" for "gaining a comprehensive, integrated understanding of learners' interlanguage behaviour involving relativization"; we also need to consider the "learner-external factors", such as, learners' L1, and universal learning principles of relativization (like the ones represented by the AH) (p. 147).

4.2.2.1. Contrastive Analysis and relative clause studies in Arabic contexts

Similarities and/or differences between relative clause structures in English and their parallel in other languages are likely to exist. According to the strong form of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), what is different is difficult, and errors produced by L2 learners can be attributed to interference from their native language (Lado, 1957: 2; cited in Aarts and Schils, 1995: 52). These underlying assumptions of the CAH have been widely tested and approved (Ellis, 1994). Even recently, some researchers, such as Nakamori (2002), seem to be affected by such assumptions when they suggest that "the learners' first languages should be compared thoroughly with English in parallel, in order to clarify the similarities and differences in the structures of these languages" (Nakamori, 2002: 32). As far as relativization in English and Arabic is concerned, several researchers (Keenan and Comrie, 1977, 1979; Ioup and Kruse, 1977; Schachter, 1974; Tadros, 1987; and Thompson-Panos and Thomas-Ruzic, 1983) have investigated the differences and similarities between

the two languages with respect to relative clause formation, specifically relative marker appearance, relative marker morphology, pronoun retention, and case marking (Ammar & Lightbown, 2005: 176). Ammar and Lightbown (ibid) have concluded on the basis of such contrastive studies that "in general Arabic speakers encounter problems mainly with pronoun retention when learning English relative clauses". In chapter three (section 3.3), we saw that this common problem in Arab learners' use of English RCs is attributed by many error analysts to the discrepancy between Arabic, which retains the personal pronoun referring to the antecedent, and English, which does not. Another less commonly reported problem is the Arab learners' interchangeable use of 'who' and 'which', which is hypothesized to be the result of another discrepancy between the two languages; the relative pronoun carries the 'human/non-human distinction' in English but not in Arabic (Smith, 1984; cited in Myegle, 1997).

Apart from these two differences, both Arabic and English "respect nearly the same rules when it comes to RC formation", as pointed out by Ammar and Lightbown (2005: 189-190), who as we have seen in an earlier passage attributed students' improved understanding and application of English RCs in part to the similarity between the relativization systems in the two languages, and thus, to the positive impact of students' mother tongue (Arabic) on them. To illustrate how different RCs are formed in Arabic and how they compare with their equivalent RCs in English, Arabic examples of the six RC types suggested by the NPAH, in addition to the seventh type of 'Adverb' RC, are presented below. These Arabic examples are translations of the English relative clauses given at the beginning of section 4.2.2 to exemplify types of RC in the NPAH.

1. **Subject**
   rajulu al-shurta allathi e'taqala John.
   man the-police who arrested-he John.
   the policeman who arrested John.

2. **Direct object**
   al-qasida allati qara'aha al-tulab.

the-poem which read-they-it the-students.
the poem which the students had read.

3 Indirect object
al- zamil allathi dayantuhu al-nuqood.
the-colleague who lent-I-him the-money.
the colleague who I lent the money to.

4 Object of preposition
al-bas allathi kunna nantazeruhu.
the-bus which were-we we-wait-it.
the bus which we were waiting for.

5 Genitive/possessor
al-sayeda allati bnaha qutel.
the-woman who son-her was-killed-he.
The woman whose son was killed.

6 Object of comparison
al-fatatu allati Susan atwal menha.
the-girl who Susan taller than-her.
the girl who Susan is taller than.

7 Adverb
al-madina allati woledtu fiha.
the-town which was-born-I in.
the town where/in which I was born.

Fakhra (2004) found that these grammatical structures tended to be ignored or underused by Arab (Syrian) students; besides, no RC errors were detected except for those of 'relative pronoun omission'. This last error type was attributed to the students' deficient knowledge of the correct implementation of RC structures and of the role of relative pronouns in them; i.e. it was considered a non-transfer, developmental, or intralingual error[1]. It was further highlighted as an inaccuracy that could have been avoided had the students recognized the facilitative effect of their native language in this respect (i.e. the employment of relative pronoun) and translated the intended RC in English from its equivalent in Arabic, which normally employs relative pronouns ('positive transfer'). The defect of such an explanation

[1] Salebi (2004) too classifies the omission of relative pronoun by Arab learners as a developmental error (see 3.3).

however is that it does not take into account the non-standard form of the Arabic language, where the relative pronoun is sometimes dropped by its speakers (see Mohammed, 2000). Tadros (1966, 1978; cited in Mohammed, 2000 and Myegle, 1997 respectively), who did not refer to the possible variety or varieties of Arabic underlying this error of relative pronoun omission (and other errors), classified it as an interlingual error (i.e. L1 based). To conclude this section, we echo Mohammed's (2000) pedagogical recommendation: "both varieties of Arabic [standard and non-standard] could be considered when presenting the learners of English with contrastive comparisons [of Arabic and English], when analyzing students' errors and correcting them, and when designing contrastive analysis courses for teacher training purposes" (p. 134-35).

4.2.3. Other hypotheses for English relativization difficulty

4.2.3.1. The Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis (PDH)

Apart from the AH hypothesis, there are other hypotheses that also predict a natural order of difficulty for relative clause acquisition, and that are derived from both first language acquisition (FLA) and second language acquisition (SLA) relativization literature (see Doughty, 1991; Izumi, 2003). One of these hypotheses is Kuno's (1974) Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis (PDH), which assumes that a sentence like that in (1) below poses greater difficulty in processing than the sentence in (2), because it represents the case of 'center embedding', which, due to short-term memory limitations, interrupts the processing of the matrix sentence with the relative clause; whereas in cases of 'right and left embedding', there is no such interruption (note that left embedding is irrelevant in the case of English).

(1) Center embedding
The cheese that the rat that the cat chased ate was rotten.

(2) Right embedding
The cat chased the rat that ate the cheese that was rotten.

(From Kuno, 1974: 119)

In this sense, the PDH focuses on the location of the relative clause in the matrix sentence (i.e. whether the relative clause is left-, center-, or right-embedded). Thus, unlike the NPAH, which examines only the relative clause itself with no attention given to the matrix sentence, the PDH examines the grammatical functions of both the head noun (HN) in the matrix/main clause and the relative pronoun (RP) in the relative/embedded clause, and accordingly, predicts a difficulty order of OS and OO sentences before SS and SO sentences (i.e. OS > OO > SS > SO) – where the first character of each pair stands for the grammatical role (e.g. S=subject, O=object) of the HN in the main clause, and the second for that of the RP in the subordinate (relative) clause. These four symbols represent the four basic types of relative clause construction as classified in the PDH – compared with the six types of relative clause identified in the NPAH. Izumi (2003: 289) has clarified that "although not specifically focused on in Kuno's formulation of the PDH, different RC types as outlined in the NPAH can logically be placed in different matrix positions", resulting in twelve different types of RC construction exemplified in the following table. The last vertical column is not in the original table but created by this author to show the resulting RC constructions in accordance with the PDH's four basic types.

Table 4.1: *Example Sentences for Different Relative Clause Types in English Placed in Different Matrix Positions*

Matrix position	RC type	Example	
Subject	SU	The woman who speaks Russian fluently is my aunt.	SS
	DO	The car which the man drove is very fast.	S(D)O
	IO	The man who(m) I gave the book to is my colleague.	S(I)O
	OPREP	The woman who(m) Bill is looking at is beautiful.	SO(PREP)
	GEN	The man whose car broke down is my boss.	S-GEN
	OCOMP	The mountain which Mt. Fuji is higher than is Mt. Takao.	SO(COMP)
Object	SU	The teacher liked the girl who passed the exam easily.	OS
	DO	We like the coat which Mary wears.	O(D)O
	IO	Mary likes the man who(m) I gave the book to.	O(I)O
	OPREP	She is the woman who(m) Tom wants to live with.	OO(PREP)
	GEN	I know the woman whose husband is a professor.	O-GEN
	OCOMP	I know the hotel which Hilton is cheaper than.	OO(COMP)

SU=Subject DO=Direct object IO=Indirect object OPREP=Object of preposition GEN=Genitive OCOMP=Object of comparison

(Adapted from Izumi, 2003: 288; see also Doughty, 1991: 436)

A close look at the SS type and SO type constructions above shows that both have the relative clause in the middle of the sentence (i.e. center-embedded), which is hypothesized to interfere with the language processing of the entire sentence. On the other hand, the OS type and OO type constructions do not include any interrupting relative clause at the center of sentence, and instead, have the relative clause on the right side of the main clause, i.e. right-embedded (Suh, 2003: 141). Accordingly, the PDH predicts that "regardless of the RC type, sentences with RCs embedded in the matrix subject position are more difficult than sentences with RCs embedded in the matrix object position" (Izumi, 2003: 289). The support provided for this claim by researchers like Ioup and Kruse (1977), Park (1999), Schumann (1980), and Suh (2000) (all cited in Suh, 2003) has been further enhanced by Suh's (2003) finding – based on the results from both an elicited imitation task and an informal survey – that OS type and OO type constructions were comprehended more accurately than SO type and SS type constructions. Students, Suh Suggests, "can have a better chance to learn about relativization" if they are taught these four types of relative clause in such a "simple, easy order rather than in unsystematic, random order" (p. 147). Despite this, Doughty (1991: 439) claims that the PDH, "while intuitively appealing, has not found consistent empirical support", and "there have been no acquisitional studies conducted that have emanated from it". In contrast to this, Izumi (2003: 292) asserts that "the PHD is based on a sound theoretical foundation", and reports that it has found some support in the literature (e.g. Cook, 1973; Ioup & Kruse, 1977; Schumann, 1980; Prideaux & Baker, 1986; Bates, Devescovi, and D'Amico, 1999), "but it has received less attention in L2 studies than has the NPAH to date". In his point of view, this hypothesis "warrants greater attention in SLA than it has received to date as a viable hypothesis of RC processing and acquisition".

4.2.3.2. The Parallel Function Hypothesis (PFH)

Another approach to the prediction of a difficulty order of relative clauses is derived from the Parallel Function Hypothesis (PFH), which also examines the relationship between the functions of the HN and the RP in their respective clauses. This

hypothesis predicts "a strategy of interpreting the grammatical function of the relative pronoun as being the same as its antecedent" (Sheldon, 1974b: 274; cited in Doughty, 1991: 437). In other words, the idea of parallel function, put forward by Bever (1970) and Sheldon (1974b), indicates that when the NP in main clause (i.e. HN) has the same grammatical function as the coreferential NP in relative clause (i.e. RP), "the sentence would be easier to process than one in which the identical NPs have differing grammatical functions in respective clauses. Thus, SS type and OO type of relative clauses should be easier and quicker to learn than SO type and OS type" (Suh, 2003: 134).

The PFH was formulated originally to account for first-language relativization (Doughty, 1991: 437); therefore, it is expected to have limitations in accounting for L2 learners' behaviour in the learning and use of relative clauses. In his criticism of the application of approaches mainly based on L1 research in L2 studies, Suh pointed out that

> … it is not clear how well, or how effectively an L1-based psychological approach can deal with L2 data on relative clauses, and therefore, caution needs to be exercised not to assume that such an approach would be the best, or the most appropriate tool in showing the entire picture of L2 learners' knowledge of relativization. (Suh, 2003:146)

Apart from this, Doughty (1991: 437) inferred that "parallel function of head and relativized nouns seems not to be a factor that consistently determines difficulty in processing relative clauses" since the order of difficulty predicted by the PFH has not been supported (in some cases even countered) by other first language researchers, and, furthermore, was not supported by an early study of L2 relativization (Gass & Ard, 1980).

As for the present study, its depiction of the relativization knowledge of L2 learners does not build directly and entirely on the claims of psychological approaches such as the PDH and the PFH, not only because they are not sufficiently supported by empirical research and are mainly based on L1 relativization acquisition research,

but also because they restrict the analysis to only four types of RC construction, which also predict learning difficulty. The main interest of such hypotheses lies rather in the way they raise awareness of the fact that RC sentence difficulty is determined not only by the relative clause in that sentence, as hypothesized by the NPAH, but crucially by the matrix clause as well. Therefore, the categorization of RC construction types in the writing of L2 learners in this study will take into account both the main/matrix clause and the relative clause, and will be based on the relationship between the grammatical functions of their identical NPs.

4.3. Other forms and sources of difficulty

4.3.1. Relativization aspects, error types, and learners' knowledge

Learners' knowledge about relativization should not be restricted to the types or constructions of the relative clause. There are actually other aspects of relativization which should be learned and focused upon, and which cause learners noticeable difficulty. Suh (2003), for example, mentioned five major aspects (or 'parameters') of relativization: choice of appropriate relative pronoun, pronoun retention in relative clause (i.e. the copy of an identical NP in the relative clause), adjacency of head NP to relative clause, agreement of head NP with verb in relative clause, and case marking on relative pronoun. The author measured the subjects' knowledge of these aspects by means of a grammaticality judgment task. He found that they made the most accurate judgment on, 'choice of relative pronoun', followed by 'case marking on relative pronoun'; whereas they made the least accurate judgment on, 'agreement of head NP with verb in relative clause', followed by 'pronoun retention' (2003: 138).

Following Gass (1982), both Doughty (1991) and Izumi (2003) referred to four possible types of error related to these aspects: errors of nonadjacency of HN and RP, errors of pronoun retention, incorrect relative marker morphology, and inappropriate relative marker omission. Examples of these error types were also

given by the two researchers, as in the sentences (a-d) below. In his study, Izumi (2003) used a 'grammaticality judgment task', adapted from Doughty (1988, 1991), which contained sentences with these four error types. It is worth mentioning that such tasks have been "employed in L2 research as a major data collection method in assessing a variety of differing types of linguistic knowledge" (Suh, 2003: 136); and have been used as a common tool for measuring subjects' knowledge of relativization. For instance, in a grammaticality judgment task, subjects are usually given a number of sentences containing relative clauses, some of which are correct while others are incorrect, and asked to judge whether each sentence is grammatically well-formed.

(a) The woman is young who likes John. [nonadjacency]
(b) The woman who you met her went to the hospital. [pronoun retention]
(c) I looked for the book who Tom was talking about. [incorrect relative marker morphology]
(d) The girl was in pain saw the dentist. [inappropriate relative marker omission]

(From Izumi, 2003: 300)

Suh (2003) discovered from his grammaticality judgment task that his subjects, in spite of the fact that they were above intermediate level of proficiency, did not seem to have sufficient knowledge of correct usage of relative clauses, i.e., how they are formed and function in relation to a main clause. However, even if subjects would have had a sufficient amount of 'learned knowledge' about relativization, Suh further argued, "this cannot guarantee accurate judgment or correct use of relative clauses for communication" (2003: 139). Therefore, a pedagogical implication of his study was that:

> Learned knowledge needs to be changed into acquired knowledge through continuous practice. In other words, in order for subjects to have a good, perfect command of relativization either for metalinguistic tasks such as a grammaticality judgment task, or for communicative tasks, it seems desirable that after learners learn about relativization, they should be provided with plentiful opportunity to practice what they learn in a variety of communicative contexts (Ellis, 1994). By doing so, learned, explicit knowledge can be turned into acquired, implicit knowledge which is likely to play a key role in correctly

> judging sentence grammaticality, not to mention successfully getting message across for communication. (Suh, 2003: 139)

It could be argued that besides contributing to accurate judgment of grammaticality, another advantage of knowledge becoming 'implicit' is that it makes it less likely that L1 will interfere with learners' interlanguage of English relativization and influence their performance of it. Thus, the current study anticipates that learners whose knowledge is not implicit yet are more likely to make interference errors in those aspects of English relativization which are not common for them in the relativization system of their native language – since what is 'different' between two languages is 'difficult' to acquire, as hypothesized by the Contrastive Analysis (see section 4.2.2.1).

Arabic, which is the mother tongue of students involved in this study, has restrictions on the agreement between 'relative pronoun' and 'antecedent' in terms of both number and gender, which English does not. However, it has almost the same constructions of relative clause, and the same components of a relative clause sentence as those the English language has, except for the fact that – as explained earlier (sec. 4.2.2.1) – Arabic in most cases keeps an identical pronoun to the relative pronoun in the structure of the relative clause (e.g. **I am looking for the pen which I lost* ***it*** *yesterday*), which English does not accept and considers an error of 'pronoun retention' (see Mohammed, 2000; Fakhra, 2004 (sec. 4.1); Ammar & Lightbown, 2005; and others cited in sections 3.3 and 4.2.2.1 in this thesis). Accordingly, the prediction of this study, like that of many other researchers and linguists, is that this particular aspect of English relativization would be problematic for Arab users, and probably would result in errors by them more frequently than by other L1 speakers. Nevertheless, it cannot be predicted whether this aspect would be more or less problematic for them than other aspects, as L1 interference is not the only source of difficulty or errors (Ellis, 1994; Fakhra, 2004).

4.3.2. The impact and role of teaching

In particular contexts, the approaches employed in the teaching of relative clauses are believed to cause part of the difficulty learners have using or mastering these structures. One common approach is the 'two-sentence connection', which instructs students to connect two sentences, like '*I have a friend*' and '*she doesn't speak English*', into one using the relative pronoun '*who*': '*I have a friend who doesn't speak English*'. Such practice is adopted in many textbooks (e.g. *New Total English* 3) to introduce relative clauses; besides, many applied linguists, including Gass (1979), Eckman *et al* (1988), Hawkins (1989), Doughty (1991), and Hamilton (1994), accept it as a tool for evaluating learners' linguistic competence (in Nakamori, 2002: 30). Nevertheless, this teaching method is criticized by authors such as Nakamori as "nothing but a mechanical approach that is far removed from a real use of relative clauses" since "in practice, nobody in the real world is likely to produce two separate sentences first, and then connect them with a relative pronoun" (2002: 30). Nakamori found in his study that many students at junior and senior high schools in Japan, who are taught by this method, have trouble in understanding that "the function of a relative clause is not to *connect* two different sentences like glue, but to *modify* the head noun, thereby giving more information to it" (ibid). He argues that students need to know the clausal (or 'hierarchical') relationships in the relative clause sentence, rather than only focusing on what to connect together; and they also should be given a context in which relative clauses are needed and in which relative clauses are used naturally. To conclude, a careful thought is required concerning the application of certain teaching methods to relative clauses in the EFL classroom, especially if the purpose of teaching is as proposed by Nakamori: to teach students how to communicate, and how to use English (p. 32).

Suh (2003) shows similar concern as that of Nakamori for building students' confidence in using relative clauses for communicative purposes. The last, and maybe the most important, pedagogical implication of his study for Korean learners

of English (at university level) in particular, and for EFL classrooms in general is that:

> In light of the fact that the ability to correctly manipulate and use relative clauses is not only one important aspect of grammatical competence, but the cornerstone for the effective, clear transmission of message for communication, it is indispensable for teachers to help their students to fully understand what relativization is, and how it works in both sentence and discourse level. (Suh, 2003: 147)

4.4. Relative clause reduction

No process of teaching or learning about relative clauses is complete without considering cases where the relative pronoun, though a major component of a RC structure, can be omitted (the zero relativizer) (e.g. *the man* ***whom*** *I met* becomes *the man I met*). In all such cases, it is reported, "the pronoun may be assumed to have been present at some 'underlying level' of analysis, but to have been deleted; and the meaning of the relative clause is not affected" (Newbrook, 1998: 47). Sometimes, the auxiliary verb *be* may be removed along with the relative pronoun (e.g. *the money* ***that was*** *stolen from the bank* becomes *the money stolen from the bank*), and sometimes, the deletion of the RP may be accompanied with syntactic alteration of some kind (e.g. *the planets* ***that orbit*** *the sun* can be replaced with *the planets* ***orbiting*** *the sun*; or *the planet* ***that has*** *the highest surface temperature* can be replaced with *the planet* ***with*** *the highest surface temperature*) (Master, 2002).

Usually in literature, the deletion of certain elements of a relative clause – whether accompanied with syntactic alteration or not – is called 'relative clause reduction', "the result of which does not change the meaning of the clause in any way" (Master, 2002: 201). This in turn implies that *only* when the meaning is not affected, relative clause reduction can be applied (Master, 2002: 205). In grammar however, two restrictions on relative deletion have been identified as far as formal standard English is concerned: First, it is not possible in non-restrictive relative clauses (e.g.

**the person, I met*); Second, it is not possible when the relative pronoun is the subject of its own clause (e.g. **This is the student did it*), or when it functions as an object of preposition and the preposition is fronted (e.g. **This is the student to I sent it*) (Newbrook, 1998: 47).

Newbrook (1998) considered clauses which lack a relative pronoun/item as "not true relative clauses" and called them 'non-finite' clauses as opposed to the finite true (non-reduced) ones – from which they are originally derived. Biber *et al* (1999) have distinguished between finite and non-finite types of postmodification in general, and referred to clausal postmodifiers that are finite as **relative clauses** while sub-classified the non-finite ones into '*to*-clause', '*ing*-clause', and '*ed*-clause', as in:

1. the way **to get to our house**
2. rebels **advancing rapidly southwards**
3. products **required to support a huge and growing population**

However, in Master (2002), the '*ed*-clause' and '*ing*-clause' have been included in his list of reduced relative clause types – as 'the past participle type' and 'the present participle type' respectively –, and found in his corpus to be most common compared to another two types; namely, 'adjectives' (e.g. *results similar to those found earlier*) and 'nominal appositive clauses' (e.g. *the results, 100 parts per million*) (p. 225).

The important point here is that reduction, where applicable, is an option, not a syntactic requirement, as pointed out by Chafe (1970; in Master, 2002: 205). Yet, not to reduce relative clauses at all, Master argues, is "the most common "error" that students make", and for this, their instructors are to be blamed as it is quite possible that they have warned students "that reduction is too informal a process for formal academic writing" (p. 207). Researchers who have tried to examine the performance of good writers in this matter have come up with different results. Huckin and Olsen (1983), for example, claimed that good writers "avoid applying the rule of [relative pronoun + *be* $\rightarrow$ $VERB_{ing}$] more often than not" (p. 400), whereas Huckin, Curtin, and Graham (1986) modified this view to state that this kind of $VERB_{ing}$ reduction is

"the standard choice of good writers in most circumstances" (p.185) (both cited in Master, 2002: 205-6). Huckin and Olsen (1983) explained that the use of such reduction "depends mainly on how much emphasis or focus the writer wants to give the relative clause: a full relative clause tends to command more attention than an -*ing* type of relative clause" (p. 400; cited in Master, 2002: 205). On the other hand, Huckin *et al* (1986) noted that the deletion of relative pronoun + *is* was blocked by good writers either when emphasis was required, or to avoid ambiguity; but this was found by them to be relatively rare (in Master, 2002: 206, 218, and 221). Good writers, as put by Huckin *et al*, are careful to note that "contextual factors (textual, rhetorical, other) play a major role in deciding what constitutes emphasis and what constitutes ambiguity" (p. 185, cited in Master, 2002: 206).

In Master's study of the rate of full and reduced relative clause occurrences in technical research articles, it was found that – as far as the syntactic role of the head NP is concerned – relative clauses modifying the subject of the main clause were more than twice as likely to be reduced than full, and that relative clauses within object or predicate NPs were more likely to be full. It was also found that more than half (55%) of all the relative clauses traced in a corpus that consisted of 18 technical research articles were reduced, which indicated that the reduction of relative clauses is common in such genres. Accordingly, Master concluded that "it would be a pedagogical error to tell students that reduction is not appropriate in formal technical writing" (p. 222).

In Biber *et al*'s (1999) attempt to compare the frequencies of different postmodifier types (prepositional phrases, and non-prepositional postmodifiers: appositives, *to*-clauses, *ed*-clauses, *ing*-clauses, and full relative clauses) across four registers (conversation, fiction, news, and academic prose), they demonstrated that of all non-prepositional postmodifiers, (full) relative clauses were the most common, and were relatively frequent in all three written registers – but proportionally, they were most common in fiction (c. 70% of all non-prepositional postmodifiers). *Ing*-clauses (a reduced relative clause type in Master's typology) were reported by Biber *et al* as

"moderately common in all three written registers (10-15% of all non-prepositional postmodifiers)". However, they were most frequent in academic prose. Finally, as for *ed*-clauses and appositive noun phrases (both classified as reduced forms of RC by Master), they were found to be considerably more common in both academic prose and news than in other registers (Biber *et al*, 1999: 607). In general, the 'zero relativizer' (i.e. reduced RC) was found by these researchers to be "moderately common" in the whole corpus – yet, the relativizers *whom, whose, where, when,* and *why* were "considerably less common". In contrast, revealed by results as "by far the most frequent forms" were the relativizers *that* and *which*, and to a lesser extent *who* (p. 609 & 611).

Another important notion discussed by Master (2002) was that full relative clauses signify 'new information', which, as supported by several of the sources he cited, "tends not to be reduced" (p.225); and "which the English language does much to highlight (e.g. by the use of nonreferential *there* and *it* to delay the appearance of – and thus emphasize – new information)" (p.226). That is, reduction is less likely to be applied when information is new (this no doubt applies not only to technical research articles, but to more general texts as well); and since new information typically comes at the end of the sentence, this explains why relative clauses that came toward the end of the sentence were noticed in this study often not to be reduced.

4.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this chapter has been to show how relative clauses have been examined and classified from various aspects, how, consequently, the relationship between the type of relative clause and its difficulty has been studied, and how certain features in relative clause construction have been found to be more problematic for learners. Our knowledge of all such aspects and features surrounding the application/misapplication of relative clauses necessitates that we give them more attention in our teaching. It is true that some studies have found second

language instruction ineffective as their results revealed no significant difference between subjects that were instructed and subjects that were not (e.g. Perkins & Larsen-Freeman, 1978); nevertheless, there are other studies that "claim that instruction, given certain conditions, can make a significant contribution to second language acquisition" (Aarts and Schils, 1995: 50). Concerning relativization, there are researchers who testify to the effectiveness of instruction: Doughty (1991), for instance, reports a "highly significant improvement in relativization ability" – a result based on a comparison of pre- and posttest scores (p. 452). Aarts and Schils (1995), in support of Doughty's result, claim that their figures "also clearly show considerable progress in students' performance" (p. 50) as the number of errors in the post test was smaller than in the pre-test. However, the two researchers admit that this is unlikely to be attributed entirely to the instruction students received between the first test and the second as there are other factors, such as exposure to spoken and written English, which may also have played a part. Ammar and Lightbown's (2005) experimental findings, in comparison, "suggest that exposure to and instruction about relative clauses have strong positive effects". They clarify: "while the control group, which was exposed to structures other than relative clauses, did not show any gains in relativization ability, the experimental groups' knowledge of that structure improved significantly" (p. 188). In the current study, it is assumed that a selective and focused kind of instruction on relative clauses; that is, on aspects most problematic in their use for students, or on constructions frequently not used by them where expected, could have a positive effect on these students' performance.

This chapter, with all the concepts it has identified and the insights into the use of relative clauses it has provided, has intended to prepare the way for the analysis of relative clauses in the Syrian students' writing corpus employed in this research (chapter 7), and later on in the British students' writing corpus (chapter 9). This analysis aims to examine and highlight particular aspects and difficulties in the non-native speaker students' implementation of RCs.

Chapter Five: Research on Conjunctive Adjuncts in Student Writing

5.1. Cohesion in writing: Going beyond developing syntactic skills and towards appreciating logical relationships

5.1.1. Transcending individual sentences

In English writing, acquiring the grammar of subordination and gaining control of the use of different subordinate structures in English, such as relative clause structures, is an important syntactic skill whose development is a sign of the writing quality and maturity development. In fact, the ability to easily make (what was then characterized as) 'sentence-embedding transformations' and 'subclausal constructions' such as adverbial and relative clauses, prepositional phrases, adjective constructions, etc. was discovered in the early 1960s to be in direct relationship with 'maturity of expression' (Hunt, 1965; 1970). Nevertheless, writing is not merely an exercise in syntactic orderliness, where efforts are made to connect surface structures variably and correctly; rather, it is an attempt to communicate (Holloway, 1981: 217). Realizing this means being aware of the fact that connecting ideas underlying surface structures is as crucial as connecting these structures is for composing a written work with 'acceptable' quality. As Holloway (1981: 216) puts it:

> The organizing principles of our language, to some extent within, and definitely beyond, the sentence should be based on the *ideas* we wish to convey to a particular audience, not simply on an effort to use correctly the grammatical structure of that language.

For researchers who wish to address linguistic features in written texts, the discussion above implies that analysis should go beyond sentence boundaries. During the 70s and 80s, most of the research at the college level that tried to

investigate the internal characteristics distinguishing essays ranked high and low in overall quality was restricted to "examining errors and syntactic features while generally ignoring the features of texts that extend across sentence boundaries" (Witte and Faigley, 1981: 189). Such research has been condemned as not providing specific directions for the teaching of writing; and neither the error approach nor the syntactic approach it adopted has been entirely satisfactory (ibid). Improving the overall quality of college students' writing, in fact, demands much more than mere focusing on conventional theories of syntax (e.g. transformational grammar) or error analysis.

For this very reason, the intention of the present study was not to stop at the limits of the two exploratory studies described in chapter two, which although providing a substantial background to the main study, were restricted to examining categories, sources, and numbers of grammatical errors (Fakhra, 2004), as well as attitudes of writing teachers towards types and/or frequencies of such errors (see 2.2.2). Realizing that the pedagogical insights that could be derived from such research, or the writing instruction that could be developed based on its findings would probably not sufficiently help better the overall quality of university students' writing, the present study goes further to examine both the use and misuse of particular linguistic units in the texts of such students, specifically 'relative clauses' and 'conjunctive adjuncts'. Relative clauses represent a form of complex subordination, or 'sentence-embedding transformation' and 'subclausal construction' as Hunt (1965) called them, on the basis of which the maturity of syntactic writing is often measured. With relative clauses then, it may appear that our interests as researchers are still confined within the grammar of sentence structure. Nevertheless, it should be realized that relative clauses, as we saw in the previous chapter and will see in chapter 7, have semantic relevance as well (e.g. their relation to the principles of 'end-weight' and 'given-new information', which affect where they occur and what form they take). They are, as noted by Swales (1981), postmodifiers whose function "is primarily to provide textual linkage and cohesion" (cited in Master, 2002: 206) (see chapter four).

As for conjunctive adjuncts, they are normally recognized as good predicators of logical semantic relationships that obtain across sentence boundaries and thus attain aspects of 'textuality'. Yet, this is not to ignore that they have certain syntactic aspects as well. They have been characterized, as we will see in this chapter, as combining the features of both grammatical and lexical cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; in sec. 5.2.1) and as having "discourse-organising function, grammatical, semantic, and morphological attributes" (Tanko, 2004: 159; in sec. 5.3.1). By addressing the two language features of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts in written texts, we do actually hope to increase the possibilities for students to produce improved writing, at least as far as the use of such structural (or syntactic) and textual (or semantic) features is concerned.

The tendency to extend composition research beyond its "frequent moorings in sentence-level operations and features" as Witte and Faigley (1981) express it, has emerged from the original description by Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan of relationships between and among sentences in text in their well known work *Cohesion in English* (1976). They were both interested in the ways by which sentences worked together in extended units of discourse, such as paragraphs and longer pieces of writing, as they realized that the meanings a speaker or writer wishes to express normally transcend sentence boundaries.

5.1.2. Discourse/textual features

Researchers in the field of communicative competence modeling introduced the concept of 'discourse competence' and recognized it as "one of the constituent abilities that contributed to a language learner’s overall proficiency", in addition of course to grammatical knowledge and other situational abilities such as sociolinguistic competence and illocutionary competence (e.g. Canale, 1983; Bachman and Palmer, 1982; Haley *et al*, 1990; Henning and Cascallar, 1992; Schmidt, 1983) (in Chiang, 2003). Canale (1983), who first proposed the construct

of 'discourse competence', conceptualized it as an attribute that helps a learner to achieve "unity of a text … through *cohesion* in form and *coherence* in meaning" (cited in Chiang, 2003: 474). On the other hand, Bachman (1990), in his attempt to distinguish between 'grammatical competence' and 'textual competence', defined the latter as the knowledge of rules of *cohesion* and *rhetorical organization* (ibid), considering both as essential textual features.

In the field of writing assessment and the investigation of the relative contribution of the various features in a composition to its overall quality – where many researchers identified 'grammatical accuracy' as the raters’ favorite (e.g. McDaniel, 1985; Sweedler-Brown, 1993) – Chiang (2003) assumed that if the concept of 'discourse', with its two features of 'cohesion' and 'coherence', was adequately defined in relation to 'grammar', it would emerge as the more important factor in rater evaluations of L2 writings. This was in fact what Chiang found in his study of the effect of grammatical and discourse features on rater perceptions of writing quality in evaluating foreign language writing samples. The results showed that syntactical accuracy was still an important indicator of writing quality; nevertheless, cohesion appeared to be the most important condition. Besides, all except three of the 30 raters (NSs and NNSs) in the study based their perceptions of 'overall quality' primarily on either of the two discourse features: coherence and cohesion. On comparing these results with the ones obtained from the evaluation survey reported on earlier (chapter 2) however it emerged that the syntactic and structural aspects in the students' texts remained at the top of the evaluators' concerns, especially the non-native speaker evaluators. Coherence and, to a lesser extent, cohesion aspects did gain value in their assessments; yet, this value was not as high as the one the former aspects gained (see tables 2.3 & 2.4) – confirming the more common finding in literature concerning their being the raters' favorites.

In the current study, one of the major concerns is to investigate conjunctive adjuncts as cohesive tools in L2 writing. Below, the concept of 'cohesion' is introduced before a discussion of conjunctive adjuncts.

5.1.3. Cohesion

For Halliday and Hasan (1976), "cohesion depends upon lexical and grammatical relationships that allow sentence sequences to be understood as connected discourse rather than as autonomous sentences" (cited in Witte and Faigley, 1981: 190). These lexical and grammatical relationships are to a great extent realized by the application of various types of what Halliday and Hasan termed 'cohesive ties' – categorized by them into five major classes: *reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction,* and *lexical reiteration and collocation*, all of which are necessary to produce a logically and syntactically well connected piece of writing. A cohesive tie, as first defined by them, "is a semantic relation between an element in a text and some other element that is crucial to the interpretation of it" (1976: 8).

Although work on cohesion nowadays is often related to specific genres, from the date of the publication (1976) of *Cohesion in English* it attracted the attention of teachers of English as a foreign language; and over the years, it has probably been the most widespread Hallidayan influence on language teaching (Bloor and Bloor, 1995). "Nowadays, all general course books and most reading and writing courses incorporate work designed to help learners grasp the cohesive devices of written English" (e.g. Nuttal, 1985) (ibid). Holloway (1981), in his presentation of cohesion as a semantic approach that could be helpful in teaching writing – and that could be used during the process of writing itself in order to guide writers *as they compose* –, tried to show how the knowledge of Halliday and Hasan's major categories can help us use cohesive devices to teach more effective writing, emphasizing the significance of such devices for discourse and for improving "the dramatic interchange between writer and reader" (p.216) as it is perceived by Halliday and Hasan themselves:

> The means by which a speaker or writer ties together discourse can determine the meaning and the focus of that discourse. And the quality and effectiveness of those cohesive devices determine how a listener or reader understands or decodes our meanings. (Holloway, 1981: 210)

Following his argument, Holloway appeared to be tackling *coherence* issues as well, enhancing Halliday and Hasan's premise that text cohesion leads to greater text coherence; a view which, although it sounds acceptable, has been questioned and modified by a number of scholars; especially, when talking about cohesive ties of the 'conjunction' class – which are as we will see later (sec. 5.2) more commonly known as 'conjunctive adjuncts'. Carrell (1982), for example, rejected the idea that text cohesion is necessarily a textual property that is manifested by means of grammatical or lexical connective ties. For her, cohesion is rather "an outcome of coherence when readers of text are able to derive the connectivity of ideas from their knowledge of the world (and text schema)" (cited in Hinkel, 2001: 112). Carrell hence concluded that when readers are able to connect the ideas of the text without relying on explicit cohesion devices, explicit cohesive ties are not needed to unify the text's ideas (as in Carrell's example, *The picnic was ruined. No one remembered to bring a corkscrew* (p. 484)). Accordingly, she argued that in teaching L2 writing and composition to NNSs, cohesive devices should play a secondary role to instruction on organizing the flow of ideas in a text (ibid).

But cohesive devices do play an important role in the teaching of L2 composition and writing, particularly those classified by Halliday and Hasan as 'conjunctions'. They have been quite common in L2 writing instruction because, as Reid (1993) explains, ESL writers often employ various cohesion conventions differently from native speakers of English, which may sometimes make their L2 texts appear incoherent to native speaker readers. With this in mind, Reid recommends that text cohesion be taught in conjunction with issues in the coherence of ideas to provide learners with linguistic means of developing unified texts (in Hinkel, 2001: 113).

The realization of the important role cohesion matters play in English texts, as well as the realization of the difficulty many NNSs have understanding how cohesive and logical ties are constructed in text, has made other authors (e.g. McCarthy, 1991) also emphasize the need to explicitly teach them in L2 reading and writing instruction. Among L2 learners' difficulties, according to Scott (1996), is that they

often transfer from L1 to L2 rhetorical and syntactic devices for constructing unified text, even when proximate cohesion devices cannot be found in L2. Scott, therefore, underscores the importance of teaching L2 linguistic and lexical means of cohesion in written text (all cited in Hinkel, 2001: 113).

As already hinted at, of the five major categories of cohesive device identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976), the category of 'conjunction' has been allocated special attention in almost every textbook for teaching composition, for the major role conjunctions play in organizing ideas and indicating logical relationships between portions of text (see for example Hacker, 2000; and Beason and Lester, 2000; cited in Hinkel, 2001). Moreover, much of the research that has been motivated by the need to teach English language learners in a second-language (ESL) or foreign-language (EFL) environment has been carried out on patterns of conjunction (or 'connector') usage in student writing (Bolton, Nelson, and Hung, 2003). In Hartnett's (1986) description, these "dynamic cohesive ties" are more difficult than other cohesive devices in English writing, and they bear a certain correlation with the quality of writing (cited in Li, 2004: 4).

This type of cohesive connective; so-called 'conjunction' (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), will be the focus of the remaining part of this chapter; but first a clarification will be presented of what the terms 'conjunctions' and 'conjunctive adjuncts' mean, how they are used by different grammarians, and why conjunctive adjuncts are chosen to be the focus of this study. This will be followed by a review of how conjunctive adjuncts have been termed, defined, and classified by various researchers, and then by a literature review of research on these devices use in L2 student writing.

5.2. What are 'conjunctions' and what are 'conjunctive adjuncts'? Why are conjunctive adjuncts chosen to be under focus in this study?

In most grammar books, 'conjunction' is the term used to refer to the linguistic tools that mark structural relationships between clauses or phrases, such as, *coordination* (or *linking*) relationships and *subordination* (or *binding*) relationships. Accordingly, conjunctions are normally classified with regard to their grammatical function into two basic categories: a. 'coordinating conjunctions' (or 'coordinators' or 'linkers') – identified as connecting independent clauses (and sometimes phrases and words) which are characterized to be in a relationship of equality; and b. 'subordinating conjunctions' (or 'subordinators' or 'binders') – identified as transforming the independent clauses to which they are appended into subordinate ones, in which case, joined clauses are characterized to be in a relationship of inequality (Zamel, 1983: 25; Lock, 1996: 248-49). Examples of the first category are: *and*, *or*, *but*; and of the second one are: *because*, *although*, *if*, *since*, *when*, *while*, *before*, *after*, *so that*.

Because conjunctions, syntactically speaking, are not part of the structure of the clause (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 55), for they do not really belong to either of the clauses they join (Lock, 1996: 5), and because they have a semantic function – in addition to the grammatical one – signaling logical relationships between the clauses (or phrases) they connect, they are sometimes classified according to the meaning or logical-semantic relations they indicate as well. These relations could be *addition*, *adversity*, *alternation*, *time succession*, *contrast*, etc. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). For Halliday and Hasan (1976), many semantic relations like these have two ways of functioning in discourse: 'structurally' and 'cohesively'. They are structural when indicated by a coordinator or subordinator connecting two linguistic units within the sentence, as in sentences (1), (2) and (3) below. On the other hand, they operate cohesively only when indicated by a connective expression – normally distinct from coordinator and subordinator expressions, and usually functioning as 'Adjunct' –

establishing connection between two separate sentences, as in sentences (1`), (2`) and (3`). This is so because 'cohesion' as identified by Halliday and Hasan is "a relation between sentences in a text, not a relation within the sentence" (p. 227 & 232).

1. **Although** he was very uncomfortable, he fell asleep. (*Adversity*)
2. **After** the battle, there was a snowstorm. (*Time succession*)
3. **Before** they fought a battle, it had snowed. (*Time succession*)

1`. He was very uncomfortable. **Nevertheless** he fell asleep. (*Adversity*)
2`. They fought a battle. **Afterwards**, it snowed. (*Time succession*)
3`. They fought a battle. **Previously**, it had snowed. (*Time succession*)

(Examples from Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 228-29)

Differently from the terminology in most grammar books, in Halliday and Hasan's scheme, the term 'conjunction' is specifically used to refer to *cohesive* connectors like the adverbs (functioning as Adjuncts) in sentences (1`), (2`) and (3`) rather than to *structural* connectors like the subordinators in sentences (1), (2) and (3). As put by them, "it is this, the semantic relation in its cohesive function, that we are referring to as CONJUNCTION. The Adjunct will be referred to as a CONJUNCTIVE, CONJUNCTIVE ADJUNCT or DISCOURSE ADJUNCT" (p. 228) (Capitals as in the original).

Nonetheless, in Halliday (2004), the concept of 'conjunction' emerges being used more comprehensively to encompass non-structural (cohesive) markers of logico-semantic relations as well as structural ones:

> The logico-semantic relation is marked by a conjunction – either by a non-structural one that is used only in this way, that is, only cohesively, such as *for example, furthermore, consequently*; or by a structural one whose prototypical function is to mark the continuing clause in a paratactic clause nexus. The former serve as conjunctive Adjuncts and are very commonly thematic; the latter are simply analysed as structure markers and are obligatorily thematic as structural Theme. (Halliday, 2004: 540)

There are certain conjunctions however that have multifunction both as conjunctive adjuncts and coordinators or subordinators, such as, *and*, *but*, *or*, and *though*. Yet,

Halliday and Hasan (1976) distinguish them specifying that they function as conjunctive adjuncts (i.e. cohesive conjunctions) when used between sentences; that is, at the beginning of a new sentence connecting it to a previous sentence. In contrast, they function as coordinators or subordinators when used as structural items within sentences.

As a matter of fact, logico-semantic relation markers like the conjunctive adjuncts and subordinators/coordinators not only do often seem to convey similar meanings, but also have in common the function of signaling "the rhetorical organization of the text" (Bloor and Bloor: 1995: 56-57). And as pointed out by Swales and Feak (1994: 22), they are all necessary to "maintain flow and establish clear relationships between ideas" (cited in Hinkel, 2002: 144). Unlike Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday (2004), for whom achieving textual cohesion is restricted to conjunctions of the non-structural type (i.e. conjunctive adjuncts), some linguists (e.g. Davidson, 1991; Biber *et al*, 1999) believe that all categories of conjunction, whether those connecting phrases and clauses or those connecting sentences, are cohesive agents in text. According to Davidson (1991; cited in Hinkel, 2002: 144) for example, "the presence and the uses of coordinators, among those of several other cohesive devices, can be used as a statistically reliable measure of discourse cohesion in the assessment of L2 writing on standardized tests". In Biber *et al* (1999: 875) on the other hand, it is affirmed that alongside coordinators and subordinators, conjunctive adjuncts (or as they call them 'linking adverbials') "are important devices for creating textual cohesion".

In spite of this shared rhetorical and cohesive significance of conjunctive adjuncts and coordinating/subordinating conjunctions in discourse, they still behave *grammatically* in a different way – due to the different syntactic positions they occupy and different text levels they operate on (e.g. phrase, clause, sentence, and paragraph) – as already hinted at in some of the arguments raised above. For this very reason, they are usually classified differently, assigned different labels or word classes, such as, sentence *adverb* versus *conjunction* (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 65-57).

One unique distinction made between these logical devices, also on the basis of the difference in their grammatical behaviour, is that of Hinkel (2001; 2002), who maintains that conjunctions' function is "to establish connectivity between ideas in the discourse flow, and they can operate on multiple levels of text, such as phrasal, sentential, and logical/ideational (Halliday and Hasan, 1976)" (2002: 143). With respect to this notion of text levels, Hinkel classifies conjunctions distinguishing three basic categories: **a) phrase-level** conjunctions (or **coordinators**) (*and, but, yet, or, both ... and*); **b) sentence-level** conjunctions (or **transitions**) (*first, second, third, moreover, however, thus, therefore, on the other hand, in addition*); and **c) logical-semantic** conjunctions (*because of, like, unlike, too, instead of, as well, in spite of)*. In her discussion of these forms of conjunction, Hinkel (2001) argues for the important role they all play in developing cohesive 'academic' text.

To shed more light on the linguistic items most familiarly known as 'conjunctive adjuncts' or 'conjunctive adverbs' and discussed above, since their use in EFL university student writing will be examined as part of the main study, we elaborate in the next section (5.2.1) on how they are termed, identified, and classified diversely by different linguists and researchers. One reason for focusing on these particular discourse features is that they are 'dynamic ties' that have certain correlation with the quality of writing (Hartnett, 1986, cited in Li, 2004: 4) – which EFL teachers are interested in finding ways to help students in the concerned context improve.

The other reason for aiming to concentrate on conjunctive adjuncts has to do with the 'problematic nature' of their use in non-native speaker writers' English texts as revealed in several research studies (Tanko, 2004: 157). This presumably arises from their being difficult to master; something acknowledged by scholars such as Hartnett (1986), who describes them as more difficult than other cohesive devices in English writing (in Li, 2004: 4). Indeed, their use has been observed to be problematic also in the Syrian students' English writing under examination in this research. More

precisely, conjunctions in general, including conjunctive adjuncts, have been arranged (together with relative clauses) among the five most problematic language features explored in this writing (chapter six).

Reasons like these are probably behind not only researching the use of these conjunctive adjuncts in L2 writing, but also inserting discussions of their uses (alongside coordinating and subordinating conjunctions) in practically every textbook for teaching writing and composition, including textbooks on L2 college-level and academic writing (e.g. Axelrod and Cooper, 1996; Bates, 1998; Beason and Lester, 2000; Hacker, 2000; Leki, 1999; Raimes, 1992, 1999; Swales and Feak, 1994). In such textbooks, a unit is often devoted to the uses of these devices, where they are listed and their importance is stressed in text cohesion (in Hinkel, 2001: 113-14).

5.2.1. Terms, definitions, and classifications of conjunctive adjuncts (or cohesive conjunctions)

Conjunctive adjuncts have been found referred to in literature with various terms as "conjuncts" (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973), "logical connectives" (Crewe, 1990), "logical connectors" (Green, Christopher, Lam and Mei, 2000), "linking adverbials" (Biber *et al*, 1999), "linking devices" (Zamel, 1983), "cohesive devices" (Field and Yip, 1992), "dynamic ties" (Hartnett, 1986), "connectors" (Bolton *et al*, 2003), and "sentence-level conjunctions/transitions" (Hinkel, 2001; 2002), in addition to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) and Halliday's (2004) term "conjunctions".

With all these alternative terms, the major fact about conjunctive adjuncts remains that they are linguistic items that relate structures mainly through their meanings, and that is why when compared with coordinators and subordinators, they are said to "have semantic weight, but no grammatical function" (Zamel, 1983: 25). This semantic weight is represented in the effect they have of extending the meaning of one sentence to a subsequent one (Witte and Faigley, 1981). More precisely, as

explained in Halliday and Hasan's (1976) definition of these "conjunctive elements", "they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse" (p. 226); in other words, they signal semantic relations which specify "the ways in which what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before" (p. 227). As noted before, Halliday and Hasan (1976) consistently confirm that they mainly work across sentence boundaries; that is, they supply "conjunctive cohesion" when connecting two or more independent sentences together, having as their domain the whole of the sentence in which they occur. Exceptional cases are, however, acknowledged to exist: some cohesive conjunctions (i.e. conjunctive adjuncts) may connect clauses as well, only in such circumstances when they have "the effect of repudiating – that is, of setting a limit to the domain of – any other conjunction that has occurred previously in sentence-initial position" (p. 232).

Halliday (2004: 538-39) illustrates more accessibly this way in which the cohesive system of conjunction works. He points out that text spans which a cohesive conjunction relates with a logico-semantic relationship are "of varying extent, ranging from clauses within clause complexes to long spans of a paragraph or more". However, although cohesive conjunctions may be used within clause complexes, "their real cohesive contribution is made when they are used to indicate logico-semantic relations that extend beyond the (grammatical) domain of a single clause complex".

Biber *et al* (1999: 875) define their "linking adverbials" in more or less the same way. They describe their primary function as "to state the speaker/writer's perception of the relationship between two units of discourse", and generalize that "because they explicitly signal the connections between passages of text, linking adverbials are important devices for creating textual cohesion, alongside coordinators and subordinators". Furthermore, they demonstrate with numerous examples that "linking adverbials can connect units of discourse of differing sizes": the linked units may be a. sentences; b. units larger than the sentence, as when

connecting a subsequent sentence with (several) preceding sentences; or c. clauses, as in connecting a *to*-clause to a preceding main clause (e.g. *My objectives in this work are two fold:* ***first****, to set out a precise yet comprehensive analysis*) (p. 765).

This is comparable with Bates's (1998: 149) definition of the function of these elements that it is to indicate "to the reader a particular logical relationship between two clauses, sentences, or groups of sentences", which Hinkel (2001: 114) uses to distinguish her category of "sentence-level conjunctions" (or "transitions") from her other two categories of "phrase-level conjunctions" (or "coordinators") and "logical-semantic conjunctions" (noting that the very first category is the one equivalent to conjunctive adjuncts).

Most linguists, researchers, and textbook designers who have dealt with the phenomenon of conjunctive adjuncts – though using different terms – classify its items into categories (and sub-categories) according to the semantic functions they convey. As previously hinted at, these discourse items are primarily recognized as establishing relations between meanings rather than grammatical units; they signal semantic relations that instead of simply marking *which* elements are connected convey information on *how* the elements are connected (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; in Tanko, 2004: 160). Tanko (2004: 160) draws attention to one linguistic factor of conjunctive adjuncts, as previously noted by Halliday and Hassan (1976: 226), that because they combine the features of both grammatical and lexical cohesion, they are not as easily classifiable as reference, substitution, or ellipsis – the other types of cohesive relation in Hallaiday and Hasan's scheme.

In addition to their being difficult to classify, conjunctive adjuncts are not identically classified by linguists and researchers. There are various classifications, but at the end these classifications are not significantly different from each other; they only define categories and allocate certain items differently, and some of them are more detailed and extended than others. As Halliday and Hasan (1976: 238) state:

> There is no single, uniquely correct inventory of the types of conjunctive relation; different classifications are possible, each of which would highlight different aspects of the fact.

In their own scheme of classification, Halliday and Hasan (1976); the pioneers in defining cohesion in English, invent four main categories of conjunction: *Additive, Adversative, Causal,* and *Temporal*, in addition to an extra fifth category: *Continuative*. Under these headings, further sub-classifications are introduced, which are, however, acknowledged by the two scholars to be "not of any very rigid kind" (1976: 239) (see the table provided by them in Appendix E). Examples of the sub-categories they suggest are: *alternative, comparative,* and *appositive* under the first category; *contrastive, corrective,* and *dismissive* under the second one; *result, reason, purpose, conditional,* and *respective* under the third; and *sequential, conclusive,* and *summative* under the fourth. The fifth category of *Continuative* includes six individual conjunctive items, which are grouped together as "they do not express any particular one of the conjunctive relations identified above" but are "used with a cohesive force in the text" (p.267). Examples of conjunctive items listed under each category are as follows:

I. Additive conjunctions: *and, and also, nor, or, or else, furthermore, in addition, besides, alternatively, incidentally, by the way, that is, I mean, in other words, for instance, for example, thus, likewise, similarly, on the other hand, by contrast.*
II. Adversative conjunctions: *yet, though, only, but, however, even so, nevertheless, despite this, in fact, actually, conversely, and, on the other hand, instead, on the contrary, rather, anyhow.*
III. Causal conjunctions: *so, then, hence, therefore, consequently, for this purpose, for, because, on this basis, in that case, under the circumstances, otherwise, in this respect.*
IV. Temporal conjunctions: *then, next, after that, at the same time, previously, finally, at last, first…then, at first…in the end, soon, after a time, on another occasion, meanwhile, secondly, in conclusion, at this point, here, to sum up, in short, briefly.*
V. Continuative conjunctions: *now, of course, well, anyway, surely,* and *after all*.

Another well-known classification is that of Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985) in the chapter of "Semantics and grammar of adverbials" in their work *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, where they use the term "conjuncts" instead of "conjunctions" or "conjunctive adjuncts", and organize conjunctive items under seven headings: *Listing, Summative, Appositional,*

Resultive, Inferential, Contrastive, and *Transitional*. In Quirk *et al*'s definition, conjuncts conjoin independent units contributing "another facet of information to a single integrated unit" (p. 631) – which shares a similar concept as that of conjunction in Halliday and Hasan's system. They sub-classify and exemplify their conjuncts as follows:

I. Listing
(a) Enumerative: *first, second, third…, first(ly), secondly, thirdly…, one, two, three…, a, b, c…, in the first place, in the second place…, first of all, on the one hand…on the other hand, for one thing... (and) for another (thing), for a start, to begin with, to start with, next, then, to conclude, finally, last, lastly, last of all.*
(b) Additive
Equative: *Correspondingly, equally, likewise, similarly, in the same way, by the same token.*
Reinforcing: *Again, also, further, furthermore, more, moreover, in particular, then, too, what is more, in addition, above all.*
II. Summative: *altogether, overall, then, before, thus, (all) in all, in conclusion, in sum, to conclude, to sum up, to summarize.*
III. Appositive: *namely, thus, in other words, for example, for instance, that is, that is to say, specially.*
IV. Resultive: *accordingly, consequently, hence, now, so, therefore, thus, as a consequence, in consequence, as a result, of course, somehow.*
V. Inferential: *else, otherwise, then, in other words, in that case.*
VI. Contrastive
(a) Reformulatory: *better, rather, more accurately, more precisely, alias, alternatively, in other words.*
(b) Replacive: *again, alternatively, rather, better, worse, on the other hand.*
(c) Antithetic: *contrariwise, conversely, instead, oppositely, then, on the contrary, in contrast, by contrast, by way of contrast, in comparison, by comparison, by way of comparison, (on the one hand…) on the other hand.*
(d) Concessive: *anyhow, anyway, anyways, besides, else, however, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, only, still, though, yet, in any case, in any event, at any rate, at all events, for all that, in spite of that, in spite it all, after all, at the same time, on the other hand, all the same, admittedly, of course, still and all, that said.*
VII. Transitional
(a) Discoursal: *incidentally, now, by the way, by the by(e)*
(b) Temporal: *meantime, meanwhile, in the meantime, in the meanwhile, originally, subsequently, eventually.*

A similar but conflated classification is that of Biber *et al* (1999), who name conjunctive adjuncts as "linking adverbials" and assert their being important devices for signaling the connections between passages of text and creating textual cohesion. Their classification is based on a large corpus-based research, whose corpus comprises over forty million words of authentic materials from four registers:

Academic prose, News, Fiction, and Conversation. Six semantic categories of linking adverbials are identified by them: *Enumeration and addition, Summation, Apposition, Result/inference, Contrast/concession,* and *Transition*, examples of which are grouped below:

I. Enumeration and addition: *first, second, lastly, for one thing,… for another, firstly, secondly, thirdly(etc.), in the first/second place, first of all, to begin with, next, in addition, further(more), similarly, also, by the same token, likewise, moreover.*
II. Summation: *in sum, to conclude, all in all, in conclusion, overall, to summarize.*
III. Apposition: *which is to say, in other words, that is, for example, for instance.*
IV. Result/inference: *therefore, consequently, thus, so, then*
V. Contrast/concession: *on the other hand, in contrast, alternatively, though, anyway, however, yet, conversely, instead, on the contrary, by comparison, anyhow, besides, nevertheless, still, in any case, at any rate, in spite of that, after all.*
VI. Transition: *by and by, incidentally, by the way, now, meanwhile.*

Hinkel (2001; 2002) presents another version of classification, which shares some similar headings with the previous versions, especially with that of Biber *et al* (1999). Her so-called "sentence-level conjunctions" (or "sentence transitions") correspond with what we identify here as conjunctive adjuncts as they function to "connect the ideas in propositions or sentence units" (Hinkel, 2002: 145). Transitions in Hinkel's categorization fall within six types listed and exemplified by her as follows:

I. Enumerative: *first(-ly), second(-ly), third(-ly), fourth(-ly) ..., next, then; in the first/second/third ... place; first/second/third ... of all; for one thing, to begin/start with, in conclusion, to conclude, finally, last(-ly), at last.*
II. Additive: *above all, additionally, (once) again; in addition, likewise, similarly, in the same way, by the same token, even worse, furthermore, moreover; also, besides, then, still, yet, nevertheless, nonetheless, again, then (again),* (distinguished from phrase-level coordinators).
III. Summative: *all in all, altogether, in sum, therefore, thus, to summarize, to sum up.*
IV. Resultive: *accordingly, as a result, as a/in consequence, consequently, hence, now, (and) so* (excluding adverbial subordinators).
V. Concessive: *after all, all the same, anyhow, anyway(s), at any rate, at the same time, besides, else, however, in any case/event, for all that, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the other hand, (better/and) still, that said, though* (in the sentence final position only), *(but) then/yet* (distinguished from the phrase-level coordinator, in the sentence final or initial position only).
VI. Other (focusing, contrastive, replacive, temporal, transitional): *as a matter of fact, by the way, conversely, incidentally, in contrast, in fact, meantime/while, in the*

meantime/while, eventually, originally, on the contrary, otherwise, rather, somehow, subsequently.

One final classification of conjunctive adjuncts we would like to refer to here is that of Halliday (2004), for whom the logico-semantic relations that are manifested in the cohesive system of conjunction fall into three types of "expansion": *Elaboration, Extension,* and *Enhancement*. That is, "conjunctions" according to Halliday (2004) "mark relations where one span of text elaborates, extends or enhances another, earlier span of text" (p. 540). He provides a discussion of each of these three primary types and its immediate sub-types in turn. His sub-categorization of relation types in fact is the most extended and detailed of all the others' we have seen above. Because of space limit, we will not display here the full set of his sub-categories listed under each primary category. We will rather refer to and exemplify only the "general" headings he accentuates at the end of his discussion:

> The headings that may be found useful for most purposes of analysis are the general ones of (i) elaborating: appositive, clarificative; (ii) extending: additive, adversative, variative; (iii) enhancing: temporal, comparative, causal, conditional, concessive, matter. (Halliday, 2004: 549)

Examples of these general headings are:

I. Elaboration

a. Apposition: *in other words, I mean (to say), for example, thus, to illustrate.*

b. Clarification: *or rather, at least, by the way, incidentally, in any case, anyway, leaving that aside, in particular, more especially, as I was saying, to resume, in short, to sum up, in conclusion, actually, as a matter of fact, in fact.*

II. Extension

a. Addition: *and, also, moreover, in addition, nor.*

Adversative: *but, yet, on the other hand, however.*

b. Variation: *on the contrary, instead, apart from that, except for that, alternatively.*

III. Enhancement

a. Temporal: *then, next, afterwards* [including correlatives *first ... then*], *just then, at the same time, before that, hitherto, previously, in the end, at once, straightaway, soon, on another occasion, an hour later, meanwhile, until then, at this moment, at this point, here, now, last of all.*

b. Manner

Comparative: *likewise, similarly, in a different way.*

c. Causal-conditional

Causal: *so, then, therefore, hence, as a result, on account of this, for that*

purpose.

Conditional: *then, in that case, otherwise, if not.*

Concessive: *yet, still, though, nevertheless, despite this, however, even so, all the same.*

d. Matter: *here, there, as to that, in that respect, in other respects, elsewhere.*

Comparing all these systems of classification together, they on the whole seem to be of similar nature and scope. However, they do have dissimilarities in defining and dividing their categories, as well as, in distributing certain conjunctive items among these categories. For example, the categories of enumeration, summation, and transition in Quirk *et al* (1985) and Biber *et al* (1999) include items which are included in the temporal category of Halliday and Hasan (1976). Moreover, some of these classifications (e.g. Quirk *et al*'s (1985) and Halliday's (2004)) are more detailed or more subdivided than others.

Different researchers of conjunctive adjuncts use in texts have chosen different systems of classification to base their analysis on. Field and Yip (1992), for instance, followed Halliday and Hasan (1976), adopting a four-way classification of "cohesive devices" in terms of *additive*, *adversative*, *causal*, and *temporal* categories. Milton and Tsang (1993), on the other hand, followed the categorization of Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983), and chose to study the occurrence and distribution of 25 single-word "logical connectors", which they classified as *additive*, *adversative*, *causal*, and *sequential.* By contrast, Granger and Tyson (1996) selected 108 "connectors" derived from Quirk *et al*'s (1985) identification and description of such cohesive devices (all cited in Bolton *et al*, 2003). In opposition to all these researchers, Bolton *et al* (2003) chose to identify and investigate a list of "connectors" – in student academic writing – that was not derived from "pre-existing categorizations", as they called them, like the ones provided by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Quirk *et al* (1985), or similar pedagogic and reference grammars, but that they devised themselves by analyzing the subset of academic writing taken from the ICE-GB corpus as an initial procedure to identify the connectors used by the authors of such published academic texts, presuming it to be a "valid starting point" for the analysis of student academic writing which followed.

In our analysis of conjunctive adjuncts in non-native speaker university students' writing (and in native speaker university students' writing later on), we will use the scheme of Halliday and Hasan (1976) due to the simplicity, clarity, and comprehensiveness of its conjunction classification (Li, 2004). A clearer account of our preference for this particular scheme is provided in chapter eight.

5.3. Previous research on conjunctive adjunct use in L2 student writing

Analyzing patterns of the use of the cohesive device of conjunctive adjunct in EFL/ESL student written discourse has been the objective of many researchers who were primarily motivated by pedagogically driven needs of particular EFL/ESL student groups for proper L2 writing instruction in the implementation of such textual features (Bolton *et al*, 2003; Hinkel, 2005). Most researchers, as well as writing theorists, who scrutinized features like these were on the one hand attentive to their importance in explicitly marking discourse organization and aiding in the development of cohesive and coherent prose, and perhaps producing good quality texts in general, and on the other, were conscious of their problematic nature in L2 texts and thus asserted that learners should be coached in their use (e.g. Witte and Faigley, 1981; Holloway, 1981; Zamel, 1983; Hartnett, 1986; McCarthy, 1991; Hinkel, 2001; Li, 2004; Tanko, 2004).

With this awareness, much of the research on this topic has sought to investigate, quantitatively and/or qualitatively, the ways in which the use of conjunctive adjuncts in the English texts of L2 writers differs from its correspondent use in the English texts of native English-speaking writers (e.g. Wikbork and Bjork, 1989; Field and Yip, 1992; Mauranen, 1993; Milton and Tsang, 1993; Granger and Tyson, 1996; Green, Christopher, Lam, and Mei, 2000; Hinkel, 2001, 2002; Bolton *et al*, 2003; Tanko, 2004). Comparative studies like these were carried out as part of the attempts

to comprehend more adequately facets of the problem related to the use of conjunctive adjuncts by L2 writers (e.g. conjunctive adjunct misuse, underuse, and overuse), and further, recommend pedagogical treatment. Highlighting one facet of the problem in the light of native speaker writers' linguistic performance, McCarthy (1991; as cited by Tanko, 2004: 159) stated that "advanced L2 learners' output data can seem unnatural because, unlike native speakers, they cannot employ a variety of appropriate connectors to express cognitive relations and this decreases the comprehensibility of their texts".

Reid (1993), as we saw before (section 5.1.3), made another, more general, statement of the problem, illuminated also by the results of comparing L2 writing with L1 writing: it is that ESL writers often employ various cohesion conventions differently from native speakers of English, which may sometimes make their L2 texts appear incoherent to native speaker readers. Therefore, Reid emphasized the teaching of text cohesion in addition to issues in the coherence of ideas to provide learners with linguistic means of developing unified texts (cited in Hinkel, 2001: 113). Similarly, Silva (1993), in his synthesis of 72 published research reports and empirical studies, which was aimed at highlighting the most pronounced differences between practically all aspects of writing in L1 and L2, pointed out that compared to L1 basic and student writing, L2 writers "develop text cohesion differently, with weak lexical/semantic ties and theme connections, and a preponderance of overt conjunctive markers" (cited in Hinkel, 2005: 619). In the light of such and many other fundamental differences, Silva's pedagogical implication was based on the recognition that L2 writers' learning needs are distinct from those of L1 writers, whether basic or skilled; and thus, "teachers who work with L2 writers require special and focused training to deal with cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences of their students" (ibid).

Almost a decade later, Hinkel (2001; 2002) conducted two large scale corpus-based comparative studies of NS and NNS essays written by university students. In her first study (2001), Hinkel carried out a comparative analysis of median frequency

rates of explicit cohesive devices employed in academic texts of native speakers and non-native speakers – who were speakers of different L1s (Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, and Arabic). "Sentence transitions" were among the explicit devices she focused on, and they were found employed by all NNS groups at significantly higher median frequency rates than those of NSs, which possibly indicated that NNSs over-relied on these devices to make their texts cohesive. Hinkel found that even advanced L2 writers lacked the skills of using these textual features effectively (p. 123) , and that the preponderance of sentence transitions in L2 texts often reflected the "NNS writers' attempts to construct a unified idea flow within the constraints of a limited syntactic and lexical range of accessible linguistic means" (p. 111/128). What has led to such overuse, and probably misuse, in NNS texts is, in Hinkel's opinion, "the focus on transitions in writing and composition instruction for university level students" (p. 123), to which she suggested that learners otherwise "can be taught that sentence transitions alone cannot make the text cohesive but can merely enhance textual cohesion that exists largely independently of transitional words and phrases" (p. 129).

Hinkel's second study (2002) on the other hand set out to examine lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical features in 1,457 NS and NNS placement essays written in several universities across the United States. All NNS students involved in the study (Arabic, Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese) were advanced and trained L2 writers, most of them holders of U.S. academic degrees. Hinkel (2002) found that "even after years of ESL and composition training, L2 writers' text continues to differ significantly from that of novice (first-year) NS students in regard to most features examined in her study" (cited in Hinkel, 2005: 622) – among which were sentence transitions. This accords to a considerable degree with Silva's conclusion from his research overview, in which he stated that "L2 writing is strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically different in important ways from L1 writing" (p. 669). Hinkel (2002) accounted for this by claiming that "NSs of English already have a highly developed (native) language proficiency that a majority of NNSs require years to develop, in most cases as adults" (p. 669). Like Silva (1993),

she called for "changes in the methodologies for teaching L2 writing that are based on the pedagogy intended for teaching composition to NSs" (ibid).

Similarly to Hinkel's first study (2001), a considerable amount of L2 writing research has focused on examining the occurrence and distribution of conjunctive adjuncts in the English writing of university students from EFL/ESL contexts (e.g. Chinese, French, Hungarian, Finnish, Swedish), for whom English is generally a language learned/acquired at school – as is the case with the Syrian EFL students taking part in this study (Wikbork and Bjork, 1989; Crewe, 1990; Field and Yip, 1992; Mauranen, 1993; Milton and Tsang, 1993; Granger and Tyson, 1996; Altenberg and Tapper, 1998; Green *et al*, 2000; Bolton *et al*, 2003; Tanko, 2004). Much of this research adopted a corpus-based approach to the study of conjunctive adjuncts and investigated patterns of the problem EFL/ESL students had in their implementation, such as 'misuse', 'overuse', and 'underuse'. In most cases, however, the analysis of students' writings showed that their major problems lay in their overuse and misuse of conjunctive adjuncts, whereas little or no evidence of significant underuse was revealed (Bolton *et al*, 2003). An illustration of how these three problematic features of conjunctive adjunct use in L2 writing were identified and evidenced by researchers is presented in the following section.

5.3.1. Conjunctive adjunct 'misuse', 'overuse', and 'underuse' in L2 writing and problems of pedagogic practice in textbooks and teaching of writing

Firstly, "Logical connectives **misuse**", as defined by Crewe (1990), "is an almost universal feature of ESL students' writing" (p. 317), which occurs when these connectives are "used with erroneous meanings" (p. 324), like, as exemplified by Crewe, when *on the contrary* is used for *on the other hand/however*, as in:

> [wild beasts, fascist police, etc]. Those are the images of the British Government that the Communists want to impose on the local Chinese and its supporters or readers. On the contrary, they describe the communists as patriotic Chinese who did not show the slightest fear.
>
> (Crewe, 1990: 317)

According to Crewe's argument, conjunctive adjunct misuse causes comprehensive problems: "if the links are misused, the argument as a whole, not merely the sentence containing the connective, becomes difficult to process and may even appear illogical" (p. 316).

In Milton and Tsang's (1993) study of conjunctive adjunct occurrence and distribution in the academic writing of Hong Kong high school and university students, the concept of 'misuse' was further clarified as referring to incidences where "the use of the logical connector is misleading; another device should have been used; the logical connector is placed inappropriately … [which] is related to loose organization and faulty logic within the text" (p. 228). The sentence below was provided by Milton and Tsang as an instance of this faulty logic, resulting from the misuse of *therefore*, "where *therefore* is used to force a conclusion from unsupported assumption" (p. 230) (cited in Bolton *et al*, 2003: 169).

> In conclusion, beside the methods mentioned above, there are many other methods of courtship and they are interesting. Therefore, its better for us to contact more the nature[1].
>
> (Milton & Tsang, 1993: 230)

Crewe (1990) pointed out that conjunctive adjunct misuse may result from pedagogic practice in textbooks and teaching that relies on paradigmatic lists of conjunctive adjuncts. Crewe was one of those writing theorists (e.g. Zamel, 1980; 1983) who warned against offering students lists of these cohesive devices categorized according to function. He asserted that such lists cause students much confusion: "not only are the students led into error, but they are not provided with sufficient information to resolve it". Listing for him "only serves to separate the connective as a linguistic entity from its role in the information structure of the text" (p. 318). Zamel (1983: 24) described the lists provided in most teaching textbooks at that time as "ineffective" since learners need to know "how these links make

[1] Incidences of conjunctive adjunct misuse in the EFL writing corpus of this thesis are fully displayed and categorized in the conjunctive adjunct analysis chapter (chapter 8, section 8.4.4).

contextually related ideas clear and logical" rather than just learning them as a class of items. She also considered them "misleading" as some transitional markers may have more than one function in English, such as 'since', which may signal time or cause. Another serious problem for Zamel has to do with the fact that "devices categorized together are not necessarily interchangeable: 'but' and 'however' cannot be substituted for 'on the contrary' or 'on the other hand', although they are often classified together" (ibid).

Secondly, the terms 'overuse' and 'underuse' generally speaking have been employed in most corpus-based analyses of student difficulties in the use of linguistic features in L2 writing as "descriptive, not prescriptive, terms; they merely refer to the fact that a linguistic form is found significantly more or less in the learner corpus than in the reference corpus" (Gilquin, Granger and Paquot, 2007: 322). Thus, analysts' conclusions about EFL/ESL writers' conjunctive adjunct overuse and underuse were often drawn on the basis of measuring the occurrence ratios of conjunctive adjuncts in EFL/ESL writing against their occurrence ratios in native English writing, whose writers could be either university students or authors of published articles. In a few cases though, such as in Crewe's (1990) study, no quantitative data of any kind was presented, and judgments thus of overuse/underuse were merely "impressionistic", which was criticized by Bolton *et al* (2003: 172). Crewe illustrated the overuse of conjunctive adjuncts in the writing of Chinese university students by citing one student writer who packed a chain of expressions such as *moreover*, *indeed*, *as a matter of fact*, *in actuality*, *however*, *nevertheless* into the space of just three short paragraphs of prose (cited in Bolton *et al*, 2003: 167). The essential argument in Crewe's study was that Chinese students' overuse of connectors in his data might be motivated by their "trying to impose surface logicality on a piece of writing where no deep logicality exists" (1990: 320). Additionally, he observed that this overuse might even be seen as a way of "disguising poor writing", where the writer attempts to overcome an area of difficulty by "the abundance of superficial links" (P. 321). In his conclusion, Crewe focused on overuse and linked it to misuse noting that:

> Over-use at best clutters up the text unnecessarily, and at worst causes the thread of argument to zigzag about, as each connective points it in a different direction. Non-use is always preferable to misuse because all readers, native-speaker or non-native-speaker, can mentally construe logical links in the argument if they are not explicit, whereas misuse always causes comprehensive problems and may be so impenetrable as to defy normal decoding. (Crewe, 1990: 324)

Milton and Tsang (1993) were among those researchers who measured conjunctive adjunct overuse in their data on the basis of comparing results from L2 and L1 corpora. Alongside though, they distinguished it as occurring when "the logical connector is unnecessary; its presence does not contribute to the coherence of the text" – referring to it hence as "redundant use" (p. 228). The following sentence was provided by them as an example of the redundant use of *moreover*:

> Any animal or insects need to generate their next generation with no exception. Moreover, the very first step is to date an opposite sex.
> (Milton & Tsang, 1993: 228)

As in Crewe's study, Milton and Tsang's analysis of Chinese university students' difficulties in this aspect of essay-writing revealed that overuse (e.g. *firstly*, *secondly*, and *lastly*) and misuse (e.g. *moreover* and *therefore*) were the two main problem areas. In a third study conducted by Field and Yip (1992) – also into the use of conjunctive adjuncts (or "conjunctive cohesive devices" in their terms) by L2 student writers from Hong Kong, the analysis results supported Milton and Tsang's (1993) and Crewe's (1990) findings, showing that "Cantonese speakers use far more devices than their native speaker counterparts, that many of them choose expressions that seldom appear in the writing of L1 students of a similar age and educational level" (p. 27). Moreover, they noted particular devices that tended to be misused by students, such as *on the other hand* and *besides*.

Another relevant study that used corpus techniques to investigate this issue is that of Granger and Tyson (1996). In this study, the researchers compared a sample (89,918 words) of the French mother-tongue sub-component of the ICLE (International Corpus of Learner English) corpus with a sample (77,723 words) of writing from the

control corpus of English essay writing. The EFL French writers were advanced learners; i.e. university students of English, usually in their third or fourth year of study (p. 18), and the NS writers were also students at university level. The texts analyzed in the NNS and NS corpora were of similar genre; that is, argumentative writing. Granger and Tyson hypothesized that they would discover a general overuse of "connectors" (their term for conjunctive adjuncts) by French learners. Although their calculation of these items' overall frequencies demonstrated that this hypothesis was invalid, a more qualitative look showed strong evidence of individual connectors overuse (e.g. *actually, indeed, of course, moreover, e.g., for instance, namely, on the contrary*) and underuse (e.g. *however, instead, though, yet, hence, then, therefore, thus*) (p. 17 & 20-21). They reported that "the cases of underuse were unexpected", and "the cases of overuse seemed to provide evidence of mother-tongue influence", for "it is more common in French than in English for texts to be explicitly structured by the use of connectives" (p. 19; citing Hervey and Higgins, 1992: 49). They then proceeded to analyze cases of stylistic, semantic, and syntactic misuse, and concluded that:

> Even at a reasonably advanced level, connectors are difficult to master. We have seen that French learner connector usage differs widely from that of their NS counterparts: this is due to an inability to differentiate stylistically, insufficient knowledge of semantic restrictions placed on individual connectors, and inexperience in manipulating connectors within the sentence structure. (Granger and Tyson, 1996: 24-25)

In their pedagogical implications, Granger and Tyson suggested that if problems like the ones above are to be addressed, "it is essential to teach students that connectors in English should not be used as 'stylistic enhancers' but should be thought of as higher-level discourse units" – emphasizing by this a point first argued by Crewe (1990: 316). In addition, "it is necessary to place more emphasis on *how* to use connectors, laying stress on examining their use in authentic texts" (p. 25). They agreed with Crewe (1990) that "misleading lists of so-called interchangeable connectors often found in textbooks should be avoided at all costs", and with Zamel (1983: 27) that "learning when not to use them (connectors) is as important as learning when to do so" (p. 25).

Bolton, Nelson, and Hung (2003), again in a corpus-based study of connector usage in the writing of university students in Hong Kong and in Great Britain, confined their analysis to overuse and underuse. They questioned the accuracy of the previous studies' measurement of these concepts, suggesting that the target model in academic writing is not the academic writing of native speaker students – as hypothesized by Field and Yip (1992) and Granger and Tyson (1996), nor is it the general published writing of native speakers (e.g. newspaper, literature, popular writing, textbooks, etc.) – as assumed by Milton and Tsang (1993). Rather, they argued that "a better set of control data", for both native and non-native speaker academic students, could "be provided by a corpus of published academic writing in English" (p. 173). Hence, they made use of such a corpus and took the frequency of connectors in it "as a benchmark against which to measure overuse and underuse" in the writing of both NNS and NS students (p. 165 & 180). Measured in this way, the results showed that both groups alike "overuse[d] a wide range of connectors". As for underuse, no significant evidence of it was offered (p. 165). In their conclusion, Bolton *et al* summarized their results as follows:

> The results presented here indicate clearly that the overuse of connectors is not confined to non-native speakers, but is a prominent feature of students' writing generally. Both non-native and native (British) students use a considerably smaller number of different connectors in their writing than professional academics. As a result, both sets of student tend to overuse those connectors within their repertoire, and this overuse is much greater in the corpus of Hong Kong student writing, particularly with items such as *so, and, also, thus,* and *but*. In the British data, overuse is most marked with the items *however, so, therefore, thus,* and *furthermore*. (Bolton *et al*, 2003: 180)

A number of other studies set out to explore similar issues in the writing of non-native speaker students with other L1 backgrounds. Tanko (2004), for example, conducted a small scale study in which he focused on the use of conjunctive adjuncts (or "adverbial connectors" as he called them) in high-rated argumentative essays written by Hungarian advanced learners of English (second and third year students enrolled in an MA in English Language and Literature course in Budapest). The in-

depth study of the texts revealed that "Hungarian writers share the problems of writers with other cultural backgrounds" (157):

> Hungarian writers tend to use more yet slightly fewer types of adverbial connectors than native speakers. The distribution of adverbial connectors in the essays is uneven, few phrasal equivalents are used, and there is a common tendency to use listing adverbial connectors to mark the superstructure of the text. (Tanko, 2004: 157)

In his research review, Tanko reported a number of studies that evidenced the problematic nature of non-native speaker students' use of connectors in academic texts written in the English language, as each of these studies revealed various types of shortcomings in this use. For example, Mauranen (1993) studied the use of connectors in Finnish writers' texts. Her comparative analysis of Finnish and Anglo-American academic texts showed that Finnish writers tended to avoid the use of overt connectors in their English texts, possibly as a result of L1 influence, since the emphasis on the indication of textual relations is less marked in Finnish. Another study that Tanko referred to was that of Wikbork and Björk (1989), which focused on the use of these devices in Swedish university students' texts. In this study, the misuse and underuse of particular connectors was found to be the cause of the coherence breakdowns identified in Swedish writers' texts (Tanko, 2004: 158).

The third study in Tanko's review was that of Altenberg and Tapper (1998), which contrasted Swedish learners' English texts with those of French students. Both Swedish and French learners were reported to lack the register awareness necessary for the appropriate use of connectors in academic writing. By contrast, Hungarian writers, as reported in Tanko's own study, showed familiarity with the stylistic requirements of the academic register. At the end, as one main implication of his study, Tanko suggested a concordance-based classroom activity for the teaching of connectors; one that "relies heavily on the findings of large scale corpus linguistic studies that investigated the use of connectors in texts produced by natives" (p. 158). It is worth mentioning here that Milton and Tsang (1993) also in their pedagogical implications suggested using concordancing in connector teaching, assuming that by

comparing the concordance of ESL writing with that of NS writing, students can find the similarities and differences by themselves, and improve their writing in this aspect by imitating the NS writers' implementation of these cohesive markers.

However, according to Tanko's main argument in his study, "teaching learners why, when, and how to use connectors so that their written output approximates the norms of native texts is not an easy undertaking" (p. 159). There are various linguistic and methodological factors that make the acquisition and appropriate use of connectors difficult for ESL and EFL writers. As he explained:

> The sources of difficulty related to the use of connectors are diverse and rooted in their discourse-organising function, grammatical, semantic, and morphological attributes, and also in shortcomings in the techniques employed to teach these devices. (Tanko, 2004: 159)

The very last source of difficulty mentioned in Tanko's above statement in relation to teaching techniques shortcomings has been in particular highlighted by a number of linguists and composition theorists who recognize the confusion caused for teachers and students by most textbooks in the use of conjunctive adjuncts in L2 writing (e.g. Zamel, 1980; 1983; Crewe, 1990; Field and Yip, 1992; Milton and Tsang, 1993; Hinkel, 2001; Li, 2004). We have already seen how linguists like Zamel (1983) and Crewe (1990) attributed learner misuse of conjunctive adjuncts to pedagogic practice in textbooks and teaching that relies on paradigmatic lists of conjunctive adjuncts. We have also seen how the over-emphasis on these logical devices in teaching and composition instruction was condemned by authors such as Hinkel (2001) as leading non-native speaker students to overuse, and even misuse, them in their outputs.

Like Hinkel, Crewe (1990) largely attributed over-use of conjunctive adjuncts to the misconception students hold about their use, which is, "the more, the better" (p. 320). "Such a misconception, he argued, resulted from some kinds of mechanical exercise devised to train students in the correct use of connectives and also from the education examination system which not only encourages students to make abundant

use of connectives in their writing but awards marks in examinations for the sheer presence of the connectives" (cited by Ting, 2003: 5). This situation is much the same as the examination system in Syria; the EFL context of the present study. Crewe extracted an exercise from Mackay's (1974/1987: 254-5) textbook to illustrate the type of exercises he meant. The exercise contained five sentences and required students to fill in the blanks at the beginning of four out of the five sentences with connectives by selecting from a range of connectives with different semantic and discoursal values.

Researchers like Field and Yip (1992) presumed that what led many ESL writers in their study to overuse conjunctive adjuncts and sometimes misuse them was "an awareness of the variety of devices acquired from second language teaching" – contrasting with those NS writers who acquired the language naturally (p.27). Zamel (1983) focused more in depth on how to teach these cohesive devices and how to solve the problems caused by the misleading teaching methods and instructions in writing textbooks. She suggested that English language students particularly need *careful* instruction in the use of "conjuncts" (as she called them). Her main argument – which other researchers like Granger and Tyson (1996: 25) and Tanko (2004: 159) emphasized and agreed with – was that:

> Teachers need to bear in mind, however, that, important as these links are, learning when *not* to use them is as important as learning when to do so. In other words, students need to be taught that the excessive use of linking devices, one for almost every sentence, can lead to prose that sounds both artificial and mechanical. (Zamel, 1983: 27)

After all, the pedagogic practice in textbooks and teaching methods is of course not the only source of the problem. The inappropriate use of conjunctive adjuncts in students' writing may be the result of other influencing factors like L1 interference, to which a number of researchers as we saw earlier assigned student conjunctive adjunct overuse, underuse, or misuse (e.g. Mauranen, 1993; Granger and Tyson, 1996; Ting, 2003; Li, 2004). In Ting's (2003) study of "conjunction" (following Halliday & Hasan's terminology) errors in the writing of Chinese tertiary EFL

students, a further distinction was made between factors related to L1 interference – there called "inter-lingual interference" – and factors related to "intra-lingual interference", indicating by the latter cases where students confuse conjunctions of similar type in L2, such as using '*on the contrary*' for '*however*'. Ting also accounted for the redundant use of certain conjunctions ('*because*' and '*since*') in students' texts by referring to the influence of "spoken language habit" on them, and therefore suggested the need for them to learn how to write formal/academic essays.

In addition to all these influencing factors, Ting found that the phenomenon of overuse of additive conjunctions in the study was "more or less related to the students' inability to employ complex hierarchical sentence structures", e.g. by using clause connectors like '*which*' or '*whereby*' instead of additive conjunctions to change one-clause sentences to longer, hierarchical sentences (p. 5). As a result of this finding, Ting criticized Crewe's (1990) sole attribution of the misconceptions students have about the use of conjunctions to certain types of "mechanical exercises" and to the "education examination system" commenting that:

> No doubt Crewe (1990) provides a sound explanation for the over-use of conjunction in students' writing. However, he seems merely to emphasize some environmental/external contributing factors, and to neglect student writers' internal language developmental stages which may also in some way cause this problem. (Ting, 2003: 5)

In conclusion, conjunctive adjunct overuse has not surprisingly been identified as a characteristic of lower-proficiency learners' texts. Chiang's (2003) study was one of a few studies that related the overuse of conjunctive adjuncts by ESL learners to low quality writing. Specifically, he investigated the effect of grammatical and discourse features on NNS and NS rater perceptions of writing quality in evaluating English writing samples produced by Taiwanese college students. Most NNS and NS raters in his study agreed that "transition between sentences in the absence of junction words" was the best predicator of an essay's overall quality (p. 472, 476-77, & 480), indicating that using fewer and varied conjunctive adjuncts is a sign of high quality English writing. At the same time however, a number of other researchers' analysis

results revealed that high-rated essays' writers used more conjunctive adjuncts than low-rated essays' writers (e.g. Witte and Faigley, 1981; Ferris, 1994; Li, 2004). Witte and Faigley (1981), for example, analyzed 5 low-rated and 5 high-rated college student essays and found that "the writers of high-rated essays employ over three times as many conjunctive ties as the writers of low-rated essays" (p. 196). Also, Ferris (1994), in her analysis of various lexical and syntactic features in a corpus of 160 ESL texts rated by different raters on a 1-10 scale, found that conjunctive adjuncts were among those features used with greater frequency by students at higher levels of ESL proficiency (p. 417). Moreover, Li (2004), in her investigation into the use of conjunctive adjuncts in fifty English argumentative essays written by Chinese writers (different quality samples of TEM4 and IELTS writing tasks) and native speaker writers, found that the higher the writing quality of the Chinese writers' essays is, the higher the frequency of conjunctive adjuncts used in them is. Despite this, not all of the above referred to researchers presumed that the high frequency of conjunctive adjuncts could be taken as a sign of good English writing (e.g. Li, 2004). Li's (2004) study showed that from the Chinese group with the highest quality writing to the native speaker group, conjunctive adjuncts frequency decreased greatly. As she commented, this prominent decrease "proves that in advanced quality essays written by native writers, connectives are much less used than those essays written by Chinese writers, even by high proficiency Chinese English teachers. Therefore, the high frequency of connectives cannot be taken as a symbol of good English writing" (p. 40).

5.4. Previous research on conjunctive adjunct use in Syrian and Arabic-speaking students' L2 writing

In this research, following Halliday and Hasan's (1976) concept and categorization of conjunctive adjunct (or conjunction), the intention is to study the occurrence and frequency of this cohesive device in the writing of Arab university students of English language and literature in Syria, and to examine its appropriate/correct use, misuse, overuse, and underuse by them. Choosing to focus on this area is triggered

by the fact that conjunctive adjuncts are often pointed at as an important property of writing quality (Witte and Faigley, 1981: 195-7); yet, English language and literature students in Syria, at their various stages of study, are observed to have difficulty in mastering them. In previous studies that investigated various aspects in the writing of students from this same context (e.g. Dalbani, 1992; Meygle, 1997; Mouzahem, 1991; Fakhra, 2004), these cohesive devices – to the best of our knowledge – were not scrutinized and examined in the way intended in this research, and no or little evidence of our last observation was presented. Only in Dalbani's (1992) analysis of texts written by students with supposedly different levels of language proficiency (passing and failing second and fourth year students), few instances of problems like the unnecessary/redundant use, insufficient utilization, and misuse of these devices were briefly reported. Our observation concerning the difficulty facing Syrian university students in conjunctive adjunct use could however be supported with the findings of some studies which examined Arab students' performance in this area. For example, Hinkel's study (2001), reviewed in this chapter, concerning the implementation of sentential conjunctions by non-native speaker academic students of various L1 backgrounds, one of which was Arabic. Overall, this implementation was characterized by misuse, and most by overuse.

Another study is that of Bacha and Hanania (1980; cited in Zamel, 1983), which focused on the ability of Arab students at university level to use cohesive links in writing. These researchers found that conjunctive adjuncts caused many problems, which may stem, as they hypothesized, "from a restricted knowledge of linking words in the English language and the logical relationship associated with each" (Bacha and Hanania, 1980: 251, cited in Zamel, 1983: 23), "rather than from the differences between the rhetorical systems of the two languages, as Kaplan's well-known theory [Contrastive Rhetoric] would have us believe (1967)" (Zamel, 1983: 23). It is worth mentioning here that Kaplan, as early as 1966, stated that speakers of Arabic transfer rhetorical patterns from their mother tongue into their English writing (cited in Khuwaileh & Shoumali, 2000: 175). Inspired partly by this perspective, and mainly by the problems facing Arab (Jordanian) academic students

in both Arabic and English writing, Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000) conducted a study in which they presumed an interrelatedness or association between the writing ability of these students in English (L2) and their writing ability in Arabic (L1), and hence, between their writing errors (or weaknesses) in English and Arabic. They thus investigated writing skills in the two languages aiming to see whether there was an association between poor writing across languages. The study confirmed that "poor writing in English correlates with similar deficiencies in mother tongue" (p. 174). What is particularly relevant in their findings to our own observation in relation to the difficulty of conjunctive adjunct implementation for Syrian university students is that "the lack of cohesion and coherence" was the most obvious linguistic weakness noticed by them in the Arabic and English compositions alike; and one prominent form this lack of cohesion and coherence took was the underproduction of logical connectors (conjunctive adjuncts in this study).

> The texts lacked the logical connectors of sequence, consequence, contrast, addition, illustration and contrast. More than a third of the participants (36%) did not use signal words to guide the discussion of their arguments. While reading their texts, we felt that the burden of working out the participants' intended meanings was time consuming and sometimes confusion or misunderstanding took place due to the lack of signal words. … The participants wrote essays with good ideas, but due to the lack of enumerators and /or sequential words, their writing seemed like a list of sentences. … In Arabic, more than half of the students (55%) wrote compositions with no appropriate logical linking of ideas. (Khuwaileh & Shoumali, 2000: 177-78)

In their conclusion, Khuwaileh and Shoumali asserted that "given the strong association between L1 and L2 performance, deficiencies in writing English are not solely the responsibility of the English teachers. The problem already exists in L1" (p. 181). This implied that some students' problems in English writing "can be linked to the deep-rooted problems in Arabic writing" (p. 182), to which they suggested that "learners of English need to be taught about the English text awareness rather than transferring. This can be done by guiding learners to look critically and analytically at English texts written by native speakers of English which in turn supports their own writing" (ibid).

Finally, we would like to note that attempts like the ones reviewed above to study or underscore Arab learners' problems in the use of conjunctive adjuncts as cohesive tools in English writing – whilst revealing significant results – are few, limited, and in need of validation through further empirical research. That is to say, although there have been numerous studies of conjunctive adjuncts in EFL writing – with many contradictory findings, there is still a need for these involving Arabic-speaking students.

5.5. Conclusion

Upon examining Syrian EFL students’ employment of conjunctive adjuncts in the data of this study, we intend to suggest possible sources of the inappropriate/redundant use of these devices, or even of the tendency to avoid using them. Furthermore, the investigation of the frequency of various conjunctive adjuncts in the Syrian students’ products attempts to predict patterns of conjunctive adjunct overuse and underuse (chapter 8), also measured in a correlative investigation of such frequencies in the written products of native English-speaking academic students, for the purpose of comparison (chapter 9). The results of the comparative analysis will then be compared with previous research findings reported in this chapter, and conclusions drawn.

Chapter Six: Introduction to the Main Study

6.1. The context and data of the main study

The poor form and quality of writing observed in texts produced by students of the English Language and Literature Department at a top university in Syria, as well as the hope to contribute to understanding of how the grammar is applied/misapplied by them, and consequently helping them improve their application of some grammar patterns, have been introduced right from the beginning as the primary reasons behind the establishment of this work as a whole. With this broad basic objective in mind, the main study was conducted within the same academic context as that of its preliminary exploratory studies discussed in chapters two and three – though with a different and larger set of data.

6.1.1. Subjects and setting

The subjects in the present study are a group of Syrian EFL students from the English Language and Literature Department at a top university in Syria, where all students follow a four-year program of English language and literature study. After graduation, a few students of this department, in particular those with relatively high grades, might choose to resume their study following a one-year Diploma course – either in literature, linguistics, or translation. Unlike the two exploratory studies, whose subjects were only a small number of first and third year students, subjects in this study are 35 third year, fourth year, and Diploma students, whose writing is assumed to be more sophisticated, organized, and developed in terms of form and content than that of first and second year students.

The reason behind choosing the products of undergraduate students in the third and fourth years of study, in this particular setting, as a source of data is that in spite of

the special attention given to teaching writing in this setting, particularly the linguistic aspects, and in spite of the good deal of exam writing (but not free or classroom writing) all students are subject to at every stage during the four years, most graduates of the department are observed to still write an English of relatively poor quality at all levels, such as spelling, lexis, grammar, mechanics, and text structure. Therefore, most of their performance tends to be unsatisfactory, and no real attempts of improvement have been made on the part of either teachers or students. It could be the large numbers of students in this academic context that make it difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to trace, identify and address their pupils' problems (for more details see chapter one).

In contrast, Diploma students, whose products have been chosen to be part of our data as well, are more competent in language use and much fewer in number than undergraduate students. They have a better chance than the latter group to develop and adjust what they have learned and incorporated into their interlanguage – including language norms, organization techniques, and communication skills. In short, these postgraduate students represent the group of 'good writers' in this research. Another reason for including Diploma students is that their linguistic and communication abilities in writing can be compared with those of undergraduate students. Through such comparison, not only can 'patterns of development' be explored, but also 'patterns of persistent errors'. The underlying presumption here is that errors which persist at an advanced level, like that of Diploma students, will not only reflect the learner's knowledge of the language, but also reveal the aspects of language use/usage that are most difficult to learn.

6.1.2. Corpus

For purposes of this research, a new and larger set of written texts was selected to be analyzed. These texts are different from the ones used in the survey and in Fakhra (2004) in terms of type, length, and constraints. A collection of 35 'examination papers' written by the 35 students, who are divided as described above into third

year, fourth year, and Diploma students, constitutes the corpus of this research. The 35 papers are made up of approximately 30,000 words, with each of the three groups' papers consisting of around one third of the 30,000 words. Table 6.1 below demonstrates the exact number of words in the whole corpus and in each of the three sub-corpora.

Table 6.1: Word numbers in the Syrian groups' sub-corpora

Group sub-corpus	Third year	Fourth year	Diploma	*Total*
Number of words	9,869	9,499	9,978	29,346

This corpus is a focused one as it has been carefully and narrowly selected. Because we know that language varies with genre, the texts written in the selected exam papers are all of the literary essay type in which students were asked to analyze, explain, criticize, or comment on a particular literary topic or extract(s) from a text or texts they had studied. In each student's paper there are two-three essays and paragraphs, ranging from 200 words to 600 words long, depending on the number of questions he/she was asked to answer (see samples of exam questions in Appendix C). The reason behind choosing examination papers to be analyzed lies in the nature of the writing process as students were composing under the stressful conditions of time limit and exam tension, and as they could not seek the help of a dictionary where they might get stuck. All the papers that were selected as data are passing ones (their marks range between 50% and 80%). All essays were transcribed by the researcher, and their writers' real names replaced with pseudonyms (see samples of students' exam papers in Appendix D).

6.2. Data analysis

6.2.1. Initial analysis of grammar errors

After the texts were chosen, a selection of all groups' texts was examined in terms of all the grammatical inaccuracies they contained. Through this initial procedure we

aimed to explore and identify the most salient and persistent errors. Although we are aware of the importance of examining students' grammatical performance as a whole – including errors and non-errors; what the student did and what he/she avoided (chapter three, section 3.1.1) – if we are to evaluate his/her grammar competence, choosing errors to focus on as a first step was meant to highlight problematic areas in the English grammar for students in the specified context, and was inspired by the significance of studying errors pointed out by researchers such as Corder (1967; 1973), Ellis (1992; 1994), and Salem (2007) (chapter three, section 3.1).

This error analysis was also intended to check which of the grammatical errors that were found to be most serious according to the error analysis made in Fakhra (2004) and according to the teachers' survey carried out earlier would (or would not) reemerge in the corpus analyzed here, and which of these errors would (or would not) be classified among the most serious (salient, frequent, or persistent) ones this time.

5000-6000 words from each group's sub-corpus were analyzed, which amounted to 7 exam papers from the third year group, 7 from the fourth year group, and 5 from the diploma group (all selected randomly). Inaccurate grammar forms in general were identified in these papers, and the ones observed to be most frequently reoccurring and persistent were marked up, each type with a different highlighting color to distinguish it from the others. Then, the instances of each recurrent/persistent inaccurate form (both different and repeated occurrences) were counted and their total number in each group's texts was compared with the total numbers of the other inaccurate forms' instances (see table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Frequencies of prominent grammar errors in each group's 5000-6000 words.

Grammar patterns affected by errors	Third year	Fourth year	Diploma	Total
Prepositions	48	58	40	146
Articles	31	49	20	100
Conjunctions (including conjunctive adjuncts)	30	26	15	71
Subject-verb agreement	12	21	2	35
Relative clauses	9	8	3	20

Table 6.2 shows the most prominent error patterns that were observed in the analyzed texts and compares the three groups and, to some extent, distinguishes what features of 'progress' or 'persistence' might exist in their formal outputs, taking into consideration their stages of study. Nevertheless, we can not draw firm conclusions about these features as we do not know whether a decrease in the number of a particular grammar error in the writing of a particular group compared with another group indicates a development in the performance or knowledge of this group (as might be the case with Diploma students), or whether it indicates 'ignorance' or 'avoidance' on its part (as might be the case with third year students), as far as the specific grammar pattern is concerned. On the other hand, we are not quite sure – even though this could be the case – whether the increase in the numbers of some error patterns in the production of fourth year students, if compared with third year students, implies a tendency among the members of this group to 'achieve', rather than 'avoid', when they do not know a structure and "attempt to cope with their ignorance", which may lead them to commit more "traceable" errors (Medgyes, 1989 in James, 1998; Færch and Kasper, 1984 in Olsen, 1999; chapter 3, section 3.1.1: 'achievement vs. avoidance').

Errors in the analyzed texts were not restricted only to the five ones displayed in table 6.2. Many other error types were noticed and underlined, but because they were either less frequent or less persistent, we did not include them in that short list of errors. Tense errors (particularly tense sequencing violation), run-on sentences, comma splices, and sentence fragments were the types of error that dominated most texts, especially those of third and fourth year students (as was the case with the

texts of first and third year students used in the exploratory studies); that is, they were so numerous and persistent that we found it difficult and time consuming to count and examine them, though they could be easily spotted and distinguished.

The results of this initial grammar error analysis can be compared with the results of error analysis studies that have been conducted in Arabic-speaking contexts, such as the ones that were reviewed in chapter 3 (sec. 3.3). All in all, the results disclosed here appear to accord considerably with most of the other studies' findings which revealed that tense, subject-verb agreement, preposition, article, and relative pronoun/clause errors are the most serious or frequent errors in the English writing of Arab learners – with tense errors very commonly placed at the top of all.

6.2.2. The relationship between the initial analysis and the exploratory studies

The observations and results of the investigation of grammar errors in the corpus of the main study were similar to the observations and results of the exploratory studies in many respects. First, and generally speaking, almost all types of grammatical error that were identified in the students' error profiles in the first exploratory study (Fakhra, 2004), as well as the ones that were distinguished and ranked by the survey respondents in the second exploratory study, were noticed to occur in the main research corpus (e.g. word order, parts of speech or word class choice, using 's' form of the verb instead of infinitive, different cohesion errors, etc.).

Second – and as far as the major purpose of looking for the most problematic areas in the English grammar for Syrian English students at the university is concerned –, in Fakhra's (2004) attempt to trace the most frequent deviances in the writings of first and third year students, six areas in the English grammar were found to be more affected by errors than others; they were: tense sequencing, modals, articles, prepositions, relative clauses, and cohesive devices. As one may notice, most of these, as table 6.2 and the discussion in 6.2.1 show, remained problematic for students at more advanced stages of study, like fourth year and Diploma students, as

errors in these areas were common in their writings as well – which enhances the 'persistence' of such errors in particular; and hence, emphasizes the importance of dealing with them. On the other hand, articles, relative clauses, and subject-verb agreement errors were among the top five grammar errors identified by the survey respondents as most 'serious' in affecting the quality of texts written by first and third year students (see table 2.5). Conjunction errors were not referred to directly by them, but a few of them referred to cohesive ties and cohesion errors in general.

As for Preposition errors (which as shown in table 6.2 were the most dominant ones in the corpus), only one native speaker teacher of the 10 respondents made a slight comment on them when judging one of the texts, even though they were categorized among the most frequent errors. Perhaps the reason why the non-native speaker teachers did not condemn the erroneous use of prepositions was that most of it was due to Arabic language interference (or direct translation of equivalent structures from Arabic into English), which means that they possibly were able to access the meaning of most sentences containing inaccurate prepositions as they shared students with the same L1 (i.e. Arabic). Similarly, the reason behind the native speaker teachers' non-stigmatization of preposition errors could be that their comprehension of the intended meaning was not affected by such errors.

6.2.3. Main analysis: focusing on conjunctive adjuncts and relative clauses

From the five grammar patterns whose erroneous uses in the corpus were investigated in the initial analysis only two patterns, 'conjunctive adjuncts' and 'relative clauses', were chosen to be the focus of the main analysis, where not only their erroneously used structures are examined, but also the correctly used ones. In other words, the whole performance (or repertoire) of each student as far as these two patterns are concerned has been subject to a more thorough and detailed analysis, including both errors and non-errors – bearing in mind that there are errors students manage to avoid, and that 'non-errors' are not always structures which are fully appropriate to the context. Sometimes they are structures used instead of other

more appropriate (or expected) ones; an indication of either 'ignorance' or 'avoidance'.

Choosing conjunctive adjuncts and relative clauses rather than other patterns to focus upon was triggered by the fact that there little has been done on their use in the writing of EFL Arabic learners, particularly Syrian Arab learners, and that, as far as we know, their employed and misemployed forms, in writing, have not been dealt with in detail before as has been the case with articles and prepositions for example (e.g. Lakkis and AbdelMalak, 2000; Al-Fotih, 2003; Zoghoul, 2002; Shammas, 1995; Kharma, 1981).

The other reason for being concerned with these two grammar patterns in particular has to do with the significant role they play in affecting not only the syntactic and rhetorical maturity of a text, but also the whole quality and coherence of that text; and despite the fact that they are two different patterns with different characteristics, norms, and contextual functions, they both share an important general function, which is providing textual linkage and cohesion. Reading through the literature on text and error evaluation, in addition to surveying a group of teachers' attitudes towards students' writings and errors (chapters 2 & 3), led us to build an awareness of the great value and attention usually paid to the criterion of communicativity and comprehensibility by text recipients or evaluators. This made us take into account while selecting the grammar points to be researched whether they have both a formal and a communicative function in text.

The main approach adopted in the analysis of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts in the Syrian students' writing corpus is a quantitative one: a calculation of the raw frequencies of these language forms' incidences. According to Granger and Tyson (1996: 17), quantitative studies as such "can be instructive"; yet, alone, they are insufficient because an evaluation of how the forms are used is needed as well. They assert that "when studying learner language in particular, it is necessary to combine a quantitative and a qualitative approach, comparing frequency and

semantic/syntactic use". Although the major approach in the current study is quantitative, this is combined with a qualitative approach through the analysis of relative clause and conjunctive adjunct misuse instances in the corpus, as well as through the examination of particular conjunctive adjunct items and relative clause constructions in their context of use.

Tagging and calculating the frequencies of the chosen features in the data was done manually without seeking the help of any computerized tagging programs. Given that computer-tagged analysis is particularly functional for examining "large numbers of texts for large numbers of features" (Grant and Ginther, 2000: 143), our preference to hand tag and count incidences of only two linguistic features in such a relatively small-size corpus (compared to the size of corpora in large-scale studies) could be justified. Moreover, texts of low proficiency levels or those containing many errors, as is the case in many undergraduate students' essays subject to analysis in this study, and as acknowledged by researchers such as Grant and Ginther (ibid), "are not served well by automatic analysis systems and are more appropriately analyzed by hand, on a case-by-case basis". Most importantly, the problem with using a computational search for the features in our case is that on the one hand it may not capture instances of relative clauses/conjunctive adjuncts incorrectly formed or even instances of certain forms, such as reduced relative clauses, and on the other, it identifies all instances of the searched word even when it performs different grammatical functions (e.g. *when*, *where*, *and*, *or*, *but*, *for*), in which case human interaction would be necessary to decide on the word function from its context.

In order to obtain accurate judgements on our EFL student writers' employment of English relative clause constructions and conjunctive expressions in their various types; in particular, judgments such as whether they employ them fairly, excessively, or diversely, we set out to conduct a further corresponding 'quantitative' analysis of the use of these constructions and expressions in a corpus of approximately 30,000 words of native English-speaking student writing which is assumed in some

research (e.g. Field and Yip, 1992; Granger and Tyson, 1996) to represent a target model for non-native speaker students. That is to say, a contrastive analysis of L2 writers and L1 writers was carried out, in which the L2 writers' performance was evaluated against the L1 writers' performance as the standard – as far as the frequency ratios of the two English language features in their writing were concerned. With such contrastive analysis, we seek to offer our NNS students guidance into how to improve their implementation of the two features by imitating that of the NS students. The analyzed NS essays were of the same 'literary' type as that of the analyzed NNS texts (for more details on the NS data see chapter 9). Specific research questions were developed separately for relative clause analysis and conjunctive adjunct analysis and are presented in chapters seven and eight respectively, and discussion of the comparison with NSs aims and results is presented in chapter nine.

Finally, with regard to the important question of 'reliability', it is worth mentioning that the detailed analysis conducted in all cases was corroborated by the researcher's supervisor, a native speaking linguist. Besides, the analysis of relative clauses presented in chapter 7 – in addition to the exploratory and initial analyses presented in chapter two and in the present chapter – was reviewed by an upgrading panel of two native speaking tutors. Furthermore, three exam papers, one from each Syrian group sub-corpus, were subjected to a 'second expert's check' in an attempt to test the reliability of our results concerning: 1. the number of relative clauses, and 2. the number of erroneous (or errors in) relative clauses. It was found that there was only a slight difference between our results and the second expert's results (see Appendix D for typed copies of the three exam scripts, together with figures showing the numbers of RCs and RC errors in each paper as detected by us and by the second expert). These points together help demonstrate that the analysis is reasonably reliable.

Chapter Seven: Relative Clause Analysis

7.1. Research questions

This study of relative clauses (RCs) is proposed to tackle the following issues:

1. Based on the research into relative clause use and typology, how frequently are different types of relative clause employed by the three groups of students, and which of these types tends to be most or least preferred, compared to others, by each group? The underlying assumption here is that the frequency of relative clause types used could be a predicator of their ease or difficulty for students (see Ito and Yamashita, 2003). Hence, a difficulty hierarchy could be built and compared with those claimed by hypotheses like the AHH, the PDH, and the PFH (chapter 4).

2. What is the rate of the inaccurately or erroneously used relative clauses in the students' texts? In what types of RC do such errors and inaccuracies occur, and what particular aspects of relativization do they affect more? In other words, what are the possible sources of RC errors, and how can they be identified and categorized?

3. In the analyzed texts, are there any occasions where the expected use of a particular RC type or structure has not been fulfilled by the student writer? And is it possible to determine which of these occasions is evidence of 'avoidance' and which is evidence of 'ignorance' or 'lack of knowledge'?

4. Is there any evidence of L1 (Arabic language here) interference into the students' use of English relative clauses? And what relativization aspects/parameters does this interference affect more? What insights can be drawn from the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis?

7.2. Background and framework for the analysis

In the literature review on relative clauses (chapter 4) we have seen how these grammatical structures are broadly classified into full (or finite) and reduced (or nonfinite) forms. We have also seen how the main components of a RC sentence (e.g. head NP and RP) play major roles – from the point of view of certain linguistic and psychological approaches, such as the AHH, PDH, and PFH – in determining its type and consequently predicting its 'ease of accessibility' in comparison to other RC types. The Accessibility Hierarchy Hypothesis (AHH) for example identifies and orders six types of RC – which are, subject, direct object, indirect object, object of preposition, genitive, and object of comparison – on the basis of the grammatical positions of the NP that can be relativized; that is, the grammatical functions of the relative pronoun used in the RC. The Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis (PDH) and the Parallel Function Hypothesis (PFH) on the other hand identify (though differently arrange) four types of RC construction – which are, SS, SO, OS, and OO – focusing on both components: the head NP in the main clause and the RP in the relative clause.

In this chapter, the intention is to consider in our investigation of relative clauses used by students all these various ways of classifying them, starting with an examination of the rates and forms of both 'full' and 'reduced' structures of RC, followed by a more profound analysis of the construction of every sentence in the corpus containing a relative clause in order to find what constructions are more or less common in the students' writing. In most cases, looking into the construction of a RC sentence assumes looking into its major components, which are usually distinguished as the 'antecedent' and the 'relative pronoun'. Biber *et al* (1999), however, have referred in their discussion and analysis of the relative clause to three major components, which this study, for its main part, will focus on and examine. These are: the 'head noun' (or antecedent), the 'relativizer' (a relative pronoun or relative adverb) – which "anaphorically refers to the same person or thing as the head noun"–, and the 'gap'. The last term, 'gap', is used by Biber *et al* to refer to "the

structural location of the missing constituent" in the relative clause, as they perceive that relative clauses "are always missing a constituent, which corresponds in meaning to the head noun" (p. 608). For example, the gap in a sentence like '*the diamond earrings* ***that Mama wore***' occurs in the direct object position, after the verb '*wore*'. That is, the underlying meaning of the relative clause is that 'Mama wore the diamond earrings'. This missing constituent is indeed the same constituent that the Accessibility Hierarchy Hypothesis of Keenan and Comrie (1977) has defined as "the NP to be relativized".

Apart from this definition of RC types and construction which forms the basis of RC analysis in this study, it is important here to provide a wider definition of those formal variants which are to be included in, as well as those to be excluded from, our analysis of relative clauses employed in the corpus. Hence, the search for relative clauses in each student's text – for the purpose of counting them and finding out at the end their total number in each group's texts – starts from Biber *et al*'s (1999) definition, in which they state that "in Standard English, relative clauses can be formed using eight different relativizers: *which, who, whom, whose, that, where, when,* and *why*", which can be further distinguished as 'relative pronouns' (*which, who, whom, whose, that*) and 'relative adverbs' (*where, when, why*) (p. 608). These relativizers represent the most obvious of numerous structural variants possible with relative clauses. Another frequent variant is when the relativizer (with or without auxiliary verb) is omitted altogether from the structure of many relative clauses (referred to as the 'zero relativizer' – resulting in 'reduced RCs' in Master's (2002) terms).

Another common form of relative clause structure is the one in which the relative pronoun is accompanied by a preposition (e.g. *in which*, *from which*, *to which*, *to whom*). These [preposition + relativizer] constructions can actually be used to fulfill different 'gap roles', such as, indirect object, object/complement of preposition, and adverbial. In many cases, as noted by Biber *et al*, preposition + *which* could be replaced with a relative adverb *where* or *when* (p.630), which highlights its being a

common variant in RCs with adverbial gaps. In terms of structural varieties, the preposition in this form of RC could be either fronted or stranded (e.g. *the apartments* ***in which*** *no one lives*, or *the apartments* ***which*** *no one lives* ***in***). It could also be omitted altogether (e.g. *the time that I began*, *the day that he left*), a case where the relativizer is also often omitted (e.g. *the way I look at it, a place I would like to go*) (see Biber *et al*, 1999: 624).

The reference made here to all the above briefly described cases and structural variants of relative clauses is as mentioned before meant to define relative clauses as they are perceived in this research. In other words, our trace of the relative clauses used in the students' texts will include all the so-called 'full' clauses that start with any of the eight relativizers identified by Biber *et al*, including those whose relativizer/RP is attached to a preposition. On the other hand, 'reduced' / 'nonfinite' clauses, from which the RP, RP + auxiliary verb, or RP + preposition is omitted, and which can be re-phrased as full relative clauses with nearly equivalent meaning, will be counted and examined as well.

As for structures like the ones exemplified in A below, in which the head noun is postmodified by a prepositional phrase, and which can be re-phrased as full relative clauses with nearly the same meaning (as in B), these will be excluded from the analysis for there are numerous occurrences of them in the texts. Another, and more important, reason for excluding them is that Biber *et al* have considered them as 'prepositional postmodifiers' rather than as 'reduced' relative clauses. Their corpus findings have also shown that such prepositional postmodifiers are very common (they "are by far the most common type of postmodifier in all registers" (p. 634)) and that full relative clauses are rare in comparison to them (p. 637). They report that "full relative clauses with main verb *have*, or with the copula *be* + preposition [since these can be used alternatively with prepositional postmodifiers], occur less than 100 times per million words in all registers. (By comparison, prepositional phrases as postmodifiers occur around 68,000 times per million words in academic prose)" (ibid).

A 1. *varieties* ***with a long maturation period***
2. *the main problem* ***at the root of Durkheim's concern***
3. *documents* ***in his possession***
4. *the car keys* ***on the table***

can be re-phrased into:

B 1. *varieties* ***which have a long maturation period*** (example of RC with *have*)
2. *the main problem* ***which is at the root of Durkheim's concern***
3. *documents* ***which were in his possession***
4. *the car keys* ***that were on the table*** (2-4 examples of RC with copula + preposition)

(Examples are taken from Biber *et al*, 1999: 634)

Also excluded from relative clause forms investigated in this analysis are 'nominal appositive clauses' (e.g. *Tom, the narrator in Williams' novel*), though a number of sources consider them to be 'reduced nonrestrictive relative clauses' (Mathews, 1981: 229, cited in Meyer, 1992: 54; cited in Master, 2002: 205), in particular, those 'defining appositives', in which "a copular relation exists between the two units in the apposition" (see Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik, 1985: 1313; and Meyer, 1992: 55; both cited in Master, 2002: 205), as in:

1. There is also, in the larva, a tissue known as mucocartilage, **which is** an elastic material serving more as an antagonist to the muscles than for their attachment.

2. There is also, in the larva, a tissue known as mucocartilage, an elastic material serving more as an antagonist to the muscles than for their attachment.

(Examples provided by Meyer, 1992: 55; cited in Master, 2002: 205)

As mentioned in the literature review (chapter 4), Master (2002) classifies nominal appositive clauses as one type of reduced relative clause, in addition to another three identified by him: the 'past participle', the 'present participle', and the 'adjective' types – which in fact are the three structures that our analysis of reduced RCs is restricted to, together with structures like '*this is the person I met*' and '*I gave him the book he wanted*'. However, Biber *et al* (1999), whom we tend to follow most in this

study, talk rather about 'appositive noun phrases (or noun phrases in apposition)' (e.g. *the dissident playwright,* ***Vaclav Havel*** or *Vaclav Havel,* ***the dissident playwright***) and consider them as a form of 'postmodifier' which is maximally abbreviated, and which can be contrasted with 'clausal postmodifiers (relative or non-finite clauses)', as appositive noun phrases include no verbs at all (p. 639). So, one reason for ignoring the appositive clauses/noun phrases used in the corpus is that Biber *et al* have not considered them as reduced RCs. Another reason is that they were observed to be used inaccurately or ambiguously in the texts, for students in most cases did not show sufficient knowledge or comprehension of how to use them. For example, many students tended to punctuate them restrictively; that is, without a comma between the two units of the apposition – despite the fact that they are "typically non-restrictive in meaning" (Biber *et al*, 1999: 638).

We are quite aware that this last reason might be received conversely as a reason to *include* appositives in the analysis instead of excluding them; yet, we chose to ignore them along with all the mispunctuations that accompanied many relative clauses, of other types, used in the corpus in general. These mispunctuations, however, indicate how incompetent students are in the mechanical use of RC, and reflect at the same time how difficult, confusing, and indecisive in nature the criteria for applying RC punctuation norms are. By 'confusing' and 'indecisive' criteria, we mean specifically those formal and functional criteria usually used to distinguish between restrictive and non-restrictive RC, which are proved by Bache and Jakobsen (1980: 248) to be "not very helpful when applied to a wide range of examples", for the status and role of a relative clause as restrictive or non-restrictive should be distinguished, as they believe, communicatively rather than formally. As Bache and Jakobsen put it, it is the 'communicative function' of the relative clause which gives us the 'intuition' whether to classify it as restrictive or non-restrictive regardless of its 'formal characteristics' (p.246) (for more illustration, see chapter 4, section 4.2.1). On the basis of this, we found that looking into the students' punctuating of the relative clauses they used would be difficult and time consuming as deciding about its correctness or incorrectness would not be clear-cut.

7.3. Analysis findings

A corpus of 35 exam papers, which consist of approximately 30,000 words, was analyzed, with nearly each third of the 30,000 words written by one of the three groups of students: third year, fourth year, or Diploma students (see table 6.1 for the exact number of words in each group's sub-corpus). The first and more general concern of the analysis was to count the number of all relative clauses found in the texts, and to compare the frequency of full RCs with that of reduced ones in each group’s texts. All the resulting numbers are summarized in table 7.1 below, which displays, in addition to the full and reduced categories of RC, a third category of RC that emerged from the analysis, and that is called 'ambiguous RCs'. This category is termed as such because it represents a few structures found in the texts whose identification as relative clauses was uncertain, even though it was clear in most cases that they should have been relative clauses – and hence, were all considered erroneous. The following examples, taken from students’ texts, help illustrate these structures (all occurrences will be provided in the students’ errors’ tables later on):

1. 'they decide to cling to the slight light **remains** to them.'
2. 'But within there is a bomb **waits** to revolt against society'

In addition to the numbers of RC types, table 7.1 shows the number of RC constructions that were used by students erroneously or inaccurately, and at the same time it shows the number of errors in these constructions. As for the categorization of the errors’ types and sources, a profile for each group of students’ errors will be presented at a later stage of the analysis.

Table 7.1: Numbers of relative clauses used and numbers of erroneous relative clause constructions, and also of errors in RC constructions:

Students' stage of study	**Number of full RCs**	**Number of reduced RCs**	**Number of ambiguous RCs** (all erroneous)	**Total**	**Number of erroneous RC constructions**	**Number of errors in RC constructions**
Third year	133 (83.64%)	25 (15.72%)	1 (0.62%)	159	14 (8.80%)	14 (8.80%)
Fourth year	133 (88.07%)	13 (8.60%)	5 (3.31%)	151	18 (11.92%)	18 (11.92%)
Diploma	162 (81.40%)	36 (18.09%)	1 (0.50%)	199	14 (7.03%)	14 (7.03%)

The features in table 7.1 reveal no major difference between third and fourth year students in terms of the total number of relative clauses used; and as expected, Diploma students' texts contained a higher number of clauses than that in the other two groups' texts. Yet, it is quite evident that for all groups, the rate of full RCs overrides to a considerable extent the rate of the reduced ones; and that fourth year students in particular did not use the latter form of RC very frequently, and, contrary to expectation, they used them even less frequently than third year students. As for types, it was observed that the majority of the reduced RCs in all groups' texts were of the *-ed* or *-ing* clause types, whereas the adjective type was noticed to be very rare (only two or three occurrences). It is worth mentioning here that also in Master's (2002) corpus findings, it was revealed at a certain point that only 7.4% of the reduced clauses were adjectives (in fact he was talking at this point only about what he categorized as subject-form reduction which constituted 99% of the reduced relative clauses in his corpus, and only about 14 of the 20 technical research articles). Nevertheless, contrary to our finding, his analysis in general showed that reduction of relative clauses is so common in technical research articles that more than half (55%) of all the relative clauses in the corpus (914) were reduced. This difference between results could be attributed to genre, field, and register influence.

If we are to assume that Diploma students in this research represent the group of 'good' or 'advanced' writers – due to the noticeable improvement, compared with the other two groups, in their writing performance in general –, attention should be

drawn to the fact that these good writers appeared not to choose to apply reduction as often as non-reduction, which is possibly a sign of avoiding what might be considered by them an informal structure in the language, as highlighted by Master (2002). In some way, this finding could be compared with Huckin and Olsen's (1983) claim referred to in the literature review (in chapter 4) that good writers "avoid applying the rule of [relative pronoun + be → VERBing] more often than not" (p. 400; cited in Master, 2002: 225), which was later challenged by Huckin *et al*'s (1986) finding that 'whiz-deletion' (i.e. VERBing reduction) "is seen by good writers as a very useful device" and that it is their standard choice in most cases (p. 185; cited in Master, 2002: 225 & 205).

In the attempt to investigate the number of erroneous relative clause constructions on the one hand, and the number of errors in relative clause constructions on the other, we found that both numbers were the same for all groups. As the table demonstrates, there was no major difference among groups in terms of such numbers of errors/erroneous clauses, and the results for the third year group and the Diploma group were even the same. A closer look into the texts has shown that fourth year students, whose texts contained the highest number of errors, were still not more competent in their relativization behavior than third year students, as one may expect them to be. They actually showed no attempts to employ more mature or more complex structures of RC than the ones employed by third year students – as we will see later on (section 7.3.2). Diploma students on the other hand did employ, as anticipated, more complex and more varied RC structures at many occasions, which might be the reason behind the errors they made. The percentage of their errors was not much lower than that of fourth year students, and was even very close to that of third year students.

7.3.1. The components of relative clause sentence analysis

As mentioned earlier, our analysis of relative clauses is not limited to investigating the frequencies of full and reduced structures in the corpus as it focuses also on

examining the three major components that constitute each instance of these structures: the head noun (HN), the relativizer (or RP), and the gap, taking into consideration that the relativizer element is omitted in the case of reduced RCs. The purpose of conducting such an analysis is to test the claims of the Accessibility Hierarchy Hypothesis and other hypotheses concerning the difficulty hierarchy of RC types, and to examine to what extent their hypothesized hierarchies may accord with the ones which emerge from this research.

7.3.1.1. Gap analysis

In the first place, the 'gap' in each relative clause was identified, as it is on the grammatical function of this constituent the AHH bases its classification of RC types into subject, direct object, indirect object, object of preposition, genitive, and object of comparison. That is to say, the aim of identifying all gaps in the corpus is to see which gap roles, and consequently RC types, occurred more or less frequently in the writing of each group. However, not only the six RC types distinguished by the AHH were under study, but also those relative clauses with an 'adverbial' gap (i.e. those starting with *where*, *when*, or *why*, or their equivalent [preposition + relativizer] constructions) – which have not been included in the AHH’s classification and order of difficulty.

In this research, the assumption is that the frequency of each of these types – compared with that of the other types – can be made use of as a predictor of its difficulty level for the students who produced the texts under analysis. This is based on the report made by Ito and Yamashita (2003) that "a lot of people involved in language acquisition research have supported the validity of the *Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy* as a difficulty predictor of relative clauses and as a frequency predictor of use of relative clauses in written material" (p. 247), which indicates that the order of relative clauses predicted in the Accessibility Hierarchy reflects in the same way both their difficulty and frequency of appearance. Likewise, we would like to assume here that any alternative hierarchy of use frequency our

analysis would arrive at, as far as the types of each RC component are concerned (e.g. gap & HN), can imply as well the difficulty order of these types.

Table 7.2.A below summarizes information that relates to the numbers and percentages of different gap roles in the writing of each group. The table also displays some details concerning how many times a particular gap occurred in full RCs as opposed to how many times it occurred in reduced ones. Of the six RCs identified in the AHH, only four were detected: subject, direct object, object of preposition, and genitive, in addition to adverbial clauses. There were no instances of indirect object or object of comparison.

Table 7.2.A: Gap frequencies in the three groups' writings

Gap roles	Third year	Fourth year	Diploma	Total
Subject	142 (89.30%)	121 (80.13%)	139 (69.84%)	402 (78.97%)
full	118	109	118	345
reduced	24	8	21	53
ambiguous		4		4
Complement / Direct object	4 (2.51%)	12 (7.94%)	21 (10.55%)	37 (7.26%)
full	4	8	10	22
reduced	0	4	11	15
Complement/object of preposition	5 (3.14%)	8 (5.29%)	21 (10.55%)	34 (6.67%)
full	5	6	18	29
reduced	0	2	3	5
Adverbial	8 (5.03%)	10 (6.62%)	15 (7.53%)	33 (6.48%)
full	7	10	13	30
reduced	1	0	2	3
place	3	8	13	24
time	4	2	1	7
manner	1	0	1	2
Genitive	0	0	3 (1.50%)	3 (0.58%)
full			3	
reduced			0	
Total	159	151	199	509

The table shows that relative clauses with subject gaps constituted 79% of all the 509 relative clauses in the corpus. In the case of third and fourth year students in particular, subject gaps were employed in their texts much more frequently than

other gaps. On the other hand, none of the two groups used relative clauses with genitive gap. Direct object gaps and object of preposition gaps, though much less common than subject gaps, occupied the second and third positions respectively after subject gaps in terms of frequency, but it is clear that it was Diploma students who produced the majority of them. Furthermore, this last group was the one responsible for the only three genitive gaps found in the whole corpus. As for adverbial gaps, which came in the fourth position after subject gaps, most of them were adverbs of place. The table also shows that all gaps were used more in full RCs than in reduced RCs.

The major result here concerning the highest frequency of relative clause occurrences with subject gap reminds us of, and supports, the AHH's claims about the ease of accessibility of the subject type of RC compared to that of the other types (see literature review, chapter 4). Both our finding and the AHH's claims are indeed further supported by Biber *et al* (1999), who found that "subject gaps in the relative clause occur more commonly than non-subject gaps", justifying this by explaining that "because the relativizer occurs initially in a relative clause, subject gaps preserve the standard subject + verb + object/predicative/adverbial order in the relative clause, while non-subject gaps result in a clause element being displaced from its normal position. Subject gaps are therefore considered easier to process and are more common" (p. 621-622).

7.3.1.2. Head noun analysis

In chapter four, we have seen how the AHH, by building its typology of relative clauses on the grammatical functions/positions of the NP to be relativized (i.e. the one to be transferred into RP; or simply the 'gap'), focuses only on the relative clause itself with no attention given to the matrix sentence or to the relationship between the function of this NP (or RP) in the relative clause and that of the head NP in the main clause – which other hypotheses like the PDH and PFH have focused upon in their classification of RC types.

However, Kuno’s (1974) PDH, which focuses on the location of the relative clause in the matrix sentence, has restricted its classification and exemplification of this location to only two types: subject matrix position and object matrix position, though in real contexts matrix position – represented in the grammatical function of the head NP in the main clause – can be of other types. Master (2002: 212), for example, introduces in addition to 'subject' and 'object' three other syntactic positions of the head NP in the main clause: 'adverbial NP', 'predicate NP', and 'VP modifier' (also known as 'sentence relatives'). On the other hand, Biber *et al* (1999) have been more general by fairly claiming that the head noun to which a relative clause is attached can occur in *any* position; nevertheless, the most important distinction for them when analyzing their corpus is, as they specify, "between subject and non-subject heads" (p. 623), meaning by 'non-subject heads' all those that occur after the matrix clause verb. In fact, it is this last distinction made by Biber *et al* that we have preferred to follow in our examination of the head NPs of the relative clauses used by the students; but in addition to these two basic categories of subject and non-subject heads, a third minor category has been examined as well, which is 'sentence relatives', defined by Master (2002) as "relative clauses modifying VPs rather than NPs (e.g. *In this case, a single-carbon-carbon bond is broken to form a diradical,* ***which*** *can initiate the polymerization*)" (p. 212) (see results on the use of the three categories in table 7.2.B).

A forth category called 'unknown heads' has been added as shown in table 7.2.B to the above three categories in order to represent the one case in which we were not able to identify the grammatical position of the HN of the RC used, for the student quoted this RC from the novel’s/play’s passage she was analyzing, and inserted it in her text out of its real context. The following extract demonstrates this case:

> '*The boy’s death presents a striking image of a human being turning into a ghost (****white sheet folding around him****) in front of our eyes, this prepares us for his presence as a ghost afterwards*'. (Hanan, Diploma, L. 5-6)

As a result of following Biber *et al*'s classification of RC head nouns into subject and non-subject, the identification of the head nouns in the corpus as such was in some cases confusing and not very clear-cut. Therefore, the next part is devoted to displaying the extracts that represent these cases and discuss how the HNs in them have been classified as subject, non-subject, ambiguous, or something else (see table 7.2.B).

1. 3rd year, Mai, L. 60-63
   In fact, Miller was a realistic writer who wanted to free his writing from all the symbolism in it. ***Unlike Williams, who was an expressionistic writer*** *who resorted to symbolism to reveal the reality.*

2. 4th year, Donia, L. 12-14
   Both of Helena Alving and Pegeen Mike live in a society dominated by stupid conventions and old dead ideas inherited from fathers. ***The society where man should obey and conform without any questioning.***

3. Diploma, Kinaz, L. 68-70
   For them a girl should protect herself against men she has instinctual passion to preserve her virtue. So, it is not man's fault if she is contaminated. Furthermore, ***Men who should take the initiative and begin the affair.***

Had the students who wrote these passages structured their sentences, or punctuated them, in the standard way, there would have been no problem identifying the head nouns of the relative clauses in bold. It is clear that the intention of the writer in each case was to use a head noun of the non-subject type, and to modify it with a relative clause that was located towards the end of the sentence, keeping with the principle of 'end weight' (Biber *et al*, 1999: 623), and following the easier way of relativization which did not disrupt the matrix clause by forcing us to process the relative clause before reaching the main verb of the matrix clause. That is to say, we assume that Mai in (1) wanted to write '***He*** *(Miller)* ***was*** *unlike Williams, who was an expressionistic writer'*, that Donia in (2) wanted to write '*Both of Helena Alving and Pegeen Mike live in a society dominated ...****, a society*** *where man should ...*', and that Kinaz in (3) wanted to write '*Furthermore,* ***it is*** *Men who should take the initiative and begin the affair*'. If this was the case, then, the problem with the sentences the way they were used is that the matrix clauses lack the main verb element, which if the RC comes after it will be classified, following Biber *et al*, as

RC with non-subject head. On the other hand, if we are to classify the head nouns in these sentences as subjects – as they might appear, we would face the same problem of the lack of the main verb that is expected to appear after the relative clause. Based on this account, the head nouns in these three cases have been categorized as 'ambiguous'. The other cases in the corpus where – based on a similar account – HN was considered ambiguous as well are shown in (4), (5), and (6) below.

4. 4th year, Niveen, L. 57-59
   He can not see that religion make them morally superior to any other race or nation. Religion is every where in nature, ***like Whitman who sees in a blade of grass great things.***

5. 4th year, Mona, L.10-12
   if we try to examine the way of Beckett's writing it seems without real plot and we haven't the usual movement of the characters only some movements in the theatre and ***eyes shaded by hands*** *to refer to the waiting …*

6. 3rd year, Salam, L. 54-57
   So, as we said Tom resorts to imagination but in a 'View from the Bridge' it was a realistic play so it has nothing to do with imagination, ***the story of emegrants who fled to America for wealth and apportunity*** *but for Williams in his play, He tends to be a memory play.*

There is nothing wrong in terms of structure (except for a missing comma in (8) after *home*) with the relative clause sentences in extracts (7), (8), and (9) below. What might be confusing about them however is whether to consider their HNs as subject or non-subject.

7. 4th year, Donia, L. 28-30
   She thought that the hero has come, ***the hero who has the courage to do what many people would like to do*** *and* ***who has the ability to stand against society*** *and to be an individual.*

8. Diploma, Mervat, L 19-21
   Even when she tries to go to her home ***a place which is supposed to be a sanctuary****, she finds it no more than hell as her father used to say.*

9. Diploma, Hanan, L. 11-12
   *We see Bodice here after defeating her father and assuming power****; the thing she was lusting for,*** *but so what?*

Looking at only the sentences in bold may give the impression that they contain relative clauses with 'subject' heads, *'the hero', 'a place',* and *'the thing'*. But these sentences have a ‘defining’ role for other NPs in the sentences preceding them, *'the hero', 'her home',* and *'power'*, which are equivalent to the heads of the relative clauses. Hence, we can assume that the underlying structures in (8) and (9) are '*Even when she tries to go to* ***her home, which is supposed to be a sanctuary***' and '*We see Bodice here after defeating her father and assuming* ***power, which she was lusting for***', where the NPs *'her home'* and *'power'* are located in a position after the main verb of their clause; that is, in a 'non-subject' position. Accordingly, the head nouns of the RCs in bold in (8) and (9) have been classified by us as non-subject heads – rather than subject heads. As for (7), the first identical NP *'the hero'* is located in the 'subject' position of that-clause, and it is followed immediately by the main verb of the clause *'has come'* without being interrupted by the RC, as in:

> *She thought that* ***the hero who has the courage to do what many people would like to do*** *and* ***who has the ability to stand against society and to be an individual*** *has come.*

So, it is quite possible to predict that the student resorted to the 'defining clause' technique in order to avoid such interruption. In conclusion, since the relative clause in (7) was applied without disrupting the flow of the main clause '*the hero has come*' by being located in a position after the main verb *'has come'* – rather than demanding to be processed before approaching the main verb as in the sentence above, its head noun has been classified as non-subject.

Similarly, HNs were considered non-subject in (10)-(17):

10. 4th year, Dalal, L. 36-37
    Pegeen lived in a hypocritial society, ***The society that has a mask****.*

11. & 12. 4th year, Dalal, L. 41-43
    She saw the man of her dreams. Not only as a lover but also as a hero.
    A hero who was able to get ride of the father*.* ***who was able to make her feel free for a moment.***

13. & 14. Diploma, Laila, L. 3-5

He was accused of being misogynist, ***the accusation that has real grounds in his own intimate life with his three wives and which is also strongly reflected in his plays.***

15. Diploma, Ghena, L. 18-20
Bertha is the captain's life and his hope of immortality, ***a fact that makes the possibility of her not being his child destroy his whole life.***

16. & 17. Diploma, Ghena, L. 62-65
He presents characters from real every day life; ***characters whom we can get involved emotionally with, whom we sympathize with*** *in order for us to feel their suffering which is caused by the society they live in*

In case (18) below, the relative clause's head noun occupied the position of 'object/complement of preposition'. Nevertheless, the analysis followed Biber *et al*'s two categories of subject and non-subject heads, and so it has been subsumed under the category of subject heads, simply because it occurred before the main verb of the matrix sentence, and consequently, interrupted the flow of the matrix sentence.

18. 4th year, Khalil, L. 34-35
The arrival of ***Christy, who rebelled against the authority of the father, was the catalyzing factor*** *which changed the society of Mayo including Pegeen.*

And for the same last reason, HNs in (19)-(23) were categorized as subject:

19. Diploma, Laila, L. 57-60
Archetypes, or the collective unconscious of the people about ***the notions that are products of society's experience****, can be felt in the use of colours, objects (like windows and door ways) that sympolically represent other notions like imprisonment, freedom.*

20., 21., 22., and 23. Diploma, Reem, L. 19-23
To have ***a woman who hides here husband's mail although it is of great benefit for him, who spreads rumors that he is mentally sick and who draws him to such a tragic end*** *is something exaggerated. To have* ***a man who is a scientist and has a military position quarrelling like this with his wife is something*** *exaggerated too.*

In the last three cases (24-26), the relative clauses' head nouns occupied the position of object/complement of preposition, and they occurred before the main verb of the matrix sentence. Due to this, we choose to classify them as 'non-subject' heads; yet,

at a 'pre-main verb' position, which indicates the interruption they cause in the flow of the matrix sentence.

24. 4th year, Malak, L. 22-23
Another thing is that in ***the first stage where Hester was punished. there were some women*** *who coments on her.*

25. 4th year, Khalil, L. 18-21
Throughout the pressure of ***her society, which is a self-denying society, a Partriarchal society, she rebelled against the institution of marriage,*** *but could not resume and returned back again to live under heavy burden of responsibilities.*

26. Diploma, Dania, L. 8-9
In ***a society that is dominated by impotence.*** *Osborne chooses to reflect this impotence through his characters who are all defined by their inability to act.*

That is to say, although they are considered as non-subject heads, which as identified at the beginning of this section normally occur after the main verb without interrupting the processing of the matrix sentence, these heads conversely interrupt such processing as they are located before the main verb; and hence, they will be referred to as 'pre-main verb non-subject heads' (as opposed to the 'post-main verb non-subject heads' that constitute the greatest majority of heads in the corpus). Generally speaking, and as table 7.2.B shows, there were only nine incidences in the corpus where head nouns were determined to be subsumed under this last category.

Table 7.2.B: Head noun frequencies in the three groups' writings

Head Noun positions	Third year	Fourth year	Diploma	*Total*
Non-subject heads	137 (86.16%)	139 (92.05%)	164 (82.41%)	440 (86.44%)
Subject heads	16 (10.06%)	6 (3.97%)	23 (11.55%)	45 (8.84%)
Sentence heads	3 (1.88%)	0	5 (2.51%)	8 (1.57%)
Ambiguous heads	2 (1.25%)	3 (1.98%)	1 (0.50%)	6 (1.17%)
Pre-main verb non-subject heads	1 (0.62%)	3 (1.98%)	5 (2.51%)	9 (1.76%)
Unknown heads (out of the real context of use)	0	0	1 (0.50%)	1 (0.19%)
Total	159	151	199	509

Table 7.2.B helps illustrate the very high frequency of relative clause appearances with non-subject head nouns as opposed to the relatively low frequency of its appearances with subject heads in the corpus. This result implies that students in the majority of cases preferred to modify non-subject HNs rather than subject ones with their relative clauses, providing by this support for Kuno’s (1974) Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis (PDH), in which he claims that center-embedded relative clauses, which occur within the subject NP of the matrix clause, are more difficult to access than right-embedded relative clauses, which occur in the object matrix position since in the former case the relative clause interrupts the processing of the matrix sentence, whereas in the latter one there is no such interruption (for examples and more details see chapter 4).

Again, in Biber *et al*’s (1999) corpus findings we find support not only for the PDH’s claims, but also for our assumption regarding the students’ tendency to avoid using relative clauses to modify subject HNs. The authors explain: "relative clauses with subject heads disrupt the matrix clause – hearers/readers must process the relative clause before reaching the main verb of the matrix clause. As a result, subject noun phrases rarely contain a relative clause as postmodifier". On the other hand, Biber *et al* find relative clauses with non-subject head "strongly preferred because they do not interrupt the flow of the matrix clause and are in keeping with the principle of end weight" (p. 623).

Apart from the subject and non-subject types of HN, cases where the RC modifies a whole sentence rather than a head NP in the main clause; the so-called 'sentential relative clauses' or 'sentence relatives' (Master, 2002), were found but only in eight instances in third year and Diploma students’ texts, as revealed in table 7.2.B.

At the end of this discussion of the head nouns in the corpus, we would like to point at the fact that most of these head nouns, whether they were in subject or non-subject positions, were modified by full relative clauses rather than by reduced ones – as one

may conclude from our previous discussion of the results in table 7.1. Subject head nouns in particular were only eight times found modified by reduced RCs in the texts of four Diploma students and one third year student. This is a striking difference from Master's findings in his corpus of technical research articles, which even though they showed that "relative clauses within object or predicate NPs were more likely to be full", informed us that "relative clauses modifying the subject of the main clause were more than twice as likely to be reduced than full" and that "relative clauses within adverbial NPs were more likely to be reduced" (2002: 212). It is worth mentioning that this too could be explained in terms of disciplinary difference, or in terms of novice / expert difference.

7.3.2. Relative clause construction types

As mentioned before in chapter 4 and earlier in this chapter, the PDH and PFH, unlike the AHH, examined the grammatical functions of both the HN in the main clause and the RP (or gap) in the relative clause, and so built their typology of relative clause construction on the basis of the relationships between these two constituents' functions. But since these two hypotheses considered only HNs in the subject and object matrix positions, and referred to the grammatical roles of RP simply as subject and object – without really focusing on the other roles, such as DO, IDO, OPREP, OCOMP, and GEN (Izumi, 2003: 288-89), they came up with only four types: SS, SO, OS, and OO – where the first character of each pair stands for the grammatical role of the HN, and the second for that of the RP.

Izumi (2003) and Doughty (1991) have tried, as we saw in the literature review, to place all the six different RC types (or indeed RP functions) outlined in the AHH in the two matrix positions of subject and object, which resulted in twelve different types of RC construction (Chapter 4, section 4.2.3.1; Izumi, 2003: 288; and Doughty, 1991: 436). In a similar way, assuming that the five gap roles explored from the analysis of the students' texts (table 7.2.A) can be placed within the two

main HN positions focused upon in this study; namely subject and non-subject heads, there are 10 different types of RC construction:

1. **S-S** = subject HN + subject gap
2. **S-Ad =** subject HN + adverbial gap
3. **S-OPrep/CPrep** = subject HN + object of preposition/complement of preposition gap
4. **S-DO/C** = subject HN + direct object/complement gap
5. **S-Gen** = subject HN + genitive gap
6. **NS-S** = non-subject HN + subject gap
7. **NS-Ad** = non-subject HN + adverbial gap
8. **NS-OPrep/CPrep** = non-subject HN + object of preposition/complement of preposition gap
9. **NS-DO/C** = non-subject HN + direct object/complement gap
10. **NS- Gen** = non-subject HN + genitive gap

The investigation of the relationship between the functions of the HN and the gap in every RC sentence in the corpus revealed that all these constructions were applied, except for the S-Gen type. Table 7.2.C below enables us to compare the frequencies of the 9 RC construction types with one another in each of the three groups' texts. As for the remaining constructions (10-17) shown in the table, they represent the few cases where the RC was modifying a whole sentence, or a head noun which was ambiguous, unknown, or pre-main verb non-subject (gaps are various).

Table 7.2.C: Relative clause construction frequencies in the three groups' writings

RC construction types (based on HN & gap functions)	Third year	Fourth year	Diploma	*Total*
1. NS-S	122 (76.72%)	111 (73.50%)	115 (57.78%)	348 (68.36%)
2. S-S	14 (8.80%)	6 (3.97%)	16 (8.04%)	36 (7.07%)
3. NS-DO/C	4 (2.51%)	12 (7.94%)	15 (7.1053%)	31 (6.09%)
4. NS-OPrep/CPrep	4 (2.51%)	8 (5.29%)	18 (9.04%)	30 (5.89%)
5. NS-Ad	8 (5.03%)	8 (5.29%)	14 (7.03%)	30 (5.89%)
6. Sent-S	3 (1.88%)	0	5 (2.51%)	8 (1.57%)
7. S-DO/C	0	0	5 (2.51%)	5 (0.98%)

8. Amb-S	2 (1.25%)	2 (1.32%)	1 (0.50%)	5 (0.98%)
9. PMVNS-S	1 (0.62%)	2 (1.32%)	2 (1.00%)	5 (0.98%)
10. NS-Gen	0	0	3 (1.50%)	3 (0.58%)
11. S-OPrep/Cprep	1 (0.62%)	0	1 (0.50%)	2 (0.39%)
12. S-Ad	0	0	1 (0.50%)	1 (0.19%)
13. Amb-Ad	0	1 (0.66%)	0	1 (0.19%)
14. PMVNS-Ad	0	1 (0.66%)	0	1 (0.19%)
15. PMVNS-OPrep	0	0	1 (0.50%)	1 (0.19%)
16. PMVNS-DO/C	0	0	1 (0.50%)	1 (0.19%)
17. ?-S	0	0	1 (0.50%)	1 (0.19%)
Total	159	151	199	509

S= Subject NS= Non-subject Ad= Adverb C/DO= Complement / Direct Object
CPrep/OPrep= Complement of preposition/Object of preposition Gen= Genitive (or possessive)
Amb= Ambiguous ?= unknown Sent= Sentence PMVNS= Pre-main verb non-subject

As the table manifests, NS-S was the construction that students in all groups relied on most in their application of relative clauses. In some texts, particularly those of third and fourth year students, all relative clauses used were of this construction, which made it possible for us to predict its being the easiest for students to apply, and consequently to place it at the top of RC acquisition developmental order, as far as the students in the context of this research are concerned. From the features displayed in the table, we may conclude that the three groups were in some respects similar to one another in their performance, and that Diploma students just tried slightly more than the other two groups to vary their RC constructions. They were also noticeably responsible for generating all the S-DO/C and NS-Gen constructions captured in the whole corpus.

Based on all that has gone before, relative clauses as used by each group can be ordered in hierarchies of frequency (or difficulty) that can be compared with one another, as well as with the hierarchies referred to in literature. For example, the information provided in table 7.2.A about gap roles can be transferred into hierarchical sequences that start with the most frequent and easiest gap role and end with the least frequent and most difficult one. In this way, it will be easy to compare the hierarchies in the three groups not only with each other, but also with the difficulty hierarchy of RC types predicted by the AHH. Similarly, RC constructions as shown in table 7.2.C can be sequenced in terms of frequency and compared with

the PDH's and PFH's hypothesized sequences. Table 7.2.D presents a summary of all hierarchies concluded from our analysis results given in tables 7.2.A, 7.2.B, and 7.2.C.

Table 7.2.D: Gap, HN, and construction frequency hierarchies for each group and for the three groups together

Hierarchies	Third year	Fourth year	Diploma	All groups
Gap frequency hierarchy	S > Ad > CPrep/OPrep = C/DO	S > C/DO > Ad > CPrep/OPerp	S > CPrep/OPrep = C/DO > Ad > Gen	S > C/DO > CPrep/OPrep > Ad > Gen
HN frequency hierarchy	NS > S > Sent > Amb > PMVNS	NS > S > Amb = PMVNS	NS > S > Sent = PMVNS > Amb	NS > S > PMVNS > Sent > Amb
Construction frequency hierarchy	NS-S > S-S > NS-Ad > NS-C/DO = NS-OPrep > Sent-S > Amb-S > S-OPrep = PMVNS-S	NS-S > NS-C/DO > NS-Ad = NS-CPrep > S-S > PMVNS-S = Amb-S > PMVNS-Ad = Amb-Ad	NS-S > NS-OPrep > S-S > NS-C/DO > NS-Ad > S-C/DO = Sent-S > NS-Gen > PMVNS-S > S-OPrep = S-Ad = PMVNS-OPrep= PMVNS-C/DO = Amb-S	NS-S > S-S > NS-C/DO > NS-Ad = NS-OPrep > Sent-S > S-C/Do = Amb-S = PMVNS-S > NS-Gen > S-OPrep > S-Ad = Amb-Ad = PMVNS-Ad = PMVNS-OPrep = PMVNS-C/DO

(>) means 'more frequent than', and (=) means 'as frequent as'

S= Subject NS= Non-subject Ad= Adverb C/DO= Complement / Direct Object
CPrep/OPrep= Complement of preposition/Object of preposition Gen= Genitive (or possessive)
Amb= Ambiguous Sent= Sentence PMVNS= Pre-main verb non-subject

In her review of the three hypotheses, the PFH, the PDH, and the AHH, Doughty (1991) provided a manifestation of the different difficulty orders for English relativization that are derived from each of these predictor hypotheses. She used the following figure to summarize their main predictions and the difficulty orders they proclaim. Remember that the AHH relies only on the function of the RP, but in terms of the functions of both HN and RP, the difficulty order predicted by it would be, as shown in the figure, SS and OS sentences before OO and SO sentences – since

it proposes that when the relative pronoun's function is subject, its RC would be "universally the easiest or most accessible" (p.241). Doughty justified giving such ordering of the AHH as "for purposes of comparing predictions made by the three hypotheses" (ibid).

Figure 7.1: Three hypotheses for English relativization difficulty

Predictor Hypothesis	Prediction	Order Predicted
The Parallel Function Hypothesis (PFH)	Difficulty is predicted where the grammatical function of the head noun does not equal the grammatical function of the relative pronoun; ease of acquisition is predicted where there is parallel function of the head noun and its coreferential relative pronoun.	SS & OO > OS & SO
The Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis (PDF)	Difficulty is predicted where there is center-embedding of the relative clause, thus interrupting processing of the matrix sentence; ease of acquisition is predicted where there is right- and left-embedding in which the relative clause is processed either before or after the main clause, and the main clause is processed without interruption.	OS & OO > SS & SO
The Accessibility Hypothesis (AHH)	Difficulty is predicted where the grammatical function of the relative pronoun in the relative clause is at the marked or less accessible end of the NPAH; ease of acquisition is predicted at the accessible end of the hierarchy.	SU > DO > IO > OPREP > POSS > OCOMP or SS & OS > OO & SO

(From Doughty, 1991: 240)

This figure enables a comparison of the hierarchies in it with those in table 7.2.D; in particular, the AHH's order with the sequences of gap roles, and the PDH's and PFH's orders with the sequences of RC constructions. In general, as one may notice from such a comparison, the difference is clear between the RC constructions hierarchy in table 7.2.D – as far as all groups are concerned – and the difficulty hierarchies hypothesized by the PDH and PFH, in addition to the one attached in the figure to the AHH by Doughty herself. As for gap roles, the comparison reveals a

very close match of difficulty/frequency between our (final) hierarchy of gap roles and the ordering predicted by the AHH, with S and DO/C gaps occupying the first and second positions respectively, CPrep/OPrep gaps coming later, and Gen gaps placed towards the end in the two orderings alike. Adverbial gaps, which are not included in the ordering of the AHH, occupy different positions in the three groups' orderings, and the fourth position in the all groups' final ordering.

7.3.3. Relative clause error categories

In this section, we address the second research question set at the beginning of this chapter: what proportion of erroneous or inaccurate RC structures is there in each group's texts? What types of RC and what aspects of relativization do these errors affect more? In the first place, a profile of each group's errors is presented in the form of a table to categorize these errors and reveal the number of occurrences. Most error categories have been identified in a way that serves to present a short description of what is going wrong in each sentence or structure extracted from the students' texts. The categorization borrows from Doughty (1991), Izumi (2003), and Suh (2003) the 'agreement of head NP with verb in RC', 'pronoun retention', 'non-adjacency of head NP to relative clause', 'choice of relative pronoun', 'incorrect relative marker morphology', and 'inappropriate relative marker omission' (chapter 4), but their 'relative marker' term has been replaced with 'relative pronoun' in all cases, and instead of 'inappropriate relative marker omission' the expression 'missing relative pronoun' is used.

Table 7.3.A: Types/categories and numbers of errors in the third year group's texts

Error category	Error number	Error extracts	Reference (student name & line number)
Agreement of head NP in main clause (antecedent) with verb in relative clause (in terms of meaning and appropriacy) (or inappropriate collocation)	1	'He is concerned with reality. *Real events, real historical period and real characters that might had* ***happened*** during that era'.	Zaid, L. 56-57 Type: full Construction: NS-S
Agreement of head NP with verb in RC	2	'Anne Bradstreet deserved to be first American *poetess who represent* her Colonial period.' → 'American poetess who *represents* …' 'and learn how to live by the *laws* of America, which *is* "to settle for half".' → 'the *law* of America, which *is* …'	Sana, L. 23-24 Full NS-S Marah, L. 43-44 Full NS-S
Choice of relative pronoun	1	'In these words Shakespeare is chalenging the people and the history *who* see Cleopatra as a prostitute' → '… the people and the history *that* see …'	Nehal, L. 23-24 full NS-S
relative pronoun morphology (It could also be choice of RP)	1	'also, she believes in the everlasing and that man is not mortal and that he also will die when she said that man grows old and then return to eath from *what* he is made' → 'from *which*'	Salam, L. 6-7 Full NS-OPrep
Inappropriate use of relative pronoun (or incomplete structure of R.C)	1	'Other wise, Williams *who* uses an extreme poetic language because he thinks that man can acheive what he want if he is an imaginer but he must use his imagenation in the right way.'	Sana, L. 51-53 Full S-S
Agreement of head NP with RC as a whole + Incorrect morphology & type of relative pronoun	1	'This party is set to be against *the Roman world and the Roman set of values who they can'not enjoy their time purely.*' → '… and the Roman set of values *because of which* they cannot …'.	Nehal, L. 14-16 Full NS-S (should be NS-OPrep)
Missing relative pronoun (<u>if intended to be full RC</u>); or Wrong word class (<u>if intended to be reduced RC</u>)	1	'because what is moral might be immoral in accordance to the theme of relativity and to Shakespear's efforts to build *new morals differ* from the pre-concieved ones which are not based on reality.' → 'morals *which/that* differ' or 'morals *different*' or 'morals *differing* from'.	Nisreen, L. 10-12 Ambiguous NS-S

Missing auxiliary verb (in passive voice verb form)	2	‘and Shakespear in this play is establishing and defending a new kind of heroism "human heroism" which *based* on weakness and which is a mixture of fault and virtue.’ → ‘which *is* based’. ‘"Anne Bradstreet" who *considered* to be the first American poetess’ → ‘who *was* considered’.	Ghadeer, L. 10-12 Full NS-S Sana, L. 3-4 Full S-S
Inappropriate reduction	1	‘The last theme which redeemed Antony is the legend of love that Antony staged the first show of it when he died in the arms of Cleopatra and *finished* by Cleopatra by her suicide’ → ‘and *that was* finished by …’	Ghadeer, L. 25-27 Reduced NS-S
Pronoun retention *Object of preposition pronoun retention* *Subject pronoun retention*	2 1	‘The last theme which redeemed Antony is the legend of love that Antony staged the first show of *it* when he died in the arms of Cleopatra’ → ‘that Antony staged the first show of when …’ ‘She is not like the ordinary women that you can satisfy you disers with *them*’ → ‘…women that you can satisfy your desires with’. ‘Even the prisets, who *they* should be religious’ → ‘…who should be …’	Ghadeer, L. 27-29 Full NS-OPrep Nehal, L. 20-21 Full NS-OPrep Nehal, L. 24 Full S-S
	Total 14		

Table 7.3.B: Types/categories and numbers of errors in the fourth year group's texts

Error category	Error number	Error extracts	Reference (student name & line number)
Pronoun retention *Object pronoun retention*	2	‘… the meaningless of our life and acts in our waiting for nothing. for something we can't know *it*’ → ‘… something we can't know …’ ‘there was a scarlet letter A which she had embroidered *it* on her clothes’	Mona, L. 5-6 Reduced NS-DO Niveen, L. 12 Full NS-DO

Choice of relative pronoun (or relative adverb)	1	'Another thing is that in the first stage *where* Hester was punished' → 'the first stage *when* Hester was punished'	Malak, L. 22 Full S-Ad
Missing auxiliary verb (in passive voice) →	3	'let us expect that Estragon and Vladimir would suicide which kind of positive act' → '…which *is* a kind of positive act' 'He lets her go back to the real world which full of harsh realities' → '… which *is* full …' 'and it becomes more serious when it comes to the story of thieves that crusified with Christ.' → 'thieves that *were* crucified …'	Mona., L. 39 Full NS-S Haifa, L. 65 Full NS-S Mofeed, L. 18-19 Full NS-S
Preposition inaccuracy in an 'object of preposition' RC type	1	'The needle her is the symbol of self-reliance *by* which Hester proves her self as a transcendental woman.' → '*through* which'	Fotoon, L. 20-21 Full NS-OPrep
Relative clause verb form error (probably a result of confusing between reduced and full RCs.)	1	'Beckett is obsessed with the dichotomy that *undermining* our all life' → 'that *undermines*'	Mofeed, L. 14 Full NS-S
Missing relative pronoun (<u>if intended to be full RC</u>); or Wrong verb form (<u>if intended to be reduced RC</u>)	5	'they deside to cling to the slight light remains to them.' → 'the slight light *which/that* remains to them', or 'the slight light *remainin*g to them' 'When she and Antony committed suicide they achieved a very high position elevated them over Caesar' → 'high position *which/that* elevated them …', or 'high position *elevating* them …' 'Past lived like a bomb within her son waites to explode' → '… *waiting/that waites* …' 'But within there is abomb waits to revelot against society' → 'a bomb *which/that* waits to revolt', or 'a bomb *waiting* to revolt' 'he is like any father arranges a traditional marriage' → 'any father *who* arranges …', or 'any father *arranging* …'	Mofeed, L. 21 Ambiguous NS-S Lina, L. 18-19 Ambiguous NS-S Haifa, L. 32-33 Ambiguous NS-S Haifa, L. 46-47 Ambiguous NS-S Haifa, L. 51 Ambiguous NS-S

Inappropriate use of [preposition + RP] (probably a result of confusing between two RC types (e.g. object of preposition and direct object))	1	'because they will petray Beckett's idea *in which* he stresses in his play namely the dualities of life.' → '… Beckett's idea, *which/that* he stresses …'	Mofeed, L. 24-25 Full NS-OPrep
Non-adjacency of head NP ('community') to relative clause (probably a result of inability to connect main clause with relative clause using a proper (perhaps more complex/difficult) relative pronoun)	1	'she is the representative of her community *who* acts just like them' → '… her community *whom* she acts just *like*', or '… her community *like whom* she just acts'	Khalil, L. 46-47 Full NS-S (should be NS-OComp)
Agreement of head NP with verb in RC	3	'So society and father are *something* that *stand* in the way of her liberaty.' → 'something that *stands*' 'we have a speech between Mrs Alving and Pastor Manders in attacking the *conventional traditions and the corrupted society* which *influences* the people which *was* the cause of the corruption of captain Alving' → '… which *influence* the people, which *were* the cause …'	Haifa, L. 53-54 Full NS-S Mona, L. 44-46 Full NS-S Full NS-S
	Total 18		

Table 7.3.C: Types/categories and numbers of errors in the diploma group's texts

Error category	Error number	Error extracts	Reference (student name & line number)
Pronoun retention (resulting from the inappropriate insertion of 'content clause/that clause' within the RC) *Object pronoun retention*	1	'the mother refuses to accept any bridegroom whom she thinks *that he* is inferior to one of her girls' → '… whom she thinks is inferior …'	Reem, L. 37-38 Type: full Construction: NS-DO/C

Choice of relative pronoun (or relative adverb)	2	'he feels that he lacks the revolutionary fire of old times *where* people had 'good, and noble causes' which trigered them to act.' → '… old times *when* people had …' 'In his plays he presents characters *which* we can identify with.' → 'characters *whom/that* we can identify with'.	Afra, L. 2-3 Full NS-Ad Ghena, L. 61-62 Full NS-OPrep
Incorrect word insertion in the structure of RC; or Incorrect choice of RP	1	'It faces people with a social problem to which *solution* they are invited to collaborate.' → '… to which they are invited to collaborate (to find a solution)' or 'to *whose* solution they are invited to collaborate'	Hanan, L. 44-45 Full NS-OPrep
Agreement of head NP with verb in RC	4	'"Look Back in Anger" by John Osborne and "Lear" by Edward Bond are the kind of theatre which *invite* the receiver to think' → 'the kind of theater which *invites* …' 'He feels that he is stuck in a static world where there is no changes which *gives* him the feeling of being alive as a human being.' → 'changes which *give* him the feeling …' 'The murdering scene of the grave digger's boy and the raping of his wife (Cordelia) shows the violence of the people who *has* the power.' → 'people who *have* the power' 'The rural trilogy of "Blood Wedding", "Yerma" and "The House of Bernarda Alba" is a clear example of Lorca's symbolic and poetic form that combines all the before-mentioned aspects in *a way* that *create* endless possibility of interpretation'	Afra, L. 33-35 Full NS-S Afra, L.3-5 Full NS-S Afra, L.10-11 Full NS-S Laila, L. 66-68 Full NS-S
Noun-verb agreement within RC	1	'He feels that he is stuck in a static world where there *is* no *changes*' → 'where there *are* no changes'	Afra, L.3-4 Full NS-Ad
Agreement of head NP with RC as a whole	1	'Hence begins *Yank's journey, who is merely a common man'*	Kinaz, L. 109 Full NS-S

Missing preposition in reduced 'object of preposition' RC	1	'For them a girl should protect herself against men she has instinctual passion to preserve her virtue.' → '… men she has instinctual passion *for* to preserve her virtue.'	Kinaz, L. 68-69 Reduced NS-OPrep
Inaccurate structure (S-S construction is used instead of NS-S construction)	1	'For them a girl should protect herself against men she has instinctual passion to preserve her virtue. So, it is not man's fault if she is contaminated. Furthermore, *Men who should take the initiative and begin the affair*.' → '*It is men who should take the initiative …*'	Kinaz, L. 68-70 Full S-S
Missing main verb of matrix sentence in S-S construction type	1	'The thing which kills him that after fifty years of work he is unable to obtain a sense of personal dignity' → 'The thing which kills him *is* that after …'	Kinaz, L. 88-89 Full S-S
Incorrect replacement of relative pronoun (or relative adverb) with adverbial word of similar morphology	1	'when a political institution represses and oppresses its people, that would result in an unhealthy society *whereby* people will bring out their festering violence and anger on each other.' → 'unhealthy society *where* people …'	Dania, L.54-56 Ambiguous NS-Ad
	Total 14		

Note: the term 'ambiguous' is used to refer to those structures in which it was not clear whether students meant to use relative clauses in the first place – even though they sounded like relative clauses.

7.3.3.1. Discussion of errors

First of all, it is important to note that the category of error identified as 'missing relative pronoun (if intended to be full RC) or wrong word class / verb form (if intended to be reduced RC)' in both third and fourth year students' error profiles, as well as the error category identified as 'incorrect replacement of relative pronoun (or relative adverb) with adverbial word of similar morphology' in Diploma students' error profile, are actually the ones that illustrate all those RCs classified as 'ambiguous' in table 7.1 at the beginning of section 7.3 since it was not so clear how students meant to use them. It was clear however from third and fourth year students' errors that belong to the first category that these students were confused between the formation of full RCs and reduced RCs. This confusion was particularly obvious in the fourth year group's error profile, which shows that 5 of the 18 errors

committed by this group were subsumed under this category, and therefore, made the structures containing them 'ambiguous'.

Apart from these ambiguous structures, most students' errors apparently occurred in full RC structures, whereas very few errors were committed in reduced RC structures. This could be attributed to the fact that the corpus contained large numbers of full relative clauses compared to the small numbers of reduced ones.

7.3.3.1.1. Discussion of errors in different relative clause constructions

In terms of RC constructions, errors were found in various types of these constructions. Generally speaking, because NS-S was the most common RC construction in the corpus, most errors took place within sentences of this type. Nevertheless, a considerable number of errors appeared within sentences of other construction types (e.g. NS-OPrep, S-S, NS-DO, NS-Ad, and S-Ad), although these were of much lower rates than NS-S. While these latter errors constituted 42.8% of all third year students' errors, and 27.7% of all fourth year students' errors, they constituted 64.2% of all Diploma students' errors. This indicates that though Diploma students applied the NS-S construction most frequently, like the other two groups, most of their errors were not in that construction (only 35.7 %), unlike the other two groups. Rather, their errors were mainly distributed among other constructions, such as, NS-DO (7.1 %), S-S (14.2%), NS-OPrep (21.4 %), and NS-Ad (21.4 %).

Third year students had problems with the application of NS-OPrep construction on three occasions: first, Nehal's error categorized as 'agreement of head NP with RC as a whole + incorrect morphology & type of relative pronoun' was presumably the result of her inability to use the proper RC construction, which is NS-OPrep, to convey her intended message. This illustrates how more difficult or complex RC types (i.e. those with gaps of more marked functions – according to either the Accessibility Hierarchy or our hierarchy of gap roles) were not chosen and easier (or

less marked) types were used instead (such as Nehal's use here of NS-S instead of the more appropriate NS-OPrep).

Both the second and third occasions where NS-OPrep was found problematic to this group are included in the category of 'pronoun retention'. This tendency to keep the pronoun, which is identical to the RP used, after the preposition enhances the difficulty and confusion the 'object of preposition' gap causes for language users. As explained by Biber *et al* (1999), 'non-subject gaps' like this one do not occur as commonly as 'subject' gaps, and they are more difficult to process than 'subject' gaps, because, unlike subject gaps, they do not preserve the standard subject + verb + object/predicative/adverbial order in the relative clause; rather, they "result in a clause element being displaced from its normal position" (p. 621-22).

In the case of fourth year students, it was the NS-DO construction that was affected twice by 'pronoun retention' errors. These pronoun retention errors serve to illustrate one form of difficulty facing students when using relative clauses with direct object/complement gaps. The same explanation by Biber *et al* given in the previous passage concerning object of preposition gaps applies here, which is that gaps with 'direct object' function are less common and more difficult to process than gaps with subject function as they cause the displacement of a clause element from its normal position. As we saw, the claim that direct object gaps (as well as object of preposition gaps) are less common was supported by the findings of this study. Here, the two fourth year students who made these pronoun retention errors placed an object pronoun after the verb element in the relative clause in an attempt to preserve the standard order of subject + verb + object, which is disturbed by the application of the DO RC type.

However, all pronoun retention errors in this study could be explained differently from the Contrastive Analysis perspective, which mainly claims that what is different between L1 and L2 is difficult to acquire, and might lead to errors. In chapter four (section 4.3.1), having this view in mind, we made a prediction that the

parameter of pronoun retention in particular would be problematic for Arab learners, since whereas in Arabic pronoun retention is mostly obligatory, English does not accept it and considers it a grammatical error. Hence, L1 interference in this case is quite possible, and the results of RC error analysis in this study indicate that it actually did take place on six different occasions in the groups' writings (see the three error profiles). As a matter of fact, a number of contrastive studies which have investigated the similarities and differences between the English and Arabic relativization systems have revealed that due to such a major (and almost sole) discrepancy between the two systems "Arabic speakers encounter problems mainly with pronoun retention when learning English relative clauses" (Ammar & Lightbown, 2005: 176; chapter 4, sec. 4.2.2).

As pointed out earlier, the most prominent and frequent problem fourth year students had in using RCs was the confusion between full and reduced RC structures as it was the source of 6 out of the 18 errors found in their corpus. Less obvious problems were in the use of NS-OPrep RC construction – though they were not as serious as those third year students had with the same construction. The fourth year group had only two errors within NS-OPrep constructions. In the first one, the student (Fotoon) used a correct grammatical construction; but in terms of meaning, the preposition attached to the RP was inaccurate. In the second one, it was clear that the student (Mofeed) confused two types of RC with each other; that is, he employed the NS-OPrep construction while having the NS-DO construction in mind, which was indeed the right one to be employed in that context. Such an error is most likely to be a result of the lapse in focus in editing, or as Edge (1989) refers to it a "slip", which is caused by "processing problems or carelessness", and which the learner could auto-correct "if pointed out' and 'if given the chance" (cited in James, 1998: 80). This explanation sounds logical as slips were expected to take place in the writing of any of the students, who were under the pressure of exam time limit.

Relative clauses with OComp (i.e. object of comparison) gaps were very much unused or avoided by students of this study. We should remember that this gap type

is placed at the end of the AHH’s difficulty order (i.e. considered the most marked/difficult one). The last error category in fourth year students’ error profile helps illustrate this avoidance (or perhaps ignorance) of this gap where it is expected to be used, for the student who committed that error tended to resort to the most commonly used construction; NS-S, instead of the least common, but more appropriate, one; NS-OComp. This student’s preference to apply the easier RP or gap made him choose the wrong head noun in the main clause, 'she' (rather than 'community'), to modify with his relative clause.

In the whole corpus, there were only three errors in 'adverbial' gaps (out of the 33 adverbial gaps found in the whole corpus; see table 7.2.A), one of which was in fourth year students’ corpus, and the other two were in Diploma students’ corpus. The three errors took one form, which was 'incorrect choice of relative adverb' or maybe 'incorrect morphology of relative adverb', since in two errors the relative adverb 'where' was used instead of 'when' to modify *time* head noun, and in the third error, the adverb 'whereby' was seemingly used instead of the relative adverb 'where', which fitted more the context of use. In addition to these three errors, a fourth error took place within an NS-Ad construction employed by a Diploma student (Afra, L. 3-4); yet, it did not affect the choice or form of the relative adverb as the previous three errors did; rather, it affected the noun-verb harmony within the RC structure used.

7.3.3.1.2. Discussion of errors in different aspects of relativization

The three error profiles also clarify what aspects or features of relativization were affected more by errors. 'Agreement of head NP with verb in RC', 'Pronoun retention' and 'choice of relative pronoun' were the aspects that all groups had errors in. Errors of 'missing auxiliary verbs' were only common among third and fourth year students. Errors of '(form) agreement between head NP and verb in RC' were most common, contrary to expectation, in the Diploma students’ writing. They constituted 28.5% of their errors, 75% of which were however committed by one

student only. In fact, most of the Diploma students' errors – despite the noticeable development in this group's writing performance in general – reflected some incompetence, or maybe obliviousness, on their part. This perhaps could be explained in the same way Suh (2003) explained his subjects' poor performance when he tested their knowledge about relativization by means of a grammaticality judgment task. He actually suggested several explanations, which although specific to his own subjects' behaviour in a particular task, help justify our Diploma students' behaviour in a similar way:

> One possible explanation would be that in spite of the fact that subjects were above intermediate level of proficiency, they did not seem to have sufficient knowledge of correct usage of relative clauses, i.e., how they are formed and function in relation to a main clause. … Another plausible explanation would be that though subjects would have had sufficient amount of learned knowledge in Krashen's (1982) term about relativization, this can not guarantee accurate judgment or correct use of relative clauses for communication. … learned knowledge needs to be changed into acquired knowledge through continuous practice. (Suh, 2003: 139)

There was also a third explanation given by Suh, and it had to do with the possibility that subjects might have felt mentally tired or sleepy when they were given the task (after lunch), and as a result, they failed to pay careful attention to what they had to do in the task. This could be the case with our students as well, though we are not sure about the timings of the exams they were subject to. But generally speaking, they might be tired or sleepy, or perhaps just careless as hinted at before, a situation to which some of their errors (or slips) could be attributed. Alternatively, and quite sensibly, Diploma students' errors, in part, could be attributed to factors such as test anxiety, the limited time allotted to the exam, and/or their concentration on content rather than form (Salebi, 2004).

In comparison to our findings concerning the aspects of relativization affected by students' errors, the results of Suh's grammaticality judgment task showed that subjects made the most accurate judgment on sentences including errors involving parameters such as 'choice of relative pronoun', and 'case marking on relative pronoun' while they performed poorly on parameters such as 'pronoun retention' and

'agreement of a head NP with verb in relative clause'. Noticeably, also our students' performance was worse when applying the last two parameters than when applying other parameters.

Errors of 'missing relative pronoun', or as Doughty (1991) and Izumi (2003) call it 'inappropriate relative marker omission', were, as hinted at before, most dominant in fourth year students' texts, and they reflected ignorance of the fact that there is another choice available to them in grammar in case they omit the relative pronoun, which is using the other 'reduced' or 'non-finite' form of the intended relative clause – where RP omission is correct – with making the necessary alterations in its structure, such as, changing the verb form into present participle. Relative pronoun omission error, in general, has been reported in a number of studies (e.g. Tadros, 1966, 1978; Mohammed, 2000; Salebi, 2004; Fakhra, 2004) as one of the frequent errors in the writing of Arabic-speaking learners of English. However, while some of these studies (Tadros, 1966, 1978; Mohammed, 2000) categorized it as an interlingual error (i.e. the result of L1 interference), others (Salebi, 2004; Fakhra, 2004) listed it among intralingual (or developmental) errors (see the end of section 4.2.2).

7.4. Conclusion

The analysis of relative clauses in the corpus, as identified at the beginning of this chapter, has shown that there were only slight differences among the three groups in their applications of different RC types or constructions. Diploma students were different in their performance from the two 'undergraduate' groups as relative clauses in general were more frequent in their corpus, and as they tried to make use of a wider range of RC types, and consequently, more complex structures of relativization. On the other hand, the analysis results revealed that there was also a slight difference among the three groups in terms of the rates and categories of errors they made in different relative clause constructions and that affected different aspects of relativization. The case of students' non-use of more complex/difficult RC

structures in their writing, especially where they are expected, has been exemplified at certain occasions while discussing findings. Yet, there was nothing to indicate whether this non-use reflected the non-users' ignorance of such structures, or whether it reflected their tendency to avoid them.

The students' L1 had an effect on their application of specific relativization norms, which resulted in errors, such as pronoun retention errors that were found in all groups' corpora – though only once in the Diploma group corpus. All in all, a number of errors may not be always perceived as indicators of lack of competence on the part of students who committed them; rather, they could merely be 'slips' due to carelessness or, more probably, shortage of time.

The results also showed that there were some similarities between our gaps hierarchy and the gaps hierarchy outlined by the Accessibility Hierarchy Hypothesis, such as, the positioning of subject gap at the top as the easiest and most common gap type followed immediately by direct object/complement gap in both hierarchies. On the other hand, non-subject head nouns, in which the RC would be 'right-embedded' in Kuno's (1974) term, also proved to be preferred by students over subject head nouns, in which the RC would be 'center-embedded', emphasizing by this the ease of accessibility with which Kuno's Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis characterized the former HN type, compared to the difficulty it attached with the latter one. As a result of this, the construction NS-S (non-subject-subject) emerged as the top of all RC constructions that were found in the corpus in terms of frequency, and, presumably, easiness.

Chapter Eight: Conjunctive Adjunct Analysis

8.1. Introduction

This chapter displays and discusses the results of the analysis of the conjunctive adjuncts which are used in the same corpus described in chapter six, preceded by an illustration of how conjunctive adjuncts (sometimes called 'conjunctive adverbs' or 'linking adverbs') are defined in this study. First of all, the main objectives or research questions in accordance with which conjunctive adjuncts in the data were analyzed are presented, together with a description of the analysis method – which is similar to the one employed in the relative clause analysis (chapter 7).

8.2. Research questions

The data analysis attempted to investigate the following:

1. The frequency of conjunctive adjuncts, classified into types (e.g. additive, adversative, causal, temporal), in each group's corpus, which in turn would enable a comparison to be made of the three groups with one another and a demonstration of what conjunctive adjunct items and types they tended to rely on more.
2. The type-token ratio of conjunctive adjuncts in each group as a measurement of their variation. This would allow a more accurate perception of each group's conjunctive adjunct application by going beyond the mere measuring of conjunctive adjunct raw frequencies (as in 1 above) to exploring the groups with more or less varied use of conjunctive adjuncts. The hypothesis is that high variety is an indicator of good quality writing, and that the good writers' (represented by the Diploma students group) texts would be characterized with a relatively high conjunctive adjunct variety. This would

also reveal whether all types of conjunctive adjunct included in the analysis were used by all groups.

3. How are conjunctive adjuncts 'misused' by students? What are the possible sources of this misuse? What types of conjunctive adjunct do students in each group tend to misuse more than other types?
4. Based on the research into conjunctive adjunct use in the writing/academic texts of native speakers of English (especially for purposes of comparison with EFL/ESL learners' use of these linguistic items) (e.g. Granger and Tyson, 1996; Hinkel, 2001; Bolton *et al*, 2003), as well as on an investigation conducted by us at a later stage into the conjunctive adjuncts used in essays written by British university students (chapter 9), do particular conjunctive adjuncts/conjunctive adjunct types emerge as 'overused' by the Syrian students on the one hand, and do particular ones emerge as 'underused' by them on the other?
5. Does the students' L1 play a role in their misuse, overuse, or underuse of certain conjunctive adjuncts?

8.3. Analysis framework

8.3.1. Background for defining conjunctive adjuncts searched in the corpus

Following the discussion raised in chapter five, 'conjunctions' – in the broad sense of the term, and as identified by most linguists and in most textbooks for teaching writing and composition – are 'logical devices' or 'linking devices' realized by words or phrases which indicate meaning relationships between sentences, or any other discourse units smaller or larger than sentences. These relationships include addition (*and, furthermore, moreover, besides, in addition (to), etc.*), exemplification (*for example, such as, as, for instance, etc.*), contrast (*but, however, yet, while, on the other hand, etc.*), result (*so, then, therefore, accordingly, as a result, thus, etc.*), and time sequence (*then, next, afterwards, previously, first ... second, finally, etc.*). It is through such devices that the writer is able to organize his ideas and to help his reader follow him from one sentence to another (Byrne, 1988). However, for student

writers to know how to apply them correctly, as well as appropriately, they need to learn about their grammatical behaviors and restrictions; that is, about which of these markers work within the sentence, which work between sentences, and which work both ways, and how.

Hence, as opposed to the semantic approach which presents conjunctions categorized according to the meaning relationships they signal, there is another approach that classifies them according to their grammatical functions, basically into 'coordinating conjunctions' (or 'coordinators') and 'subordinating conjunctions' (or 'subordinators'), with the former functioning to connect independent clauses (or maybe words or phrases) and the latter to transform the independent clauses to which they are appended into subordinate ones (Zamel, 1983: 25). Bloor and Bloor (1995) refer to these two types as 'linking conjunctions' or 'linkers' and 'binding conjunctions' or 'binders' respectively, and state that the linkers are a small set that contains *and*, *but*, *or* and possibly *for*, *so*, and *then*, whereas the binders are a larger group which include *because*, *since*, *when*, *whenever*, *until*, *before*, *after*, *while*, *if*, *unless*, *whether*, *although*, *even though*, *in case*, *given that*, *so that* and many more.

As for expressions such as *moreover, furthermore, besides, however, nevertheless, therefore, thus, afterwards, finally*, which normally initiate a sentence showing the link between it and previous text, they fall neither under coordinators nor under subordinators; rather, they form a separate group of connectors, often called 'Conjunctive Adjuncts' or 'Conjunctive Adverbs' (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Zamel, 1983; Bloor and Bloor, 1995; Halliday, 2004). Bloor and Bloor (1995: 56-57) argue that "as their name suggests, Conjunctive Adjuncts have a function similar to that carried out by conjunctions [i.e. coordinators and subordinators]; they signal the rhetorical organization of the text"; besides, "they often seem to convey a similar meaning to that conveyed by conjunctions". Figure 8.1 below is presented by Bloor and Bloor to illustrate conjunctions and conjunctive adjuncts that are equivalent to each other in terms of the meaning relation they indicate. Nevertheless, because the two linguistic features behave *grammatically* in a different way, as Bloor and Bloor

point out, they "classify them differently, assigning them different labels as word classes (*adverb* versus *conjunction*)".

Figure 8.1: Conjunctive adjuncts and conjunctions equivalent in meaning

Conjunctive Adjunct (adverb)	conjunction
moreover, furthermore	and
however, nevertheless	but, yet
alternatively	or, whereas
meanwhile, simultaneously	when, while
thus, therefore, consequently	so that

(Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 57)

The first grammatical difference they mention has to do with syntactic position, as conjunctions always occur at the beginning of the clause which they link or bind, whereas conjunctive adjuncts can occur at various points within the clause that they affect. In Halliday's (2004: 540) words, the latter "are very commonly thematic", while the former "are obligatorily thematic as structural Theme". The second grammatical difference is that conjunctions link or bind two parts of the sentence, whereas conjunctive adjuncts relate two separate sentences. It is due to such differences, Bloor and Bloor further claim, that orthographic conventions prescribe a full stop (or a semi-colon) between two clauses with a conjunctive adjunct (e.g. *however*) and permit a comma between two clauses with a conjunction (e.g. *but*). However, conjunctive adjuncts, generally speaking, are linguistic items that relate structures mainly through their meanings, and that is why when compared with conjunctions, they are said to "have semantic weight, but no grammatical function" (Zamel, 1983: 25).

Biber *et al* (1999), who use the term 'linking adverbials' to refer to conjunctive adjuncts, assume that "because they explicitly signal the connections between passages of text, linking adverbials are important devices for creating textual cohesion, alongside coordinators and subordinators" (p. 875). In fact, Halliday and Hasan, in their famous work *Cohesion in English* (1976), consider coordinators and subordinators as merely 'structural' means for relating linguistic elements (words,

phrases, or clauses) to each other and do not include them within the list of 'textual' ‘cohesive’ devices/relations they introduce (i.e. *Reference, Substitution, Ellipsis, Conjunction, and Lexical cohesion*). For them, "cohesion is a relation between sentences in a text, not a relation within the sentence" (p. 227 & 232); and accordingly, a conjunctive adjunct is perceived to be a ‘cohesive’ agent in this text, while a coordinator or subordinator is not – even though it can imply the same semantic relationship implied by a conjunctive adjunct. Examples of this (provided by Halliday and Hasan) are the ‘adversative’ relation in [1] and the ‘succession in time’ relation in [2], which are expressed ‘structurally’ in (a) and (b) by means of subordinators, but ‘cohesively’ in (c) by means of conjunctive adjuncts:

[1] a. He fell asleep, in spite of his great discomfort.
b. Although he was very uncomfortable, he fell asleep.
c. He was very uncomfortable. Nevertheless he fell asleep.

[2] a. After the battle, there was a snowstorm.
b. After they had fought a battle, it snowed.
c. They fought a battle. Afterwards, it snowed.

At this point, it is important to refer to the fact that Halliday and Hasan use the term ‘Conjunction’ in a way different from that of Bloor and Bloor, Biber *et al*, Zamel, and other linguists. They use it restrictively in cases where the semantic relation expressed is "in its cohesive function", "operating conjunctively" rather than structurally (as in c in [1] & [2] above); and thus, any expression of that relation is considered by them to fall within the category of conjunction. Therefore, not only conjunctive adjuncts in their various forms have been included in this category, but also words like *and*, *or*, *but* – which are more typically used in ‘structural/coordinate’ relations than in ‘cohesive/conjunctive’ ones – when used cohesively, to link one sentence to another.

In this research, our analysis of conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus of Syrian students’ English writing has been built in the first place on Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) perception of conjunction and its types. So, the remaining part of this section (8.3.1) will be devoted to present their definition and classification of this language

feature, and to justify our preference to adopt their scheme of categorization in our analysis over other schemes.

8.3.1.1. Conjunction definition in the scheme of Halliday and Hasan (1976)

According to Halliday and Hasan, a conjunction is a cohesive device signaling a semantic relation, which specifies "the way in which what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before" (1976: 227); or as they themselves put it:

> Conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meanings; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the preceding (or following) text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse. (p. 226)

As hinted at previously, Halliday and Hasan adopt a criterion for including an expression under the heading of conjunction: "given a particular semantic relation which CAN operate conjunctively (*ie* which takes on a cohesive function when expressed on its own)" (p. 231); that is, "unaccompanied by other explicit connecting factors", such as structural means (p. 227). Taking this criterion into account, they list three kinds of conjunction/conjunctive expression/conjunctive adjunct as follows:

(1) adverbs, including:
simple adverbs ('coordinating conjunctions'), *eg: but, so, then, next*
compound adverbs in *-ly*, *eg: accordingly, subsequently, actually*
compound adverbs in *there-* and *where-*, *eg: therefore, thereupon, whereat*
(2) other compound adverbs, *eg: furthermore, nevertheless, anyway, instead, besides*
prepositional phrases, *eg: on the contrary, as a result, in addition*
(3) prepositional expressions with *that* or other reference item, the latter being (i) optional, *eg: as a result of that, instead of that, in addition to that,* or (ii) obligatory, *eg: in spite of that, because of that.*

(Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 231)

In addition to the previous criterion, Halliday and Hasan set out a general principle which describes conjunctive adjuncts[1] in a way that could help us as text analysts identify them more easily and accurately while tracing them: it is that "a conjunctive adjunct normally has first position in the sentence (with some exceptions), and has as its domain the whole of the sentence in which it occurs: that is to say, its meaning extends over the entire sentence, unless it is repudiated" (p. 232). However, this general principle can not be always strictly followed, especially when analyzing a written text. The first reason for this, as stated by Halliday and Hasan, is that the sentence itself (as written, *i.e.* extending from capital letter to full stop) is "a very indeterminate category", "as evidenced by the indeterminacy, or perhaps flexibility", of the English punctuation system, "and it is very common to find conjunctive adjuncts occurring in written English following a colon or semicolon". The second reason they give is that "the conjunction has the effect of repudiating – that is, of setting a limit to the domain of – any other conjunction that has occurred previously in sentence-initial position (p. 232). To illustrate, in the example below (given by Halliday and Hasan), "the *but* following the colon presupposes the first part of the sentence; it therefore cancels out the *so* at the beginning, defining the limit of its domain. It would be equally possible, and with very little difference in meaning, to start a new sentence at *but*" (p. 233).

> *So Alice picked him up very gently, and lifted him across more slowly than she had lifted the Queen, that she mightn't take his breath away: but, before she put him on the table, she thought she might as well dust him a little, he was so covered in ashes.*
>
> (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 232)

What Halliday and Hasan want to conclude from this is that despite the fact that cohesion, as they define it, is a relation between sentences, not a relation within the sentence, it should be recognized that at the same time "in many instances there is a conjunctive expression in the middle of a sentence, presupposing a previous clause in the same sentence"; which indicates that there can be instances where "elements

[1] The terms 'conjunctive adjunct' and 'conjunctive expression' are used by Halliday and Hasan alternatively with the term 'conjunction'.

that create texture by bringing about cohesion between sentences also reinforce the internal texture that exists within the sentence itself" (p. 233). In Halliday (2004), this notion is explained differently and in a simpler and more direct way as follows:

> It [the cohesive system of CONJUNCTION] provides the resources for marking logico-semantic relationships that obtain between text spans of varying extent, ranging from clauses within clause complexes to long spans of a paragraph or more. Cohesive conjunctions may be used within clause complexes … But their real cohesive contribution is made when they are used to indicate logico-semantic relations that extend beyond the (grammatical) domain of a single clause complex. They may mark relations that obtain between two clause complexes … (Halliday, 2004: 538-39)

In accordance with that, our investigation of conjunctive adjuncts (or cohesive conjunctions) in the corpus will consider not only those occurring at the beginning of sentence, following a full stop, but also ones similar to *but* in Halliday and Hasan's example above as long as they (a) reinforce the internal texture within the sentence, (b) presuppose a previous clause/part of the sentence, (c) have a repudiating effect (this applies to adversative conjunctive adjuncts only), and (d) can be preceded by a full stop instead of the punctuation mark used by student – whether it is a colon or semicolon – with little or no difference in meaning. In fact, concerning the last point, students involved in this study were observed on many occasions inappropriately using a comma before the conjunctive expression initiating a sentence or a clause within it (in many cases it was unclear which was intended by student), and on some occasions even using no punctuation marks at all. Such instances of conjunctive adjunct use in the corpus will still be counted on the assumption that had the students who did so been competent enough in English punctuation, they would have replaced the comma with a full stop, colon, or semi colon, and inserted one of these three marks where they used nothing.

8.3.1.2. Conjunctive adjunct categorization

8.3.1.2.1 Overview of various categorization schemes and justification for choosing Halliday and Hasan's (1976) categorization scheme

As we saw in chapter five, conjunctive adjuncts have been classified diversely by researchers. Although these classifications define categories and allocate certain items differently, and although some of them are more detailed and extended than others, they are on the whole similar to each other in nature and scope. Halliday and Hasan (1976), for example, adopt a scheme of four main categories: *Additive, Adversative, Causal*, and *Temporal*, in addition to an extra category: *Continuative*. In comparison, Quirk *et al* (1985), in their work *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, term conjunctive adjuncts as "conjuncts", and organize them under seven headings: *Listing, Summative, Appositional, Resultive, Inferential, Contrastive,* and *Transitional*. They further sub-classify (a) the *Listing* group into: *Enumerative* and *Additive*, (b) the *Contrastive* group into: *Reformulatory, Replacive,* and *Antithetic*, and (c) the *Transitional* group into: *Discoursal* and *Temporal*. Another source to be compared with is Biber *et al*'s (1999) *Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, where conjunctive adjuncts are named "linking adverbials" and arranged into six semantic categories: *Enumeration and Addition, Summation, Apposition, Result/Inference, Contrast/Concession*, and *Transition*. A final and more recent classification is that of Halliday (2004), in which "cohesive conjunctions" fall into three primary types of "expansion" and numerous subtypes. As summarized by him, "the headings that may be found useful for most purposes of analysis are the general ones of (i) *Elaborating*: *Appositive, Clarificative*; (ii) *Extending*: *Additive, Adversative, Variative*; (iii) *Enhancing*: *Temporal, Comparative, Causal, Conditional, Concessive, Matter*" (Halliday, 2004: 549).

Of these four systems, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) scheme of categorization seems to be the simplest and most general. In fact, the two scholars themselves describe the

four conjunctive relations presented in this scheme as "very general", and their account for this is as follows:

> A very simple overall framework like this does not ELIMINATE the complexity of the facts; it relegates it to a later, or more ‘delicate’, stage of the analysis. Our reason for preferring this framework is just that: it seems to have the right priorities, making it possible to handle a text without unnecessary complication. A detailed systematization of all the possible subclasses would be more complex than is needed for the understanding and analysis of cohesion; moreover, they are quite indeterminate, so that it would be difficult to select one version in preference to another. We shall introduce some subclassification under each of the four headings, but not of any very rigid kind. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 239)

It is for this same reason of handling texts without unnecessary complication that we find Halliday and Hasan’s framework more convenient and easier to apply in this research than the others’. Li (2004), in her MA research, investigated the three systems of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Quirk *et al* (1985), and Biber *et al* (1999) for the purpose of giving an overview of the research on conjunctive adjuncts (or "connectives") classifications, and she too preferred to use Halliday and Hasan’s system as the basis for the data analysis in her paper. In an attempt to justify this preference, she reports in her summary of the three classifications that Quirk *et al* provide the most detailed classification of connectives and show its effectiveness in quantitative research; while Biber *et al*’s study is based on a corpus of over forty million words, and so, has high reliability and authority. Yet, both works are grammatical dictionaries, and their definitions of connectives are limited to grammatical adverbials. Important connectives like *and*, *or*, and *but* are excluded in their discussions because they are more frequently coordinating conjunctions. As for Halliday and Hasan’s scheme, according to Li, "although it is in some way antique (sic) and not as detailed as the recent ones, it includes all possible connectives and it is the clearest and most comprehensive classification of connectives" (p. 13-14).

For similar reasons as these, the conjunctive adjunct analysis in this study as well, as mentioned before, has been based on Halliday and Hasan’s system of categorization, which is summarized by them in a table showing the four basic conjunctive relations

and listing examples of the words and phrases that express these relations (see Appendix E). As noted by them, "some labels are given to the subcategories, where it is felt that these would be helpful" (p. 244) – though they should not be adopted very rigidly (239). Although the category of *Continuatives* does not appear in the table, Halliday and Hasan do introduce and explain them towards the end of their chapter on 'conjunction'. In the table, they also distinguish between 'external' conjunctions and 'internal' conjunctions; but these do not fall within the domain of our interests concerning conjunctive adjunct analysis.

Each of the four cohesive relations, together with the various meanings that could be expressed through it, has been discussed in detail and exemplified by Halliday and Hasan. The words *and*, *yet*, *so* and *then*, as clarified by them at the beginning, "can be taken as typifying these four very general conjunctive relations, which they express in their simplest form" (p. 239). A brief account is presented next of some main points discussed by Halliday and Hasan under each relation; that is, those of particular relevance to this research.

8.3.1.2.2. Categories/types of cohesive conjunction/conjunctive adjunct in the scheme of Halliday and Hasan

As Halliday and Hasan's "summary table of conjunctive relations" (1976: 242-43; see Appendix E) demonstrates, under the first heading ***Additive*** – the general meaning of which is 'there is something more to be said' (p.245) – other related patterns are included, such as: *Alternative*, *Comparative*, and *Appositive* (*Expository* and *Exemplificatory*) relations. Contrary to other systems (e.g. Quirk *et al*'s (1985) and Biber *et al*'s (1999) systems), Halliday and Hasan's system indicates that the words *and*, *or* and *nor* are not restricted to structural coordination within the sentence (as it is the case with the correlative pairs *both ... and*, *either ... or*, and *neither ... nor*); rather, they can all be used cohesively, as conjunctions, and classified as additives (p. 244). Likewise, it is mentioned that expository items like *namely* and the abbreviations *i.e.* and *e.g.*, which are usually used as structural

markers within the sentence, may occasionally be found linking two sentences cohesively (p. 248). Accordingly, we count such words in the corpus as conjunctive adjuncts only when occurring between sentences, functioning cohesively – even though the boundaries of sentences were not very clear in all cases due to inaccurate punctuation; and so, were estimated by us depending on meaning and context. This can be illustrated in the following passages taken from third and fourth year students' texts, where *and/or* apparently connect two independent sentences, or maybe clauses, but are not punctuated so (i.e. being preceded by a full stop and capitalized, or by a semicolon) and thus, are considered cohesive conjunctions (i.e. conjunctive adjuncts) – rather than coordinate conjunctions. Determining the status of *and* in these passages as a cohesive (additive) conjunction has also been guided by Halliday and Hasan's argument that in contrast to the coordinate *and*, "the typical context for a conjunctive *and* is one in which there is a total, or almost total, shift in the participants from one sentence to the next, and yet the two sentences are very definitely part of a text" (1976: 235).

> *Antony and Cleopatra is ambigious, rich and complex play* ***and*** *Shakespear in this play is establishing and defending a new kind of heroism "human heroism" which based on weakness and which is a mixture of fault and virtue.* (Ghadeer, third year, L. 10-12)

> *she said that man will die at a certain moment and that he will reach his last moment whenever he gets old* ***and*** *in order to prove that she uses the elements of nature 'The heaven, the earth, the trees' by saing that although these elements have strength and beauty but at last they will fade away* (Salam, third year, L. 27-30)

> *As we can see by reading the 1st stanza she at first sees nature as being immortal, as never showing the signs of age,* ***or*** *if they do they are only renewed within the spring* (Marah, third year, L. 20-22)

> *The stupid conventions and traditions have changed Mrs. Alving into a ghost* ***and*** *by his ideas about freedom and light Osvald could open his mother's eyes toward the great responsibility the individual has toward himself* (Donia, fourth year, L. 41-43)

> *When Thoreau built the house he digged down in the earth because he wanted to surch for the origion of man (and Nature is the origion of man), he also built the chimney (to go beyond his physical existence and to transcend his*

experiences to God) ***and*** *he built the house himself* (Malak, fourth year, L. 35-39)

they daren't to move. So how do we expect them to suicide ***and*** *if they tried by the rape and the bare tree it will be a comic scene* (Mona, fourth year, L. 29-30)

So, instances like these ones are interpreted as additive conjunctive adjuncts and included in the analysis.

The second heading of conjunction in Halliday and Hasan's scheme is ***Adversative***, and its basic meaning is 'contrary to expectation'. It includes *Adversative* relations, *Contrastive* relations, *Corrective* relations, and *Dismissive* relations, with the meanings 'in spite of', 'as against', 'not … but', and 'no matter …, still' respectively (for examples, see Halliday and Hasan's table in Appendix E and also chapter 5, sec. 5.2.1).

An adversative expression like *however* is always cohesive, and can occur either initially or non-initially in the sentence. However, it is more confusing when dealing with other adversative words such as *but*, which can be either coordinate or conjunctive, and *though*, which can be either subordinate or conjunctive. As distinguished by Halliday and Hasan, *but* as a conjunctive always occurs initially in the sentence (or between clauses provided it has the effect of repudiating the former clause), whereas *though* as a conjunctive "may occur initially (in which case it is indistinguishable in speech from the subordinating *though* (= *although*) and would be treated as cohesive only if occurring in writing after a full stop), but its normal position is as a tailpiece at the end of the clause" (p. 250), as in *'Jane felt most disheartened. She was not going to let herself be beaten though'*. In our corpus, it was difficult in a few cases, again because of mis-punctuation, to decide upon *but*; i.e. whether it was used coordinately or cohesively. As was the case with *and*, which function *but* had was determined after looking into the context it was used within and the ideas it connected. As for *though*, it was not found used conjunctively in any of the analyzed texts.

Under the third conjunction type; ***Causal***, three specific relations are included: *Result*, *Reason*, and *Purpose*, which may be exemplified with the simplest causative expression *so*, meaning ‘as a result of this’, ‘for this reason’, and ‘for this purpose’. They may also be expressed with various prepositional phrases (see Appendix E, and chapter 5, sec. 5.2.1). Besides these specific types, three other forms of causal relation are distinguished: *Reversed* causal relations – in which the sentence presenting the cause follows the one presenting the effect (i.e. the logical precedence of cause over effect is violated)[2], *Conditional* relations, and *Respective* relations.

Finally, ***Temporal*** relation is a relation between two successive sentences, whether in terms of time sequence, or in terms of points enumeration. Generally speaking, a temporal conjunction may be *Sequential* (e.g. *then, next, afterwards*), *Conclusive* (e.g. *finally, at last, in conclusion*), or *Summative* (e.g. *to sum up, in short*). Sequential and Conclusive conjunctions may occur in correlative forms as well (e.g. *first … then, first … second, at first … finally, to begin with … to conclude with*).

Halliday and Hasan discuss six further individual conjunctive items and group them together under the heading ***Continuatives***. They are: *now, of course, well, anyway, surely*, and *after all*, which "although they do not express any particular one of the conjunctive relations identified above, are nevertheless used with a cohesive force in the text" (p. 267). However, they are discussed mostly in the context of speech and associated with a particular intonation pattern, which is described with this "brief general statement":

> In general, when functioning cohesively they are ‘reduced’ forms (*ie* unaccented and with reduced vowel values) of items which also occur, but not cohesively, in a ‘full’ (non-reduced) form. Their meaning as conjunctive items is derivable from their meaning as full forms; their phonological reduction is simply a signal that they have in fact a backward-linking function. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 268)

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[2] The simple conjunction with this meaning is *for*. It is hardly ever heard in spoken English, where its nearest equivalent is the word *because* in phonologically reduced form (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 258).

So, if *now* for example is reduced, it is cohesive, and it means "the opening of a new stage in the communication; this may be a new incident in the story, a new point in the argument, a new role or attitude being taken on by the speaker, and so on." (*ibid*). In Biber *et al*'s (1999: 879) argument, *now*, in certain occurrences, is a linking adverbial (conjunction in Halliday and Hasan's terms) of the type 'Transition'. Linking adverbials of this type, as they explain, "mark the insertion of an item that does not follow directly from the previous discourse. The new information is not incompatible with what it is linked to but rather it is signaled as only loosely connected, or unconnected. That is, these adverbials mark the **transition** to another, usually tangential, topic". Of the six continuatives listed by Halliday and Hasan, *now* and *of course* were found in the corpus – used by just a few students[3].

8.3.2. Clarifications of some conjunctive adjuncts in the data

1. ***in fact***: this prepositional phrase occurred quite frequently in the data, but in many cases it was used as a 'disjunct' (as Quirk *et al* (1985) classify it) or 'stance adverbial' (as Biber *et al* (1999) classify it); i.e. not cohesively; whereas in other cases it had the function of a 'conjunctive adjunct', and only then it was marked up and counted by us. Stance adverbials, according to Biber *et al* (1999: 585), can also have a connective function, like linking adverbial. The use of *in fact* is one example of this as it "often not only shows actuality, but also connects the proposition to a preceding sentence, which it strengthens or makes more specific", as in:

> *She's never seen him on the porch.* ***In fact****, there's no chair to sit on.*
>
> *Irrigation implies not only an adequate and controlled water supply, but also efficient drainage of excess water when desirable. This supply and control of water,* ***in fact****, is the most important aspect of irrigated paddy cultivation.*
> (Biber *et al*, 1999: 858)

And from the corpus,

[3] As they are more oral, none were expected.

*Likewise, Frank Norries's Vandover and the brute, introduces a criticism of the false standards of society. he introduces a refined artist whose main concern is to pursue his education. during his university education he was a good man, but after he read a book about obstetrics the brute in him awakened he was triggered to Vice. Norris sneered at the false ethical and moral standards of the society. **Infact**, Society blamed Vandover's innocence at the beginning. he developed from his moral innocence to vice, from innocent ignorance to degeneration and then his Lycanthropy.* (Kinaz, Diploma, L. 56-62)

*As we said the structure of the novel followed the same structure used in Greek epic. The novel is divided into 3 stages. The first one is introductory. It describes the setting where the events took place (the scaffold). The second one is the middle stage .... And the last one is the conclusion when Demmisdale confeses his crime ... **In fact** The Scarlet letter was a well organized interisting novel.* (Malak, fourth year, L. 15-27)

As understood by us, *in fact* in the last extract taken from Malak's text indicates actuality, and at the same time, has a conclusive-conjunctive effect, introducing a general statement given to summarize or evaluate what went before.

However, because *in fact,* used as such, has not been referred to by Halliday and Hasan, or categorized under any of the five types of conjunction suggested by them, it is subsumed in our analysis under a sixth separate group of conjunctive adjunct called 'Actuality conjunctive adjuncts'. Apart from this, Halliday and Hasan recognize a conjunctive function of *in fact*, which is of a *contrastive* kind, with the sense 'as against'; and hence, classify it as an *Adversative* conjunction. In the texts under examination in this study, *in fact* in this sense was found used only once, that is:

*The poetess is Anne Bradstreet (1612-1622). Anne wrote her poetry in secret she does not want anyone to read her poetry, because the puritanical mentality considered writing poetry as a waste of time. If they knew that she wrote poetry, they will blame her so she wrote her poetry in secret, **in fact**, we notice that the more we get into her poetry the more it becomes religious, her first writings and poetry related to something personal in her life, like the death of her Grand child, and the burning of her house. all these disasters in her life trigger out her religious meditation to think about a different subject like God ...* (Talal, third year, L. 2-9)

2. ***because:*** this word is typically a subordinator; yet, when it connects two independent sentences in a causative relationship, it functions as a causal conjunctive adjunct. More specifically, it represents a "*reversed* form of the causal relation [(i.e. '*b*, because *a*' instead of 'because *a*, *b*')], in which the presupposing sentence expresses the cause", and which is "less usual as a form of cohesion", as put by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 257). They call it "reversed" because the typical sequence in which sentences related cohesively by *because* tend to occur is that where cause precedes effect (p. 257-58). In its cohesive reversed use, *because* is actually more associated with spoken English than with written English, where its nearest equivalent is *for* (p.258). We were not sure whether students in this study were aware of such stylistic norms concerning the use of *because* and that was why only few of them used it as a cohesive connector between sentences in their texts. The two passages below from the corpus illustrate how the reversed form of causal relation was employed by these few students using the 'informal' causal conjunctive adjunct *because*.

> *Finally, we can say that Ghosts illustrates the idea of conventions that suppress human individuality more effectively than that in The Play boy of the Western World.* ***Because*** *in Ghosts Mrs. Alving was able to change and develop, wheras in The Play boy of the Western World Pegeen could never change.* (Dalal, fourth year, L. 48-51)
>
> *He is her own Individuality. In many points in the play while talking with pastor she thanks God, because her son now speakes for her why?* ***Because*** *Osvald is young Artist who expresses his view without fear of society.* (Haifa, fourth year, L. 25-27)

By looking into the use of *because* in the second extract, we find it introducing the answer to a previous direct question 'why', a style we might be familiar with more in speech than in writing.

3. Conjunctive adjuncts that have multifunction:

(a) ***on the other hand*** can be an *Additive* conjunctive adjunct – indicating a 'comparison' relationship where 'dissimilarity' is shown –, and also an *Adversative* one – implying a 'contrastive' relationship. Examples from the corpus are:

> *The second symbol is the church which stands for redemption. But the irony in this symbol is that it stands for hypocricy rather than redemption. ... The church* ***on the other hand*** [Additive] *symbolizes the negative destructive influence of the puritan culture on the people who are under their control.* (Ghalia, Fourth year, L. 8-14)

> *Alfieri, the mouth speaker of Miller says that the law becomes wrong when it becomes unnatural. He means to say that Eddie Carbon's feelings towards his niece Catherine were ubnormal So they were wrong.* ***On the other hand*** [Adversative]*, the love relationship which developed between Rodolpho and Catherine was very natural. So, the law couldn't prevent them and their marriage.* (Mai, Third year, L. 56-60)

(b) ***thus*** can be a *Causal* conjunctive adjunct, and also an 'exemplificatory' conjunctive adjunct that belongs to the *Additive* category.

> *She flourished like a rose in a muddy environment. She is the only good character in the novella. She used to take care of little Tommie until he died, and she even used to lament and nurse her brother's wounds after his fight with the boys in the neighborhood.* ***Thus*** [Causal]*, from the very beginning we notice that Crane tries to depict Maggie as a victim to her rotten environment ...* (Mervat, Diploma, L. 12-16)

> *Archetypes, or the collective unconscious of the people about the notions that are products of society's experience, can be felt in the use of colours, objects (like windows and door ways) that sympolically represent other notions like imprisonment, freedom.* ***Thus*** [Additive]*, color white stands for purity, innocence but also death, emptiness, the absence of color or life.* (Laila, Diploma, L. 57-61)

(c) ***then*** has two conjunctive functions: *Temporal* and *Causal*.

> *in the first stanza, she describes the blue sky, the green earth, the stones and the trees which are all in their bright colors, ...* ***Then*** [Temporal]*, the poetess changes her tone and express her Puritan idea very clearly, ...* (Mai, Third year, L. 6-10)

> *Pompey refuses that not because he was honest but he was afraid that someone might have heard them talking.* ***Then*** [Causal]*, the history will register him as a trator* (Nehal, Third year, L. 6-8)

(d) ***here*** belongs to two types of conjunctive relation: the first one is called the 'here and now' relation, which is a subcategory of *Temporal* relations, and the second is

called ‘respective’, which is a subcategory of *Causal* relations, meaning ‘with respect to’.

> *The novel is divided into 3 stages. The first one is introductory. ... The second one is the middle stage. ... And the last one is the conclusion when Demmisdale confeses his crime.* ***And here*** [Temporal] *we can say that Demmisdale represents the hero of the Greek epic who has come to his down fall.* (Malak, Fourth year, L. 16-22)
>
> *Miller gives his characters a realistic shape. He concentrates upon the individual illegitimate desires.* ***Here*** [Causal] *we have a psycho analysis of Eddie Carbone’s illegetimate desires toward his niece Catherine.* (Zaid, Third year, L. 51-53)

4. ***again*** (and ***once again***) is not referred to in Halliday and Hasan’s table or discussion of conjunctions, but it is in Hinkel (2002: 142), where it is categorized as an *Additive* conjunction. We include it among the additive conjunctive adjuncts under investigation in this research as it was used by a few Diploma students.

8.4. Corpus analysis findings and discussion

In this section, we summarize and arrange in tables the final results which emerged from our investigation of the conjunctive adjuncts used in the corpus, which has been conducted in the light of the research questions presented at the beginning of this chapter. A discussion of the figures displayed in each table is also attempted, through which the three groups’ applications (and even misapplications) of the various conjunctive adjunct types are compared together. First, table 8.1 reveals the raw frequency of the conjunctive adjuncts employed by each group to express each basic conjunctive relation. Then, tables 8.2.A-8.2.F clarify what words and phrases were used by which groups to reflect the conjunctive relations, as well as, the number of occurrences of these words and phrases. Finally, tables 8.3.A-8.3.C illustrate the occasions where different conjunctive adjuncts were interpreted as misused by students, and suggestions are made of possible sources for such misuse.

8.4.1. Frequencies of conjunctive relations

Table 8.1: The frequencies and percentages of conjunctive adjunct types in each group's texts

Conjunctive relation	Third year	Fourth year	Diploma	*Total*
1. Additive	79 (41.57%)	41 (33.88%)	36 (28.57%)	156 (35.69%)
2. Adversative	36 (18.94%)	26 (21.48%)	31 (24.60%)	93 (21.28%)
3. Causal	52 (27.36)	36 (29.75%)	36 (28.57%)	124 (28.37%)
4. Temporal	14 (7.36%)	16 (13.22%)	10 (7.93%)	40 (9.15%)
5. Continuative	4 (2.10%)	1 (0.82%)	11 (8.73%)	16 (3.66%)
6. Actuality	5 (2.63%)	1 (0.82%)	2 (1.58%)	8 (1.83%)
Total	190 (43.47%)	121 (27.68%)	126 (28.83%)	437

Table 8.1 demonstrates the total numbers of conjunctive adjuncts in the texts, classified into the five basic categories of conjunctive adjunct identified by Halliday and Hasan, in addition to a sixth category allocated for actuality conjunctive adjuncts (functioning cohesively) which are not referred to by Halliday and Hasan, like *in fact* (not in its adversative meaning, which they do refer to). Obviously, conjunctive adjuncts of the additive type – though decreasing steadily in number from third year group to Diploma group – have in total the highest percentage of occurrence in the whole corpus (35.6%), followed by causal conjunctives, and then by adversative conjunctives. Nevertheless, in Diploma students' texts, these three conjunctive adjunct types are very close to one another in terms of frequency, and additives are even as frequent as causals. As for the other types, they have relatively low frequencies in all texts, particularly continuative and actuality conjunctive adjuncts.

The results in the table show that the portions of conjunctive adjuncts in fourth year students' texts and in Diploma students' texts (each consisting of approximately 10,000 words) are somewhat similar, and that third year students are the group responsible for the largest portion of conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus (41% of which is of the additive type). If Diploma students, as presumed in previous chapters, represent the group of 'good' or 'advanced' writers in this study, this last result then could be contrasted with the findings of researchers such as Witte and

Faigley (1981) and Ferris (1994). Witte and Faigley in their analysis of essays of college ‘freshmen’ rated high and low in quality found that "the writers of high-rated essays employ over three times as many conjunctive ties as the writers of low-rated essays" (p. 196). As perceived by them, "conjunctives are most often used to extend concepts introduced in one T-unit to other T-units which follow immediately in the text. Thus the more skillful writers appear to extend the concept introduced in a given T-unit considerably more often than do the less skillful writers" (ibid).

Similarly, in Ferris’ (1994) analysis of various lexical and syntactic features in a corpus of 160 ESL texts rated by different raters on a 1–10 scale, conjunctive adjuncts were among those features used with greater frequency by students at higher levels of ESL proficiency (p. 417).

Such results, however, should not lead us to draw hasty conclusions about the use of conjunctive adjuncts, like, "the more, the better" (Crewe, 1990), as the excessive use of such devices can result in, as put by Zamel (1983: 27), "a prose that sounds both artificial and mechanical", and might be a way of "disguising poor writing", as observed by Crewe (1990: 321). It could also indicate that students view conjunctive adjuncts as mere "stylistic enhancers" rather than as "higher-level discourse units", something that is warned against by Crewe (p. 316), and further by Granger and Tyson (1996: 25). Teachers are called on to make students more aware of this (see also Hartnett (1986), Carrell (1982), and the discussion in 5.3.1 in this thesis).

8.4.2. Frequencies of individual conjunctive adjuncts in the groups’ writing

In this section, details concerning the individual conjunctive items used by students are presented, showing how they have been grouped under the six general categories listed in table 8.1 above. Thus, tables 8.2.A–8.2.F (6 tables: a table for each category) illustrate what these individual items are and how many of them there are. This means that each table provides information not only about the raw frequencies of the conjunctive items included, but also about their variety in each group’s

writing. Some of the conjunctives in the tables are marked with an asterisk to indicate that this was the form in which the conjunctive was used by one or more student(s), and which was either incorrect, unusual, transferred from L1, or confused with other form.

8.4.2.1. Additives

Table 8.2.A: Additive conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus and their frequencies in each group's texts

	Additives	**Third year**	**Fourth year**	**Diploma**	***Total***
Simple & complex additive relations	1. Also	25 (31.6%)	16 (39.0%)	12 (33.3%)	53 (33.97%)
	2. And	18 (22.7%)	14 (34.1%)	-	32 (20.51%)
	3. Moreover	9 (11.3%)	1 (2.4%)	4 (11.1%)	14 (8.97%)
	4. Furthermore	3 (3.7%)	-	3 (8.3%) (by the same student)	6 (3.84%)
	5. In addition / In addition to …	1 (1.2%)	1 (2.4%)	3 (8.3%) (by the same student)	5 (3.20%)
	6. Besides / *Beside this	3 (3.7%) (by the same student)	-	1 (2.7%)	4 (2.56%)
	7. Again	-	-	3 (8.3%)	3 (1.92%)
	8. Once again	1 (1.2%)	-	-	1 (0.64%)
	9. And … also	1 (1.2%)	-	-	1 (0.64%)
	10. *Not only that, but also	-	1 (2.4%)	-	1 (0.64%)
Alternative forms	11. Or	1 (1.2%)	-	-	1 (0.64%)
	12. *Else (intended conjunctive: *or else* in its 'reversed polarity causal' – rather than 'alternative additive' – function, in which it is equivalent to *otherwise*)	-	1 (2.4%)	-	1 (0.64%)

Comparative relations: similarity & dissimilarity	13. Likewise	-	-	3 (8.3%)	3 (1.92%)
	14. Similarly	-	-	1 (2.7%)	1 (0.64%)
	15. On the other hand	-	2 (4.8%)	-	2 (1.28%)
	16. *On the first hand (intended conjunctive: *on the one hand*)	-	1 (2.4%)	-	1 (0.64%)
	17. *On the contrast (intended conjunctive: *in contrast / by contrast*)	1 (1.2%)	-	-	1 (0.64%)
Appositive relations: exemplificatory & expository	18. For example	7 (8.8%)	3 (7.3%)	4 (11.1%)	14 (8.97%)
	19. For instance	3 (3.7%)	-	-	3 (1.92%)
	20. Thus	1 (1.2%)	-	1 (2.7%)	2 (1.28%)
	21. An example of this	-	-	1 (2.7%)	1 (0.64%)
	22. In other words	3 (3.7%) (by the same student)	-	-	3 (1.92%)
	23. That is	2 (2.5%)	-	-	2 (1.28%)
	24. This means	-	1 (2.4%)	-	1 (0.64%)
	Total	79 (50.64%)	41 (26.28%)	36 (23.07%)	**156**

The figures in table 8.2.A reveal that there is a gradual decrease in the total numbers of additives – with third year students' corpus containing the greatest number of these conjunctive adjuncts, and Diploma students' corpus containing the least. This decrease is most evident in the case of *also* and *and*, which are the two most dominant additives in the corpus as a whole. The most salient point is that *and* as a conjunctive adjunct disappears totally from Diploma students' texts. One possible reason for this is that these students might have developed a knowledge that it is improper, or perhaps 'immature', to start a sentence with *and* to connect it to a previous sentence. To put it another way, they may have been *taught* to avoid using

it at the beginning of sentence. In relation with this issue, Halliday and Hasan argue that:

> The ‘and’ relation is felt to be structural and not cohesive, at least by mature speakers; this is why we feel a little uncomfortable at finding a sentence in written English beginning with *And*, and why we tend not to consider that a child’s composition having *and* as its dominant sentence linker can really be said to form a cohesive whole. However, it is a fact that the word *and* is used cohesively, to link one sentence to another, and not only by children. The ‘and’ relation has to be included among the semantic relations entering into the general category of conjunction. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 233-234)

In contrast, the ‘and’ relation was implemented quite frequently in third and fourth year students’ texts; but a thorough examination of all occasions where such implementation was made has shown that this relation was many times unnecessarily established between sentences by students simply to indicate to the reader that they are adding another point. This, we would argue, could produce an adverse effect on the reader as it disturbs the logical or natural order of sentences, where keeping such relations implicit would be better for message clarity and text coherence in general. Consider the following examples from third year texts:

> *These curses have been mentioned by the poetess when she said; “Yet seemed by nature and by custom cursed’. This line also refers to the puritanic doctrine which is “Total Depravity.’. That is Man’s evil because of Adam and Eve’s mistakes.* ***And*** *this mistake is related to custom and nature* (Zaid, L. 15-19).
>
> *So we must not be limited in our judgement that we notice that Antony and Cleopatra are elevated at the end but Caesar remain in his position.* ***and*** *we could not reach this feeling until the end of the play.* ***and*** *the feeling which I reached is the feeling of admiring of Antony and of all of this play* (Ghadeer, L. 29-33).
>
> *As for the Glass Menagerie, Tom, Williams’ narrator represents his own views.* ***And*** *he was trying to portray the young generations discontent within the depression of the 1930’s* (Marah, L. 50-52).

Actually it is found that the redundant use of *and* as an additive conjunctive adjunct on a number of occasions can be related to the students’ probable avoidance of employing complex sentence structures – a point also raised in Ting's (2003: 5) analysis of Chinese students’ conjunctive adjunct errors. In the first extract above for

instance, *and* can be eliminated and the clause connector *which* can be used instead, so that the two sentences it joins would be transformed into a one longer hierarchical sentence. On the other hand, the excessive use of *and* can be attributed to L1 interference factors, as in Arabic writing it is a quite common sentence/clause connector (Meygle, 1997; Mouzahem, 1991; Hinkel, 2001).

It is worth referring here to an investigation conducted by Meygle (1997, chapter 5) into the frequency of linking devices, 'conjunctive adjuncts' and 'conjunctions', in a corpus of Syrian undergraduate students' writing (thirty first year exam scripts & thirty fourth year exam scripts), in which *and* – in its all connecting functions, structural and cohesive – was found occurring with significantly the highest frequency rates: 302 in first year texts and 319 in fourth year texts. Incidences where *and* was used "to join clauses or sentences", as distinguished by Meygle, were 186 and 139 respectively. Although this does not specify how frequently *and* as a 'clause' connector was used cohesively and how frequently it was used structurally, it can be said to support our finding concerning the high (though not highest) frequency of *and*, as a conjunctive adjunct, in the texts of the undergraduate students involved in this research (12 third year exam scripts & 13 fourth year exam scripts). In addition to the L1 (Arabic) impact, Meygle suggested that the reason behind this over-reliance on this device might be that the students feel proficient in using it, and less proficient in using other devices. "Thus, they stay with what they know" (p. 135).

Despite the fact that Diploma students did not make use of *and* as a conjunctive adjunct at all, and made less use of other additive relations – compared with third year students in particular, the logical additive connections between their successive sentences were still coherently implied, which supports the idea emphasized by many researchers (e.g. Carrell, 1982; Hartnett, 1986; Crewe, 1990) that the readability and coherence of text are not necessarily improved by the presence of cohesive ties, and that cohesion is an outcome of coherence when readers are able to derive the connectivity of ideas in a text from their knowledge of the world and text schema. It is hence concluded that when readers are able to connect text ideas

without relying on explicit cohesion ties, such ties are not needed to unify text's ideas (Carrell, 1982, cited in Hinkel, 2001: 112 and in section 5.1.3 in this thesis).

Also was the most frequent additive conjunctive adjunct in all the corpora; yet, it was not always effectively employed, as some students tended to insert it repeatedly or unnecessarily between sentences. This is illustrated in the following passages:

> *The poetess* ***also*** *mentions the "Providence" aspect which is a puritan rule. This rule explains that only God can protect Man. There is no security unless it's God security. This idea is mentioned in the line; "Only above is found all with security". This line* ***also*** *reveals the inability of "Man", and the weakness of "Man". Anne Bradstreet is a kind of awaring "Man" to go back to God.*
> *The judgement day is* ***also*** *mentioned as a religious aspect.* ***Also*** *the nobility of "Man" as God's words is mentioned in the Bible as praising Man from other creatures.* (Zaid, third year, L. 25-31)

> *Everything in America at that time was wrong; the economical, social and political conditions were very terrible. The writer himself, had to work as a shoe-maker in order to servive. In other words, The whole world needed a saviour to set the things right.* ***Also****, all the characters of the play were victims to these ugly situations and deadly conditions.* (Mai, third year, L. 41-45)

The two conjunctives *moreover* and *for example* occupied the third position after *also* and *and* in terms of frequency, but most of them were produced by the third year group. The rest of the additives listed in the table were found to be used with very low frequencies as far as the whole corpus was concerned, which possibly reflected the limited repertoire of additive conjunctives students had, resulting in the low variety of such conjunctives in most of their writings.

8.4.2.2. Adversatives

Table 8.2.B: Adversative conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus and their frequencies in each group's texts

	Adversatives	**Third year**	**Fourth year**	**Diploma**	***Total***
Adversative relations 'proper' ('in spite of')	1. But	18 (50%)	14 (53.8%)	6 (19.3%)	38 (40.86%)
	2. However	7 (19.4%)	4 (15.3%)	9 (29.0%)	20 (21.50%)
	3. Yet	3 (8.3%) (by the same student)	1 (3.8%)	3 (9.6%) (by the same student)	7 (7.52%)
	4. In spite of that / But in spite of that / In spite of …	-	-	2 (6.4%)	2 (2.15%)
	5. Only	1 (2.7%)	-	-	1 (1.07%)
Corrective relations ('not … but')	6. Rather / But rather	1 (2.7%)	-	6 (19.3%) (5 by the same student)	7 (7.52%)
	7. On the contrary / But on the contrary / *At the contrary (intended conjunctive: *on the contrary*)	2 (5.5%)	1 (3.8%)	3 (9.6%)	6 (6.45%)
	8. Instead	-	-	1 (3.2%)	1 (1.07%)
Contrastive relations ('as against')	9. On the other hand	3 (8.3%)	3 (11.5%)	1 (3.2%)	7 (7.52%)
	10. At the same time, And at the same time	-	3 (11.5%)	-	3 (3.22%)
	11. In fact	1 (2.7%)	-	-	1 (1.07%)
	Total	36 (38.70%)	26 (27.95%)	31 (33.33%)	**93**

As table 8.2.B demonstrates, the highest total number of adversatives exists in the third year group part of the corpus, and the lowest in the fourth year group part. The three total numbers, however, are not very different from one another. Of all the conjunctive adjuncts shown in the table, *but* and *however* are used most by students.

But is the strongly preferred choice for third and fourth year students, while *however* is the preferred choice for Diploma students. Other adversatives, as noticed, are only occasionally employed by students. In Biber *et al*'s (1999) corpus, in particular in academic prose, *however* is also found to be one of the linking adverbials that occur with notable frequencies and that is preferred to mark contrast.

Many students involved in this study (especially from the third and fourth year groups) relied to a considerable extent on the conjunctive adjunct *but* to indicate adversative relations between sentences in their writing. Not only did they use *but* by itself at the beginning of a new sentence, but also they sometimes attached it to another adversative conjunctive word or phrase, the two together functioning as a single element (e.g. *but in spite of that*, *but rather*, *but on the contrary*). In Meygle's study mentioned above, in comparison, *but* was found to be the second most frequent linking device in the corpus after *and*, and its occurrence frequencies were 55 in first year texts and 49 in fourth year texts. In most cases in both years, as reported by Meygle, *but* was used to join clauses or sentences (p.135), which indicates – even though not all the adversative relations between *clauses* with *but* were cohesive – that the implementation of this word as a conjunctive adjunct was also common in Meygle's corpus.

8.4.2.3. Causals

Table 8.2.C: Causal conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus and their frequencies

	Causals	**Third year**	**Fourth year**	**Diploma**	***Total***
Causal relations: reason & result	1. So / And so	31 (59.61%)	20 (55.55%)	12 (33.33%)	63 (50.80%)
	2. Thus / And thus	2 (3.84%)	-	13 (36.11%)	15 (12.09%)
	3. Therefore / And therefore	7 (13.46%) (by two students only)	2 (5.55%)	10 (27.77%)	19 (15.32%)
	4. Because of that	2 (3.84%)	-	-	2 (1.61%)
	5. Hence	-	1 (2.77%)	-	1 (0.80%)

	6. For that reason	-	1 (2.77%)	-	1 (0.80%)
	7. *By doing so	-	2 (5.55%)	1 (2.77%)	3 (2.41%)
	8. *According to this (intended conjunctive: *In accordance with that / Accordingly*)	1 (1.92%)	-	-	1 (0.80%)
	9. *(And) by that (L1 interference)	-	1 (2.77%)	-	1 (0.80%)
	10. *So that (intended conjunctive: *So*)	-	3 (8.33%) (all by one student)	-	3 (2.41%)
Reversed causal relations	11. For	3 (5.76%) (all by one student)	1 (2.77%)	-	4 (3.22%)
	12. *Because (more usual in spoken English)	-	3 (8.33%)	-	3 (2.41%)
Conditional relations	13. Otherwise	2 (3.84%) (misused)	1 (2.77%)	-	3 (2.41%)
	14. Then	1 (1.92%)	-	-	1 (0.80%)
Respective relations	15. Here / And here	3 (5.76%)	1 (2.77%)	-	4 (3.22%)
	Total	52 (41.93%)	36 (29.03%)	36 (29.03%)	**124**

Causals, as we have seen before, are the second most frequent conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus after additives. According to the figures in table 8.2.C, fourth year and Diploma students' texts contain the same number of causal conjunctive adjuncts in general (36 each), which is less than the number third year students' texts contain (52). The resultive word *so* is quite dominant, especially in third and fourth year texts; it turns out to be the most common conjunctive of not only causal conjunctives (50.8%), but also all other conjunctives in the corpus with their different types (14.4%). This can be contrasted with Meygle's finding concerning the frequencies of this word in his first year and fourth year corpora, which were 37 and 27 respectively (in 5 occurrences *so* had the meaning of 'very' rather than being a connector); that is, lower than its total frequency in our corpus – which is made up of 35 exam scripts. All in all, *so* was the fourth most common conjunct in Meygle's corpus.

The percentage of *so* occurrence however decreases from 59.6% and 55.5% in third and fourth year students' texts respectively to 33.3% in Diploma students' texts, where another two words; *thus* and *therefore*, are used with approximately equal frequency as that of *so* to express causal relations. This probably indicates that Diploma students realize that when introducing the result of an event already stated in a former sentence or clause, *so* has the same meaning as other resultive adverbials, such as *thus* and *therefore*, and could be replaced with them (Biber *et al*, 1999: 877). In this way they avoid the repetition of *so*, which is more common in the third and fourth year students' work, and make their implementation of resultive relations more varied. However, Diploma students' employment of causal conjunctive adjuncts in general is not that varied as only four conjunctive adjuncts of result are found in their texts (see table 8.2.C).

In the presentation of their findings regarding the frequency of linking adverbials across various registers, Biber *et al* (1999) report that academic prose and conversation have a large portion of their linking adverbials in the semantic category of result/inference (p. 880): on the one hand, *so* and *then* are found to be very common in conversation; on the other, *then*, *therefore*, *thus*, and *hence* are found moderately common in academic prose (p. 886). If *so* is a marker more common in spoken than in written English, we can say then that students, especially those who belong to third and fourth year groups, have overused it, unaware that there are other markers more appropriate for the literary written discourse they work with. *Thus*, for example, occurs with very low frequency (3.8%) in third year texts, and does not occur at all in fourth year texts. Also *therefore* is exploited by only few students from both groups (two from third year group and one from fourth year group). As for *then*, which occurs with notable frequency in conversation and academic prose in Biber *et al*'s corpus, it is hardly used at all in our corpus, with a percentage of only 0.80%. So is the case with *hence*.

As can be noticed in table 8.2.C, the additive conjunctive *and* accompanies some causal conjunctives, like *so*, *thus*, *therefore*, *here*, and *by that*, and forms one single element with each of them. The phrase **and by that*, which is used by one fourth year student, is marked with an asterisk because it is an unfamiliar conjunctive expression in the English language; it is rather a direct translation of the Arabic expression *'wa-biðælek'*, which is used to connect sentences with a resultive relation in the Arabic language (the students' L1).

8.4.2.4. Temporals

Table 8.2.D: Temporal conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus and their frequencies

	Temporals	**Third year**	**Fourth year**	**Diploma**	***Total***
Sequential relations	1. Then	3 (21.42%)	5 (31.25%)	1 (10%)	9 (22.5%)
	2. First	3 (21.42%)	-	1 (10%)	4 (10%)
	3. Firstly	-	1 (6.25%)	-	1 (2.5%)
	4. Secondly	1 (7.14%)	-	-	1 (2.5%)
	5. To begin with	-	-	1 (10%)	1 (2.5%)
	6. Afterwards	-	-	1 (10%)	1 (2.5%)
	7. Later on	-	2 (12.5%)	-	2 (5%)
Conclusive relations	8. Finally	5 (35.71%)	4 (25%)	3 (30%)	12 (30%)
	9. In conclusion	2 (14.28%)	1 (6.25%)	2 (20%)	5 (12.5%)
	10. To conclude	-	2 (12.5%)	-	2 (5%)
	11. As a conclusion	-	-	1 (10%)	1 (2.5%)
'Here and now' relations	12. (And) here	-	1 (6.25%) (uncertain; i.e. with a slight possibility of being rather a 'respective *causal*' conjunctive)	-	1 (2.5%)
	Total	14 (35%)	16 (40%)	10 (25%)	40

The results in table 8.2.D help demonstrate the low frequencies with which temporal conjunctive adjuncts are distributed in the data. In fact, there is no one individual

conjunctive adjunct in this category that can be described as ‘frequent’ in any of the three groups’ texts as is the case with the additives *and* and *also*, the adversatives *but* and *however*, and the causal *so*. Generally speaking, the temporal conjunctive adjunct with the highest percentage in the whole corpus is *finally*, followed by *then*, with the first indicating a ‘conclusive’ relation and the second a ‘sequential’ one. The sequential word *first/firstly* and the conclusive prepositional phrase *in conclusion* – though there are few instances – can both be ordered the third in terms of frequency.

In Biber *et al*’s corpus too, the distribution of the so-called ‘enumerative’ and ‘summative’ adverbials – which together can be equated with Halliday and Hasan’s category of temporal conjunctions – is not as frequent as that of result/inference or contrast/concession adverbials. However, Biber *et al* report that academic prose uses enumerative and summative adverbials more commonly than the other registers (p. 880).

8.4.2.5. Continuatives

Table 8.2.E: Continuative conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus and their frequencies

Continuatives	**Third year**	**Fourth year**	**Diploma**	***Total***
1. Of course	3	-	10 (9 by one student only)	13 (81.25%)
2. Now	1	1	1	3 (18.75%)
Total	4 (25%)	1 (6.25%)	11 (68.75%)	16

Of the six continuative conjunctive items distinguished by Halliday and Hasan: *now*, *of course*, *well*, *anyway*, *surely*, and *after all*, only the first two items are found in the data – by only a small number of students, and only once in each of these

students' texts, except for one Diploma student's text, in which *of course* occurs in 9 places (table 8.2.E).

It has been mentioned in section 8.3.1.2.2 that the conjunctive adjunct *now* when functioning cohesively, in Halliday and Hasan (1976) terms, means "the opening of a new stage in the communication" (p. 268). On the other hand, Biber *et al* (1999) classify it as a 'transition' linking adverbial for it marks the transition to another topic (p. 879). As for *of course*, Halliday and Hasan identify two cohesive functions for it: it is either used "to disarm someone into accepting something the speaker knows he is likely to reject", or used with "a slightly adversative force, of the 'as against that' type, derived from the fact that it suggests that something should have been obvious 'but' was overlooked" (p. 269). After the examination of all this conjunctive adjunct instances in the data (13), however, it is concluded that in most of them it does not convey either of these two meanings; rather, it is redundant and has no apparent conjunctive significance in its context. This is especially the case in that Diploma student's text where *of course* is used 9 times. Here is an example:

> *There are references to her struggle in the poem such as: struggle, tumult, and trouble.* ***Of course****, she experienced pain and fears while alive.* (Wafa, Diploma, L. 13-15)

8.4.2.6. Actuality conjunctive adjuncts: '*in fact*'

In accordance with our investigation, no more conjunctive items of any of Halliday and Hasan's five types of conjunctive adjunct have been found in the corpus; i.e. items other than those listed in each of the five tables above. The only other adverbial that is observed used cohesively on certain occasions is *in fact*, an adverbial that Halliday and Hasan do not include under any of their categories except when indicating a *contrastive* relation with the sense 'as against'; then, they consider it an *adversative conjunction*. Yet, the *in fact* which table 8.2.F displays is not the adversative one; rather, it is the one that Biber *et al* (1999: 858) identify as a 'stance adverbial' which "can also have a connective function, like linking

adverbials", as it "often not only shows actuality, but also connects the proposition to a preceding sentence, which it strengthens or makes more specific" (for more illustration, see section 8.3.2). As the table demonstrates, *in fact* with such a function is used by one or two students in each group. Originally, this sixth category; namely 'actuality conjunctive adjuncts', was intended to include any stance (specifically actuality) adverb seemingly working cohesively between sentences in the data but not included in Halliday and Hasan's lists of conjunctive items. But because no such cohesive stance adverbs, other than *in fact*, were employed by students (e.g. *actually*, *indeed*), the category ended up containing only *in fact*.

Table 8.2.F: The frequency of the actuality conjunctive adjunct *in fact* in the corpus

Actuality conjunctive adjuncts	Third year	Fourth year	Diploma	*Total*
1. In fact	1 (12.5%)	5 (62.5%) (4 by the same student)	2 (25%)	8

8.4.3. The variety of conjunctive adjuncts in each group's writings

In order to detect the variety of conjunctive adjuncts in each group's product, we need to know the number of different conjunctive adjuncts (as opposed to the total number of all conjunctive adjuncts; i.e. their overall frequency). Nevertheless, such number would not be sufficient by itself as an accurate indicator of variety and might mislead us due to the different frequencies of conjunctive adjuncts among groups as we have just seen in the last section. For this reason, whether there are more or less varied conjunctive adjuncts in the writings of one group than another can be demonstrated more accurately through the 'type-token ratio' (TTR), which refers to the percentage of the variety of conjunctive adjuncts resulted from dividing the number of different conjunctive adjuncts by the overall frequency of conjunctive adjuncts (or the total number of tokens of conjunctive adjuncts) – as illustrated in table 8.3 below. The general norm of this measuring method can be put as follows: a low type-token ratio indicates that there are conjunctive adjuncts which are repeated

many times. Hence, the higher the ratio is, the less repetition there is and the more different conjunctive items there are.

Variety of conjunctive adjuncts is important to writing quality because it can indicate the scope of vocabulary mastered by writers. Undoubtedly, possessing a large vocabulary is one of the characteristics of high proficiency writers. With this in mind, it can be predicted that the implementation of a variety of conjunctive expressions in a text plays a role in improving the quality of writing.

Table 8.3: The variety ratio of conjunctive adjuncts in the groups' writings

	Third year	Fourth year	Diploma
Number of different conjunctive adjuncts	40	36	33
Number of conjunctive adjunct tokens	190	121	126
Type-token ratio (TTR)	21.05%	29.75%	26.19%

Looking at table 8.3, it is noticed that the numbers of different conjunctive adjuncts in the three groups' corpora are not substantially different from one another; and so is the case with the type-token ratios: there is no major difference among the type-token ratios of the three groups. But TTR is the lowest in third year texts, whereas it is the highest in fourth year texts. Although this result sounds reasonable since the third year group is likely to be the group with the smallest repertoire of vocabulary and lowest writing quality, we cannot conclude from it that the higher the proficiency or learning level of the group is, the larger the variety of the conjunctive adjuncts they use is. This is because the TTR of Diploma students, who are the most advanced group of learners in this study with the most developed writing quality and vocabulary knowledge, is lower than that of fourth year students – though not very significantly. The slight decline in TTR from fourth year to Diploma could be perceived differently however, arguing that although it is counter-intuitive if greater variety is associated with proficiency, it is partly explained when we realize that Diploma students have 'dropped' inappropriate conjunctives such as *on the first hand*, *on the contrast*, *at the contrary*, *according to this*, *so that*.

8.4.4. Conjunctive adjunct misuse

In this part, we shed some light on the various occasions where conjunctive adjuncts appear to be misused by students. Tables 8.4.A–8.4.C below are designed to display and categorize into types the instances of misuse in the three corpora. The total number of each misuse type occurrences also appears in these tables. All in all, there are 24 misuses in the whole corpus organized under five categories in a way with which each category heading describes what is wrong with the conjunctive adjunct used or with the relationship it signifies within the context in use. These categories are:

1. Inappropriate choice of conjunctive adjunct / Conjunctive adjunct inappropriacy for context / Conjunctive adjuncts' functions confusion.
2. Unnecessarily inserted conjunctive adjunct with an improper conjunctive relation implied.
3. Using an incorrect form or structure of the conjunctive expression itself.
4. Confusing a 'cohesive conjunction' (i.e. a conjunctive adjunct) with a 'structural conjunction' (i.e. a subordinator).
5. L1 interference.

Reference to the particular students who have committed such misuses and to the exact passages where they are located is made in the tables.

8.4.4.1. Misuse in third year students' texts

Table 8.4.A: Types/categories of conjunctive adjunct misuse in third year students' corpus

Conjunctive adjunct misuse type/category	**Extracts**	**Reference** (student's name & line number)
1. Inappropriate choice of conjunctive adjunct / Conjunctive adjunct inappropriacy	'She is praising the heaven because she is looking for being among the elect. In the last stanza she's talking about the man who enjoyes the sweets of life ignoring his fate, not thinking of his second life. We can observe from her last lines the pesemestic look towards life	Sana, L. 12-16

for context / Conjunctive adjuncts' functions confusion	which is full of mistakes and disasters. **Otherwise**, one will find security in heaven.' → (More appropriate: *on the other hand*) 'During these two plays we recognized the difference between the two writers in expressing their thoughts. For example Miller uses a realistic tone because he believes that reality saves people from drowning in imagination aspects which may cause a fatal end. **Otherwise**, Williams who uses an extreme poetic language because he thinks that man can acheive what he want if he is an imaginer but he must use his imagenation in the right way.' → (More appropriate: *on the other hand*) 'The poetess is reffering to the Calvinism doctrine which is "Limited Atonemen.". The "Limited Atonement" aspect is about how Jesus sacrifice made God grace but not for everybody on earth; **furthermore**, God grace has been fallen only on those "Elect" people.' → (More appropriate: *that is*, *that is to say*, *i.e.*, *rather*) 'As far as the characteristics of the age are concerned, the poem is clearly motivated by a devout Puritan spirit of Colonial America. The question of man's mortality, his immortality, and his being predestined to live in God's house after death are very clear. Man's superiority over all other creatures is also reflected. **According to this**, Anne shows her strong belief about being predestined to a better life, an eternal one, in heaven.' → (More appropriate: *that is to say*, *in other words*) 'Williams wrote his play 'The Glass Menagerie' in the thirties while America was experiencing what we call, the Great Depression …. **On the contrary**, Alfieri, the mouth speaker of Miller says that the law becomes wrong when it becomes unnatural. … etc' → (More appropriate for establishing the intended 'comparative' relation: *by contrast, in contrast, on the other hand* (i.e. additive conjunctives))	 Sana, L. 48-53 Zaid, L. 12-14 Rula, L. 20-24 Mai, L. 40-64 (two paragraphs)
Total	5	
2. Unnecessarily inserted conjunctive adjunct with an improper conjunctive relation implied	'She is not a typical woman. She is very special, very distinguished. The more she satisfies your desire the more you feel hungry and the more you desires her. Her uniqueness comes from her ability to do what she wants without any restrictions. **So**, even the strict religious men blessed her when she behaved according to her own free well.' 'Antony in this extract is narrating, while talking to Cleopatra, his past days when he gave her all the love in the world. **Of course** this is a very important point,	Nisreen, L. 3-7 Helal, L. 22-25

	because narration was used by Dryden to be able to cover for the lack of time which is one aspect of Neo classical school.' → (A stance adverb like *in fact* could be used instead)	
Total	2	
3. Using an incorrect form or structure of the conjunctive expression itself	'It is evident for everyone that natural elements seem to be everlasting, and that man **on the contrast**, seems to be doomed to fade away very soon.' → (Correct form: *in contrast / by contrast*) 'The question of man's mortality, his immortality, and his being predestined to live in God's house after death are very clear. Man's superiority over all other creatures is also reflected. **According to this**, Anne shows her strong belief about being predestined to a better life, an eternal one, in heaven.' → (Correct form: *Accordingly / in accordance with this*)	Rula, L. 5-7 Rula, L. 21-24
Total	2	
Overall Total	**9**	

Third year group's misused conjunctive adjuncts are as shown in table 8.4.A nine in total; all fall within only three types of misuse, and five of them (i.e. 55.5%) belong to only one type, which is 'Inappropriate choice of conjunctive adjunct / Conjunctive adjunct inappropriacy for context / Conjunctive adjuncts' functions confusion'. To illustrate why this type is called so, take for example the case of Sana, who seems unaware of the right function of *otherwise* in two different occasions, for she uses it in contexts where it does not convey the meaning/relation she intends appropriately, while other conjunctives like *on the other hand* can do the job more effectively.

The second and third types of misuse to which the other four misused conjunctive adjuncts by this group belong are 'Unnecessarily inserted conjunctive adjunct with an improper conjunctive relation implied' and 'Using an incorrect form or structure of the conjunctive expression itself'. The former refers to cases where the conjunctive adjunct used is redundant and has no real semantic weight – though it could sometimes disturb the reader and affect his reception of the message. A conjunctive adjunct like *so* for instance, in one of its occurrences in this group's corpus, is interpreted by us as 'unnecessarily inserted' depending on the context it is used in. However, *so* in such an occurrence (see table 8.4.A) might not be perceived

by another examiner as ‘misused’ because ‘unnecessary’; rather, it might simply appear to him/her as one of the cases, which Biber *et al* (1999: 877-78) have talked about, where *so* does not mark a resultive relationship as usual, and where it has instead a little semantic content of its own; therefore, functions more as a discourse marker.

The latter type of misuse: ‘Using an incorrect form or structure of the conjunctive expression itself’, has to do with the distortion that affects the surface structure of the conjunctive expression employed – but not the semantic relationship this expression is intended to convey to readers (except occasionally). This distortion in form probably takes place due to the student’s confusion between the formal constructions of particular conjunctive adjuncts, such as: *in contrast* and *on the contrary*[4], as is the case with Rula from this group, or to lack of concentration on the part of the student when acquiring or learning conjunctive adjunct constructions in general.

8.4.4.2. Misuse in fourth year students’ texts

Table 8.4.B: Types/categories of conjunctive adjunct misuse in fourth year students’ corpus

Conjunctive adjunct misuse type/category	**Extracts**	**Reference** (student’s name & line number)
1. Inappropriate choice of conjunctive adjunct / Conjunctive adjunct inappropriacy for context / Conjunctive adjuncts’ functions confusion	‘For him comunion with nature serves two functions. One is therapeutic. The other is religious. Nature represents for him a refugae from the poisonous influences of society. **At the same time**, the naturalized people are the truely practical and truely healthy morally and poetically.’ → (More appropriate: additive *Moreover*	Niveen, L. 52-55
Total	1	
2. Using an incorrect form or structure of the conjunctive expression itself	‘Hawthorne uses the name of Chillingworth and pearl as symbols. **On the first hand** chill means cool. So that Hawthorne uses Chillingworth to represent the cool of passion … Pearl on the other hand stands for a precious jewel.’ → (Correct form:	Ghalia, L. 26-31

[4] The confusion between these two conjunctions however could be semantic as well, as it is the case with Mai from the third year group and Reem from the Diploma group.

	*on the **one** hand*)	
	'He is warning Mrs. Alving, who has a rebellious attitude, from challenging the ghosts of the society, the harsh ideals of Man's society, **else**, they will avenge against her severly.' → (Correct form: *or else*)	Khalil, L. 4-6
	'also to the end of the play after his death she daren't to tell the truth because she was coward and haven't the enough brave to do that. **at the contrary** she build an orphanage for his memory and she expressed a real revenge in her trying to read modern books.' → (Correct form: *on the contrary*)	Mona, L. 52-55
Total	3	
3. Confusing a 'cohesive conjunction' (i.e. a conjunctive adjunct) with a 'structural conjunction' (i.e. a subordinator)	'Hawthorne uses the name of Chillingworth and pearl as symbols. On the first hand chill means cool. **So that** Hawthorne uses Chillingworth to represent the cool of passion and the lack of sympathy of that man.'	Ghalia, L. 26-28
	'The pond, according to him, is a link between earth and heaven or between nature and religion. The pond reflects the image of the sky, **so that** by looking at the water of the pond, man can see his reflection in relation with heaven.'	Ghalia L. 47-49
	'He believes that the church brings the man away from the true meaning of his relation to God. **So that** man must free himself from all the laws if the church, and go to live in nature which is the source of purity because it reprents God.' → (In all above cases, cohesive relation & conjunctive adjunct intended: 'resultive/causal' *so*)	Ghalia L.53-56
Total	3 (by the same student)	
4. Unnecessarily inserted conjunctive adjunct with an improper conjunctive relation implied	'In one point in the play and after a year of her marriage Helena tried to run away from the institution of marriage, because she is no longer can bear it. However pastor Mander sent her back in the name of duty. So she began to suffer more **and so** she has a child. she did what every mother did for the sake of her son.'	Haifa, L. 17-21
Total	1	
5. L1 interference	'now we can say that waiting is the plot of "waiting for Godot" not only that. but also, waiting is the play itself. … **and by that** we can discover that if Beckett had more than two acts it will be the same conclusion.' → (L2 equivalents for causal relation: *and so, thus, accordingly, with this in mind, with regard to this, in this respect*)	Mona, L. 15-21
Total	1	
Overall Total	**9**	

Despite the fact that the fourth year group's types of misuse are more varied than those of the last group, both groups end up with the same overall total number of misuses (9). Apart from this general and superficial resemblance between the two groups, there are a few more specific and deeper similarities in their misapplications that are worth mentioning. These similarities are actually found in those categories/types of misuse that the two groups share, which are: 'Using an incorrect form or structure of the conjunctive expression itself' and 'Unnecessarily inserted conjunctive adjunct with an improper conjunctive relation implied'. By comparing the misused conjunctive items that fall within these two categories in table 8.4.A (third year table) with those in table 8.4.B (fourth year table), we find that the structural form of the adverbial *on the contrary*, which happens to be as we have seen before a source of confusion for a third year student, remerges to be so once again in the writing of one fourth year student. On the other hand, we notice that the redundancy of the linking adverbial *so* in particular takes place in the two groups' corpora alike – though only once in each group's corpus.

The category of 'L1 interference' appears only in fourth year group's table (8.4.B), and there is only one incidence of it in this group's texts (in Mona's text). In this incidence, the student expresses the intended causal relationship by means of an unusual conjunctive expression in the English language; '*and by that*', which is a literal translation for the Arabic (L1) resultive sentential linker '*wa biðalIkə*'. This maybe reflects the student's ignorance of the variety of resultive conjunctives available in English, from which she could select the most appropriate for indicating the meaning she wants; and consequently, her preference to resort to a connector she is more familiar with in her mother tongue. However, since this is the only case of L1 interference explored in the whole data, no conclusions can be drawn.

8.4.4.3. Misuse in Diploma students' texts

Table 8.4.C: Types/categories of conjunctive adjunct misuse in diploma students' corpus

Conjunctive adjunct misuse type/category	**Extracts**	**Reference** (student's name & line number)
1. Inappropriate choice of conjunctive adjunct / Conjunctive adjunct inappropriacy for context / Conjunctive adjuncts' functions confusion	'In a society that is dominated by impotence. Osborne chooses to reflect this impotence through his characters who are all defined by their inability to act. **Thus** anger seems to go in a vicious circle where characters make their wrong choices in society, which results in self-destruction.' → (More appropriate: additives like *in addition, moreover*)	Dania, L. 8-11
	'In fact, Lorca and Brecht are both after social change. The methods of change they suggest are to a certain extent similar, but the techniques are different. **But** both of them successfully address the problem and motivate people to create change.' → (More appropriate: *yet*, or *however*)	Ghena, L, 84-86
	'This was the matter in the whole village that men had the right to do whatever they wanted while women were considered inferior. When a girl was discovered to have a child without marriage, all men found right in dragging her through the streets and punishing or killing her. **On the contrary**, Ponica gave her son money in order to go and have a good time with a prostitute.' → (More appropriate: *In contrast*)	Reem, L. 48-52
Total	3	
2. Unnecessarily inserted conjunctive adjunct with an improper conjunctive relation implied	'Yank the protagonist in O'Neill's The Hairy Ape also suffered from a severe sense of disbelonging after Mildred's visit to the stokehole. He used to believe that he belonged to the steam and the coal and he was quite satisfied with his position. Even though Mildred thought he was an ape it never occured to him that he was like this. **Therefore**, his journey to gain his position and belonging, only enhanced the world's view of him as an ape.'	Mervat, L. 56-61
	'He feels that he is stuck in a static world where there is no changes which gives him the feeling of being alive as a human being. Jimmy is angry of his current situation which makes him rage at everybody around him, and paralysis him. This passive reaction (being angry) is reflected negatively on himself and on everybody around him. **Therefore**, he spends his life complaining about everything without any positive action.'	Afra, L. 3-8
Total	2	

3. Using an incorrect form or structure of the conjunctive expression itself	'However, the colonizer imposed the aspect of his culture on the colonized whose culture was partially eraced. **Beside this** the colonizer tried to make the native a reflection of his own image, his mirror or his copy.' → (Correct form: *Besides that*)	Wafa, L. 79-81
Total	1	
Overall Total	**6**	

In the Diploma group misuse profile we observe that the confusion between the two conjunctive adjuncts *on the contrary* and *in contrast* (the first is corrective-adversative while the second is comparative-additive) reoccurs for the third time in the data. But this time, it is their meanings (or semantic functions) that are confused by the Diploma student Reem – as was the case with Mai from the third year group – rather than their forms; and that is why it is classified under the category 'Inappropriate choice of conjunctive adjunct / Conjunctive adjunct inappropriacy for context / Conjunctive adjuncts' functions confusion'.

Table 8.4.C reveals that the number of misuses committed by the Diploma group is not very different from that of the previous two groups; that is, it is only slightly lower than the number of misuses each of the other two groups has made. A more notable decrease is likely in the case of this group in particular, for two reasons: first, it is the group of writers whose writing is the most developed compared to the other groups in terms of structure, lexis, cohesion, and overall quality; second, the total number of conjunctive adjuncts employed by this group is less than that employed by the third year group, and only a little more than that of the fourth year group (see table 8.1). Hence, it would have sounded quite reasonable to presume at the beginning of this section (8.4.4) that Diploma students' misuses would be the least as much as it would have been to presume that third year students' misuses would be the highest, and for similar reasons to those just mentioned above. That is to say, third year students could have been anticipated to be the producers of the highest frequency of misuses in the corpus (and the results of this study prove that they are indeed) not only due to their lower language proficiency, but also due to the

fact that their texts contain the largest number of conjunctive adjuncts compared to the other groups.

In comparison with this study’s findings concerning conjunctive adjunct misuse, Ting (2003:5) in her study of conjunction errors in the compositions of Chinese tertiary EFL students documents that "cohesive errors concerned with conjunction [i.e. conjunctive adjunct] are extensively found in the sample essays across all the grades", and that "there is no statistically significant difference between the good essays and the poor essays in the number of errors in the four subcategories of conjunction – Additives, Adversatives, Causals, and Temporals". According to Ting, this "implies that the use of conjunctive ties is generally a weak area for all writers of English with a Chinese first language background". In the case of this study, the same conclusion cannot be reached because despite the insignificant difference between the numbers of misuse in the three groups’ writings, these numbers do not reflect an ‘extensive’ misuse of conjunctive adjuncts by students as was found to be the case in Ting’s study. In fact, these numbers tend to be too small to indicate that the use of conjunctive adverbials is an area of weakness for English students in this research context (the misused conjunctives in the whole corpus represent only 5.49% of all the conjunctives used by students; that is, only 24 out of the 437 conjunctives in the corpus are distinguished as misused).

However, there might be another fairer way in which we could formulate our own conclusion; one similar to that reached by Granger and Tyson (1996: 24) in their research on conjunctive adjunct usage by French learners of English: it is that conjunctive adjuncts seem difficult to master, even at a reasonably advanced level. In all cases, we acknowledge as these last two researchers do that "more work on large samples would need to be conducted before reaching any firm conclusions" (ibid).

Finally, looking into the three misuse profiles taken together, and examining what categories of conjunctive adjunct are misused more than others by students, we

discover that causal conjunctives (*so, therefore, otherwise, accordingly/in accordance with that, thus, or else*) are notably the most frequently affected by various types of misuse. More specifically, 14 out of the 24 conjunctives found misemployed in the data, either formally or functionally, are causals (i.e. 58.83%); whereas misuses in additives, adversatives, and continuatives occur with lower frequencies (16.6%, 19.2%, and 4.1% respectively), and misuses in temporals do not occur at all. By contrast, the results of Ting's (2003) analysis for conjunctive adjunct errors in the essays of Chinese writers reveal that "errors in use of Adversatives and Additives are more common than errors in using Causals and Temporals" (p. 5). Although it might be difficult to hypothesize any particular reason behind the frequent misuse of causal conjunctives more than other conjunctives by the EFL students in this study, it is at least recognized that this type of conjunctive requires special attention in teaching to help students understand their logical meanings and how to employ them both appropriately and correctly.

As for patterns of conjunctive adjunct 'overuse' and 'underuse' in the data, which the research questions assigned at the beginning of this chapter proposed to explore, the analysis results at this stage only allow us to predict a tendency among students to overuse certain conjunctive adjuncts, such as the causal *so*, the additives *and* & *also*, the adversatives *but* & *however*, and the continuative *of course* – on the basis of their notably high occurrence frequencies in the corpus compared to other conjunctive items, together with their being used redundantly, or unnecessarily, on a number of occasions. On the other hand, the low frequency, or even rare occurrence, of many other conjunctive adjuncts in the data (see tables 8.2.A–8.2.F) may lead us to anticipate that students tend to underuse them. In order to obtain a more substantial ground for passing accurate judgments over conjunctive adjuncts that are overused and those that are underused, we set out to conduct a further investigation into conjunctive adjunct frequencies in the writing of native English-speaking academic students, the results of which are presented in the next chapter (chapter 9) and compared with the analysis results provided in this chapter concerning the frequencies of conjunctive adjuncts in the writing of the Syrian non-native speaker

academic students. That is to say, the frequencies of conjunctive adjuncts in the NS students' writing are used as benchmarks against which the NNS students' overuse and underuse of these devices in their English writing are measured.

Chapter Nine: Native Speaker Students' Writing Analysis

9.1. Introduction and background to native speaker students' writing analysis

Attempts to understand the nature of L2 writing, with the aim to deal effectively with L2 writers, have in many studies not been restricted to the examination of EFL/ESL learners' written products only; empirical research comparing EFL/ESL writers' output with that of native English-speaking (NES) writers has been conducted alongside as a route to such an understanding, investigating how and to what extent the first output differs from the second (Silva, 1993). Silva (1993) reports forty-one studies that involve ESL-NES comparisons, and points out that the findings of such research indicate a number of salient differences between the two types of writing with regard to both composing processes and features of written texts (i.e. discoursal, morphosyntactic, and lexicosemantic). In his summary of these findings, he concludes that "in general terms, adult L2 writing is distinct from and simpler and less effective (in the eyes of L1 readers) than L1 writing". At the linguistic level, for instance, "L2 writers texts [are] stylistically distinct and simpler in structure" (p. 668). One area of linguistic difference he highlights is the use of 'cohesive devices', a lexicosemantic feature; for there is evidence that L2 writers use more conjunctive ties and fewer lexical ties than L1 writers (p. 667) – a finding supported further in later works; such as, Granger and Tyson (1996), Hinkel (2001; 2002), and Bolton, Nelson, and Hung (2003).

Silva describes comparative research of this kind as an "ongoing phenomenon", and, indeed, it does appear to be so. Researchers, until recently, continue to be involved in comparing and contrasting what non-native and native speakers of a language do in comparable situations (L2 vs. L1) (e.g. Granger and Tyson,

1996; Hyland and Milton, 1997; Lorenz, 1999; Hinkel, 2001, 2002; Hewings & Hewings, 2002; Bolton *et al*, 2003; Neff, Ballesteros, Dafouz, Martinez, & Rica, 2004; Martinez, 2005). This method of research, in fact, constitutes one of two basic forms of what has been called 'contrastive interlanguage analysis' (CIA) (Gilquin, 2000/2001; Granger, 1996; Granger and Tyson, 1996) – the other form being comparing different varieties of learner language (L2 vs. L2). Gilquin, Granger and Paquot (2007: 322) assert that the CIA, with its two types of comparison, is a methodology that has become "very popular among learner corpus researchers", and that "has played a key role in identifying L2-specific features". The aim of such an approach is first explained by Granger and Tyson (1996: 18) as:

> to identify and distinguish between L1-related and universal features of learner language and thus to be able to draw a clearer picture both of advanced interlanguage and of the role of transfer for the different mother-tongue backgrounds.

There is a further influential significance of this approach that has been recognized and discussed by Granger and Tyson themselves and by many other researchers (e.g. Evensen and Rygh, 1988; Field and Yip, 1992; Milton and Tsang, 1993; Hinkel, 2001; Bolton *et al*, 2003; Gilquin, Granger and Paquot, 2007). This is referred to in the following statement by Gilquin *et al* (2007: 322):

> It [CIA] has been applied to a wide range of linguistic features—orthographic, lexical, grammatical, phraseological, stylistic, pragmatic—and has brought to light interesting patterns of overuse, underuse and misuse which are helping to fill in some gaps in our hitherto somewhat patchy knowledge of the different stages of interlanguage development.

This highlights the need to go beyond the sole analysis of learner written data if we are to get a better understanding of the unique nature of EFL writing and form a more precise picture of the distinctive features characterizing it. This is, of course, not to deny the valuable contribution the analysis of learner corpora – like the one attempted in this study – has to the identification of L2 writing

characteristics in its various aspects, or to ignore its effectiveness as a way of uncovering areas of difficulty for L2 writers (Flowerdew, 2001) and tendencies among them to L1-transfer, misuse, under-use, or over-use particular norms when manipulating the foreign/second language. It is rather an indication of the importance of going further in research, comparing data produced by L2 learners with similar data produced by native English speakers, so that the results from such comparisons could be exploited in passing more accurate and valid judgments on the features distinct to learner products, including the patterns of transfer, misuse, under-use, and over-use revealed in them – in the light of the examined NS products. Otherwise, such judgments will remain 'impressionistic', as viewed by Bolton *et al* (2003: 172), due to the absence of a 'target model' to measure things against.

The assumption that clearly underlies the above argument is that the writing of native speakers embodies the target norms that non-native speaker students are expected to adopt to construct 'acceptable' writing in the target language, and that mismatches of any kind found between NS and NNS writings may indicate deviations on the part of NNS language users from the target norms. Such a belief, however, has been contested by some linguists like Seidlhofer (2004), who assumes that English language judgments should no longer be tied to its native speakers since it has become a widely spread language, having a global role all over the world; and accordingly, suggests that a description of salient features of English as a "lingua franca" (ELF), alongside English as a native language (ENL), is needed if advances in the pedagogy of English teaching are to be achieved since "the majority of the world's English users are now to be found in countries where it is a foreign language" (p. 209) (see section 3.2.1.2.3).

A perspective like that of Seidlhofer may be one of those behind the growing interest in learner corpora and the increasing awareness of the importance of combining studies of them with those of NS corpora. Similarly to Seidlhofer,

Flowerdew (2001) calls for a careful investigation of learner corpus data and insists that "insights gleaned from learner corpora need to be employed to complement those from expert corpora for syllabus and materials design" (p. 364). Both scholars, hence, emphasize the pedagogical significance of the employment of EFL corpora (together with NS corpora); yet, while Seidlhofer recommends it for the purpose of providing a clear description of the lingua franca use of English, Flowerdew recommends it for the purpose of providing sufficient evidence about the language users' problems in writing. Flowerdew's own investigation for example reveals three areas of difficulty in learner EAP writing: collocational patterning, pragmatic appropriacy, and discourse features.

Despite the different, and perhaps challenging, attitudes implied within the arguments presented in this section towards the way of approaching EFL writing and reaching a better understanding of it, they all in the end reflect a recognition of the need for integrated research, where the writing performances of both NNS and NS are taken into consideration and brought together for careful examination, for the comprehension and appreciation of one is believed to complement and strengthen that of the other. In short, integrating insights from NNS and NS corpora is testified to as a fairer and more enlightening procedure to be employed, serving not only comparative research purposes, but also pedagogical improvement purposes. With respect to this, the knowledge about the use of particular linguistic features in EFL writing that the current research has enriched us with so far from the analysis of Syrian students' texts, whilst detailed and considerably illuminating in many respects (e.g. L2 difficulties/misuses, L1 transfer), is in itself insufficient and requires consolidation in other respects (e.g. overuse, underuse) from further (similar) analysis for native English speakers' texts.

We therefore collected and analyzed another set of data, which was approximately of the same size as that of the last data set (about 30,000 words), and which comprises essays written by native English speakers, who were also

academic students at different stages of study. These essays were of similar genre/type as that of the Syrian students' essays; i.e. analytical/critical 'literary' essays – though on different topics and written in different circumstances (timed exam writing vs. untimed assignment writing). The reason for choosing data with these particular characteristics, which resemble the characteristics of the Syrian data described in chapter six, was to achieve 'comparability' between the two data sets; something that is 'essential' in 'contrastive interlanguage analysis' (CIA), as claimed by Granger and Tyson (1996), if one is to draw any reliable conclusions:

> It is essential that the data under investigation be comparable: one of the most effective arguments against the results of much of the contrastive/error analysis conducted in the past has been that the data are rendered meaningless by fundamental differences in both data and research methods. (Granger and Tyson, 1996: 18)

With regard to text type, for example, these researchers emphasize comparability stating that "it is essential for there to be a control native speaker corpus composed of exactly the same type of writing" (p. 19). Their rationale for this is that:

> Many features of language are extremely genre-sensitive, so the type of task set will significantly alter the results obtained. Therefore, if meaningful statements are to be made about differences in usage, the types of discourse under study must be comparable. (Granger and Tyson, 1996: 18)

After the variables of the new data were controlled in the way recommended by Granger and Tyson, the texts were subject to a close examination with regard to relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts; the same two linguistic items that were the focus of our last examination of the Syrian data. This chapter is devoted to displaying and discussing the results of the native speaker data examination, and also to comparing and contrasting these results with the ones displayed and discussed in previous chapters (specifically, chapters 7 & 8). Such comparisons and contrasts were proposed to highlight similarities and

differences between the two data, as well as to trace patterns of overuse and underuse in the writing of non-native speaker students. Here, we would like to borrow an important footnote added by Gilquin *et al* (2007: 322) concerning the use of terms like 'overuse' and 'underuse'; it is that these are "descriptive, not prescriptive, terms; they merely refer to the fact that a linguistic form is found significantly more or less in the learner corpus than in the reference corpus".

An objection however has been articulated by Bolton *et al* (2003: 173) to studies like this one and those of Granger and Tyson (1996) and Field and Yip (1992) for comparing "'non-native' student academic writing with 'native' student academic writing", since the assumption in these studies is that "the best 'target model' for 'non-native' or ESL students is the writing of other *students*, those from a 'native-speaking' country (however that is defined)". Instead, Bolton *et al* argue that:

> A better set of control data would be provided by a corpus of published academic writing in English. The target norm in academic writing, for both 'native' and 'non-native' students is better defined as academic writing itself, and the best texts for comparison are clearly those already published in international English-language academic journals. (Bolton *et al*, 2003: 173)

Accordingly, in their "corpus-based study of connectors in student writing", they chose to analyse initially, "as a valid starting point for the analysis which followed", a corpus consisting of academic writing samples taken from published academic papers and books across a range of disciplines. Then, they analyzed the writing of university students in Hong Kong and in Great Britain, and presented the results of this latter analysis (i.e. frequency of connectors in student writing), using the results of the former analysis (i.e. frequency of connectors in professional academic writing) as a benchmark against which to measure 'overuse' and 'underuse' in students' writing in general (both EFL Hong Kong students and native speaker British students).

Despite the more accurate measurement of overuse and underuse such an approach may provide, it could still be argued that the writing of native speaker students does present an appropriate target model for ESL/EFL students, and a fair benchmark for measuring ESL/EFL students' overuse and underuse according to. This is so for the simple reason that native speaker students are English users who acquired the language naturally, and who thus have the competence to know how and when to apply any of its norms – whereas non-native speaker students are English users who acquired the language from ESL/EFL teaching and instruction, and who might therefore build misconceptions of any kind about the application of its norms, in terms of either manner or frequency. Aside from this, we in this research do not tend to agree with Bolton *et al*'s last argument or approve their approach for measuring overuse and underuse in student writing because based on Granger and Tyson's (1996) previous argument for employing writing of comparable genres in studies of contrastive analysis, we believe that student academic essays are a different genre from published academic writing, and Bolton *et al* seem to have used a mixture of both genres. Therefore, the contrast with native speaker student academic writing is, we assume, more appropriate.

9.2. Data, analysis method, and hypotheses

For this stage of our research, 12 essays of a literary type written by 12 different British undergraduate students at Warwick University were collected from the British Academic Written English (BAWE) pilot corpus[1] to compose a corpus

[1] The British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus was created through a project entitled 'An investigation of genres of assessed writing in British Higher Education' from 2004 – 2007. This project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and was a collaboration between the Universities of Warwick, Reading and Oxford Brookes under the directorship of Hilary Nesi and Sheena Gardner (formerly of the Centre for Applied Linguistics, Warwick), Paul Thompson (Department of Applied Linguistics, Reading) and Paul Wickens (Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes). The *BAWE pilot corpus* was created in 2001, with support from the University of Warwick Teaching Development Fund. It contains about one million words of text, in the form of 500 student assignments ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 words. "The purpose of the corpus project at the University of Warwick was to collect and index

of native speaker academic students' writing, the objective of which has just been discussed in the previous section. This corpus comprises (including quotations) 31,408 words (which is roughly parallel to the Syrian corpus' number of words), and its twelve essays are produced by three groups of student: first year, second year, and third year students, with 5 essays of the twelve produced by the first group, 4 essays by the second group, and 3 essays by the third one. Each group's essays constitute nearly one third of the corpus' total number of words (see table 9.1 below). The lengths of the chosen essays range between 1000 and 5000 words, which are different from the lengths of the essays (or sometimes paragraphs) used in the Syrian corpus (200-600 words). Hence, claims about the comparability of the NS data and the NNS data in this study should take into account such a difference in essay length as it could affect the results of the comparative analysis. This is particularly true in the case of the conjunctive adjunct comparative analysis as the use pattern of conjunctive adjuncts in relatively short and long essays probably varies.

The other difference between the essays of the two corpora that might also affect data comparability is that the essays of the British corpus are assignment essays, whereas the essays of the Syrian corpus are exam (timed) essays (this difference is further discussed in the study's limitations in 10.4). The intention of choosing the writings of students at different stages of academic study is to investigate whether there are noticeable differences among them.

Table 9.1: Number of words in the three native speaker groups' sub-corpora

Group sub-corpus	First year	Second year	Third year	*Total*
Number of words	9,101 (5 essays)	10,700 (4 essays)	11,607 (3 essays)	31,408 (12 essays)

as many samples of proficient, academic writing as possible during an 18-month period. As such, the research has developed within a British academic context, although contributors to the corpus come from all over the world" (Nesi, Sharpling, & Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004). Hence, the pilot corpus contains both NS and NNS writing. All data chosen from this corpus for the purpose of the present research was L1 English speaker writing.

The British student groups' applications of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts have been analyzed according to the same methodology adopted in the analysis of the Syrian student groups' applications of these linguistic forms – categorized into different types. This methodology involves basically tracing all instances of the two forms in the corpus (excluding instances in quotations) and calculating their raw frequencies, percentages, and variety (or type-token) ratios; figures that are displayed and organized in tables in a way enabling us to compare the results of each group's sub-corpus analysis with those of the other groups' sub-corpora analyses.

The following section of this chapter hence will be devoted to reporting and discussing the findings of our investigation into the native speaker students' corpus, and presenting final comparisons between these findings and the findings of our former investigation into the Syrian students' corpus. Findings and comparisons in relation to the use of relative clauses will be dealt with first, while those in relation to the use of conjunctive adjuncts will be handled next in a separate section.

We hypothesize that our quantitative analysis at this stage would reveal some major differences between the NS and NNS groups of student in the frequencies of certain items'/constructions' occurrences, and would in consequence disclose items/constructions that are overused and others that are underused by NNS students. One reason for hypothesizing so relates on the one hand to the observation from the study of the Syrian students' writing that many conjunctive expressions and some RC structures are neglected or rarely used by them, while others are reproduced quite frequently. On the other hand, it relates to the expectation that NS students' employment of their L1 elements, like conjunctive adjuncts and relative clauses, will be more varied than the NNS students' employment of these L2 elements. So, some overuse on the part of the latter

group is expected since they use a smaller number of different conjunctive adjuncts or RCs than their NS counterparts.

Concerning the use of conjunctive adjuncts in particular, there are other reasons for formulating the above hypothesis: these have to do with a. the empirically-based studies that have been conducted in this area and that have proved the validity of such a hypothesis (e.g. Tanko, 2004; Bolton *et al*, 2003; Hinkel, 2001; Granger and Tyson, 1996; Milton and Tsang, 1993; Field and Yip, 1992; all reviewed in chapter 5), and b. the influence that writing teaching methods and instructions could have on EFL learners when emphasizing the importance of these elements for text cohesion, leading students to pay extra attention to them while writing, and consequently, overproduce them – probably without thinking carefully about the ideas they are linking.

As for L1 transfer – despite its almost universally recognized role in foreign language production (Granger and Tyson, 1996), we have excluded it as a factor in justifying the overuse/underuse hypothesis, because our own analysis of an FL production in this research showed hardly any L1 transfer causing overuse or underuse of an L2 pattern (except perhaps for *and* overuse) – though it showed that the same factor was a possible source for L2 patterns 'misuse' on a few occasions.

9.3. Findings from the native speaker students' corpus analysis

9.3.1. Relative clause analysis findings

Relative clause analysis here is similar in aims and procedures to the one adopted in chapter seven. It first attempts to explore the frequency of all relative clauses that occur in the corpus, classified into 'full' and 'reduced' RCs. Next, it focuses on the two basic components in each RC sentence in the corpus: the head noun (HN) and the gap, investigating what types of these components

native speaker students apply more frequently, as well as what types of RC construction (determined on the basis of the relationship between HN and gap in each RC sentence) they make use of more.

This will lead us to create frequency hierarchies of component types and construction types like the ones created in chapter seven. We know from that chapter that the head noun component (or antecedent) has been classified in this research into three basic types: ‘subject HN’, ‘non-subject HN’, and ‘sentential HN’, in addition to a fourth minor type we termed as ‘pre-main verb non-subject HN’ – according to the structural position occupied by the word/phrase/clause/sentence representing the HN. On the other hand, the gap component has been classified into six types following the Accessibility Hierarchy Hypothesis’s classification: ‘subject’, ‘direct object’, ‘indirect object’, ‘object of preposition’, ‘genitive’, and ‘object of comparison’, in addition to the seventh type of ‘adverb’ which the last classification does not include – according to the structural position of the linguistic constituent that is relativized (i.e. the grammatical function of the relative pronoun/adverbial pronoun). As for RC constructions, they could then be estimated to fall within 28 types, resulting from the combinations presumed to take place between the HN in its four types and the gap in its seven types.

9.3.1.1. Relative clause frequencies: full and reduced RC frequencies

Table 9.2 below demonstrates the overall number of RCs in the analyzed essays of each NS student group, specifying the number of full RCs and that of reduced RCs. By dividing the numbers of full and reduced clauses by the number of overall RCs, we get the percentages of these clauses in each group’s essays, which are also given in the table.

Table 9.2: Relative clause frequencies and percentages in the three NS groups' writings

Group	Overall number of RCs	Number of full RCs	Percentage of full RCs	Number of reduced RCs	Percentage of reduced RCs
First year	**161**	**110**	**68.32%**	**51**	**31.67%**
Second year	**178**	**103**	**57.86%**	**75**	**42.13%**
Third year	**162**	**105**	**64.81%**	**57**	**35.18%**
Total	**501**	**318**	**63.47%**	**183**	**36.52%**

Table 9.2 shows that relative clause occurrence in the second year students' part of the corpus is the highest – even though it is not that sharply higher than its occurrence in the other two groups' parts of the corpus, where almost equal numbers of RCs are used (161 & 162). In all the three groups, the rate of full relative clauses is higher than that of the reduced ones; nonetheless, the least difference between the percentage of the first form and the percentage of second form exists in the second year group's sub-corpus, while the largest difference is in the first year group's sub-corpus. As one may understand from this, the more the difference between the two percentages is, the more it indicates students' preference to apply the full form of RC over the reduced form; whereas the less the difference is, the more it reflects a balance of some sort in students' exploitation of the two forms.

A closer look at the full RC structures used in the corpus as a whole (318 structures) has revealed that the three relative pronouns *that*, *which*, and *who* are the ones employed in the greatest majority (244) of these structures by students – with *that* employed 86 times, *which* 81 times, and *who* 77 times; whereas other relative pronouns like *whom*, *where*, *when*, *whose*, *in which*, *for which …* *etc* are noticeably less frequently used (all in all 74 occurrences), and even less than the instances of reduced RC (183) traced in the corpus. This coincides to a considerable extent with the generalization made by Biber *et al* (1999) describing "relativizer" (i.e. relative pronoun) patterns in their corpus: it is that the "zero relativizer" (i.e. reduced RC) is found to be "moderately common" in the whole corpus, while the relativizers *whom, whose, where, when,* and *why* are

"considerably less common"; but by contrast, what the results reveal as "by far the most frequent forms" are the relativizers *that* and *which*, and to a lesser extent *who* (p. 609 & 611).

9.3.1.1.1. Comparison of relative clause frequencies: L1 corpus vs. L2 corpus

For comparing the L1 British corpus with the L2 Syrian corpus at this initial level of RC analysis, we use table 9.2` in which only the total results obtained from adding the results of the groups' analyses are inserted. This table helps illustrate to what extent the two corpora differ from one another in the frequency of their application of RC in its two forms.

Table 9.2`: RC total frequencies in NNS & NS corpora

Student group	Overall number of RCs	Number & percentage of full RCs	Number & percentage of reduced RCs	Number of ambiguous RCs
NNS	**509**	**428 (84.08%)**	**74 (14.53%)**	**7 (1.37%)**
NS	**501**	**318 (63.47%)**	**183 (36.52%)**	**0**

It is clear from the results the summary table 9.2` provides that the two corpora end up including very similar numbers of RCs in general. Yet, the distribution of full and reduced structures is not the same, for although the reduced ones have the lower percentage in both corpora, their percentage decline in the NNS corpus is more marked (only 14% of all RCs). That is, the dominance of full RCs in non-native speaker student writing is greater than its counterpart in native speaker student writing, which may indicate that this latter group of writers worry less about the claimed 'informality' of this kind of reduced structures in written English (see sections 4.4 and 7.3 in this thesis and Master, 2002) – and in fact, they may not have been instructed to. More significantly, they might be conscious of other criteria related to given and new information when selecting any of the two RC forms to apply (for details see section 4.4 and

Master, 2002) – something that EFL students in our context do not appear aware of.

Although the assumption in this research is that native speaker academic students of English literature in a top British university are competent enough to use their literary writing as a reference model for non-native speaker academic students of English literature in a foreign country university, it is uncertain to what extent information about RC frequency in this model could be counted on, without considering correspondent information from published literary writings in English for more professional authors, as suggested by Bolton *et al* (2003). This uncertainty is especially aroused when coming across a study like that of Master (2002), in which he examines the rate of full and reduced RC occurrences in a corpus of technical research articles taken from published journals, and finds that more than half (55%) of all the relative clauses in this corpus are reduced, contradicting our finding in the NS students' corpus (the model) that full RC is the dominant form. No doubt, it is in the light of his last finding that Master announces: "it would be a pedagogical error to tell students that reduction is not appropriate in formal technical writing" (p. 222), for it is very common. The difference in the RC frequency results between this study and Master's study may be explained in terms of genre; but still, the examination of published essays may reveal results different from those from the examination of native speaker student essays. However, and regardless of this, NNS-NS contrastive studies in general are recognized to be more reliable when the NNS and NS data under investigation are comparable in all or most variables (Granger & Tyson, 1996). Based on this, comparing RC frequencies in NNS academic students' writing with those in NS academic students' writing would be more reliable than comparing them with those in published academic writing.

RC reduction by native speaker students in this study could be described as "moderately" applied – borrowing Biber *et al*'s term – with all the various forms

of reduced RC being made use of, though not with the same proportions. The past participle structure (or *ed*-clause) for example is found to be the most prevailing form of reduction in their writing, followed by ordinary reduced structures like '*the enemies he encounters are not human*' and '*the image he comforts himself with is strictly true*', and then by the present participle structure (or *ing*-clause). The form that occurs with the relatively lowest frequency in the native speaker students' essays is the adjective clause (e.g. '*the innocent voice present in the poem*'), which is also found to be the least common form in the Syrian students' essays; yet, in the latter group it is spotted only on two or three occasions, while in the native speaker group, there are about 23 instances of it. Appositive clauses, one form of reduced RC in Master's classification, are also frequent, but they are excluded from our analysis as explained in chapter seven (sec. 7.2).

9.3.1.2. Frequencies of relative clause components: head noun and gap frequencies

9.3.1.2.1. Head noun (HN)

The head noun (or antecedent) element in each relative clause sentence in the corpus has been examined and classified under one of the four categories displayed in table 9.3. This table helps demonstrate and compare the frequencies of the different head nouns in the three groups' writings. Percentages shown are the outcomes of dividing the number of each HN occurrences in each group by the overall number of HNs in this group.

Table 9.3: Head noun frequencies in the three NS groups' texts

Head Noun	First year	Second year	Third year	*Total*
1. Non-subject (NS)	**137 (85.09%)**	**142 (79.77%)**	**128 (79.01%)**	**407 (81.23%)**
2. Subject (S)	**12 (7.45%)**	**27 (15.16%)**	**25 (15.43%)**	**64 (12.77%)**
3. Sentence (Sent)	**9 (5.59%)**	**3 (1.68%)**	**6 (3.70%)**	**18 (3.59%)**

4. Pre-main verb non-subject (PMVNS)	**3 (1.86%)**	**6 (3.37%)**	**3 (1.85%)**	**12 (2.39%)**
Overall	**161**	**178**	**162**	**501**

In all groups, head nouns with a non-subject function obviously far exceed in number head nouns with the other three structural functions specified in table 9.3. 'Sentential' and 'pre-main verb non-subject' HNs in particular are used in a relatively small number of cases, with percentages ranging just between 1.6% and 5.5%. The high frequency of RC with non-subject HN and the lower frequency of RC with subject HN is, as discussed before (sec. 7.3.1.2), a common finding in research into relative clause usage that has been accounted for in terms of ease/difficulty of accessibility, or rather in terms of matrix sentence flow interruption (Biber *et al*, 1999; Kuno, 1974).

9.3.1.2.1.1. Comparison of head noun frequencies: L1 corpus vs. L2 corpus

Table 9.3`: Head noun frequencies in the two corpora

Head Nouns	NNS	NS
1. NS	**440 (86.44%)**	**407 (81.23%)**
2. S	**45 (8.84%)**	**64 (12.77%)**
3. Sent	**8 (1.57%)**	**18 (3.59%)**
4. PMVNS	**9 (1.76%)**	**12 (2.39%)**
5. Amb (ambiguous)	**6 (1.17%)**	**0**
6. ? (unknown)	**1 (0.19%)**	**0**
Total	**509**	**501**

In table 9.3`, where the total number of each HN type appearances in each corpus as a whole is given, we notice that discrepancies between the two groups' figures are slight. Non-subject head nouns in both groups are exceedingly the largest in number; yet, their percentage is about 5% less in the native writing than their percentage in the non-native writing. On the other hand, the percentages of the other three HN types are a bit higher in the native writing than in the non-native writing. This implies a slightly more varied

implementation of HN types on the part of native speaker students. Ambiguous HNs as shown in the table are only encountered in NNS students' products. Despite these minor differences, the HN frequency/difficulty hierarchy seems to be almost the same for both native and non-native speaker students.

9.3.1.2.2. Gap

Our analysis of the gap component in all relative clauses occurring in the British students' corpus has revealed that the grammatical roles which this component fulfills in these clauses fall within five classes: subject, adverb, direct object (or complement), object (or complement) of preposition, and genitive. Table 9.4 demonstrates the frequency and percentage of each of the five gap classes' instances in each of the three groups' essays, and also gives the opportunity to distinguish the gap frequency (or difficulty) hierarchy in each group.

It should be signaled that percentages given in the table are the outcomes of dividing the number of each gap type's occurrences in one group's sub-corpus by the number of all gap types' occurrences in this sub-corpus. Percentages in the 'total' column are the results of dividing the total number of a particular gap type's occurrences in the whole corpus by the total number of RCs in the corpus (501).

Table 9.4: Gap frequencies in the three NS groups' texts

Gap	First year	Second year	Third year	*Total*
1. Subject (S)	**122 (75.77%)**	**112 (62.92%)**	**117 (72.22%)**	**351 (70.05%)**
2. Direct object / complement (DO/C)	**13 (8.07%)**	**19 (10.67%)**	**20 (12.34%)**	**52 (10.37%)**
3. Object of preposition / complement of preposition (OPrep/CPrep)	**15 (9.31%)**	**20 (11.23%)**	**13 (8.02%)**	**48 (9.58%)**
4. Adverb (Ad)	**10 (6.21%)**	**26 (14.60%)**	**11 (6.79%)**	**47 (9.38%)**
5. Genitive (Gen)	**1 (0.62%)**	**1 (0.56%)**	**1 (0.61%)**	**3 (0.59%)**
Overall	**161**	**178**	**162**	**501**

Evidently, relative clauses with subject gap are by far the most dominant ones in all groups' products, to the extent that 62% - 75% of all relative clauses in these products are of this gap type. In contrast, relative clauses with gaps of the 'DO', 'OPrep', and 'Ad' grammatical roles are found much less frequently scattered, with percentages ranging between 6% and 14%. As for RCs with genitive gap, they are markedly rare, to the extent that only one instance of them is captured in each group's sub-corpus. Based on this, it could be concluded that the Accessibility Hierarchy Hypothesis's claims, as well as Biber *et al*'s claims, about the ease of accessibility of the subject gap type of RC compared to that of the other types[2] (see sections 4.2.2 & 7.3.1.1) are once again in this research proved to be valid; that is, they are evidenced to be right dealing with native English speaker students' output as much as when dealing with non-native speaker students' output.

The gap frequency hierarchies for the three groups do not appear the same, but all in all, the general hierarchy to be deduced from the gaps' total percentages in the corpus altogether is: **S > DO > OPrep > Ad > Gen** – bearing in mind that Ad and OPrep gaps are almost equal in number.

9.3.1.2.2.1. Comparison of gap frequencies: L1 corpus vs. L2 corpus

Table 9.4`: Gap total frequencies in the two corpora

Gaps	NNS	NS
1. S	**402 (78.97%)**	**351 (70.05%)**
2. Ad	**33 (6.48%)**	**47 (9.38%)**
3. CPrep/OPrep	**34 (6.67%)**	**48 (9.58%)**
4. C/DO	**37 (7.26%)**	**52 (10.37%)**
5. Gen	**3 (0.58%)**	**3 (0.59%)**
Total	509	501

[2] This is because in the case of subject gaps, relative pronoun occurs initially in the relative clause, preserving the standard subject + verb + object/predicative/adverbial order in it, whereas in the case of non-subject gaps, a clause element is displaced from its normal position (Biber *et al*, 1999: 621-622).

Looking into the figures in table 9.4`, we notice that the patterns of gap roles application in the two corpora are comparable in several respects: first, both native and non-native speaker students implement relative clauses whose gaps are confined to the same five categories of subject, direct object, object of preposition, adverb, and genitive, while the two gap categories of 'indirect object' and 'object of comparison', which are included in the Accessibility Hierarchy Hypothesis's list of gap roles, are totally unused by them.

Second, relative clause with subject gap is the overwhelming structure of RC in the two corpora alike, while structures involving the other gaps are in contrast much less common. Moreover, genitive gap in both groups' writings is rarely employed, and the numbers of its few occurrences in both cases are even equal. Thus, as already hinted at, the common assumption that subject gaps are easier to process than non-subject gaps, and therefore, are more common, could be generalized to involve all users of the English language, whether native or non-native.

Third, the gap frequency/accessibility hierarchy turns out to be identical for both groups, with S gap on the top, followed by DO gap, then by OPrep and Ad gaps, and finally by Gen gap. As in the native speaker student corpus, Ad and OPrep gaps in the non-native speaker student corpus are so close to each other in terms of frequency that they could be ordered the same within the hierarchy. For the most part, gap ordering in the hierarchy that both native and non-native speaker students are found to share corresponds to gap ordering in the Accessibility Hierarchy Hypothesis, which is: S > DO > IO > OPrep > Gen > OComp – taking into account that this hypothesis does not include Ad gap in its system, and that IO (indirect object) and OComp (object of comparison) gaps are wholly unused in the two corpora of this research.

One slight discrepancy that could be observed between the two groups' gap application patterns is that L1 students rely on subject gap 9% less than L2

students, but at the same time, they employ DO, OPrep, and Ad gaps to some extent more, indicating a slightly higher degree of gap diversity in their output.

9.3.1.3. Relative clause construction frequencies

We know from previous explanation in chapters 4 and 7 that a relative clause construction is made out of placing a gap (or relative pronoun) with a specific role (e.g. subject) within a specific head noun (or matrix) position (e.g. non-subject), and that a typology of RC construction is built on the basis of the relationships between these two constituents' functions. Table 9.5 illustrates RC construction types that the corpus of the three British student groups contains, in addition to the frequencies of these types in each group's part of the corpus. Each pair of symbols (e.g. NS-S) in the first column stands for a construction type, with the first character referring to the head noun function, and the second to the gap function. With regard to what the results of the last analyses of RC components frequencies in this corpus have revealed, it could be anticipated that since the most common HN position is the non-subject one, and the most common gap role is the subject one, an NS-S relative clause construction is going to be most common.

Table 9.5: RC construction frequencies in the three NS groups' texts

Construction	First year	Second year	Third year	*Total*
1. NS-S	103 (63.97%)	93 (52.24%)	97 (59.87%)	293 (58.48%)
2. NS-OPrep (or NS-CPrep)	15 (9.31%)	15 (8.42%)	13 (8.02%)	43 (8.58%)
3. S-S	8 (4.96%)	13 (7.30%)	14 (8.64%)	35 (6.98%)
4. NS-DO (or NS-C)	12 (7.45%)	12 (6.74%)	11 (6.79%)	35 (6.98%)
5. NS-Ad	6 (3.72%)	21 (11.79%)	7 (4.32%)	34 (6.78%)
6. Sent-S	9 (5.59%)	2 (1.12%)	6 (3.70%)	17 (3.39%)
7. S-DO (or S-C)	1 (0.62%)	6 (3.37%)	8 (4.93%)	15 (2.99%)
8. S-Ad	3 (1.86%)	4 (2.24%)	2 (1.23%)	9 (1.79%)
9. PMVNS-S	2 (1.24%)	4 (2.24%)	-	6 (1.19%)
10. S-OPrep (or S-CPrep)	-	4 (2.24%)	-	4 (0.79%)
11. PMVNS-Ad	1 (0.62%)	1 (0.56%)	2 (1.23%)	4 (0.79%)
12. NS-Gen	1 (0.62%)	1 (0.56%)	1 (0.61%)	3 (0.59%)

13. Sent-DO (or Sent-C)	-	1 (0.56%)	-	1 (0.19%)
14. PMVNS-OPrep (or PMVNS-CPrep)	-	1 (0.56%)	-	1 (0.19%)
15. PMVNS-DO (or PMVNS-C)	-	-	1 (0.61%)	1 (0.19%)
Overall	161	178	162	501

According to the information displayed in table 9.5, there are 15 different RC constructions in the corpus as a whole, of which the NS-S construction, as anticipated, is dominantly the most reoccurring one in all groups' sub-corpora (52% - 64%). All the other constructions are in contrast distributed in these sub-corpora at much lower rates, ranging between 11% and 0.56%, and with a different frequency order in each sub-corpus. However, looking into the total rates of these other constructions in the entire corpus, we can identify the top four most frequent ones after the NS-S. These are: NS-OPrep > S-S = NS-DO > NS-Ad. As for the rest of the constructions, they noticeably have very low occurrence rates, possibly indicating the very low degrees of accessibility they have. In particular, second year students' application of RC constructions could be characterized as slightly more varied than that of the other two groups – for 14 out of the overall 15 constructions take place in their part of the corpus, and for the percentage of the dominant NS-S construction in this part is lower than its percentage in the other two groups' parts of the corpus.

9.3.1.3.1. Comparison of relative clause construction frequencies: L1 corpus vs. L2 corpus

To compare the frequencies and variation of the relative clause constructions used in the corpus of the British students with the frequencies and variation of the ones used in the corpus of the Syrian students, table 9.5` provides a summary of the total results of our analyses of construction usage in the two corpora.

Table 9.5`: RC construction frequencies in the two corpora

Construction	NNS	NS
1. NS-S	**348 (68.36%)**	**293 (58.48%)**
2. NS-OPrep (or NS-CPrep)	**30 (5.89%)**	**43 (8.58%)**
3. S-S	**36 (7.07%)**	**35 (6.98%)**
4. NS-DO (NS-C)	**31 (6.09%)**	**35 (6.98%)**
5. NS-Ad	**30 (5.89%)**	**34 (6.78%)**
6. Sent-S	**8 (1.57%)**	**17 (3.39%)**
7. S-DO (or S-C)	**5 (0.98%)**	**15 (2.99%)**
8. S-Ad	**1 (0.19%)**	**9 (1.79%)**
9. PMVNS-S	**5 (0.98%)**	**6 (1.19%)**
10. S-OPrep (or S-CPrep)	**2 (0.39%)**	**4 (0.79%)**
11. PMVNS-Ad	**1 (0.19%)**	**4 (0.79%)**
12. NS-Gen	**3 (0.58%)**	**3 (0.59%)**
13. Sent-DO (or Sent-C)	**0**	**1 (0.19%)**
14. PMVNS-OPrep (or PMVNS-CPrep)	**1 (0.19%)**	**1 (0.19%)**
15. PMVNS-DO (or PMVNS-C)	**1 (0.19%)**	**1 (0.19%)**
16. ?-S	**1 (0.19%)**	**0**
Total	509	501

The table reveals that all the 15 types of construction found in the native speaker students' writings are also found in the non-native speaker students' writings, except for one type, which is 'Sent-DO' that combines a sentential head noun with direct object (or complement) gap. Also similarly to each other, the two groups tend to greatly overproduce relative clauses of the construction type NS-S, while relatively underproducing those of the other types. Nevertheless, native speaker students employ the NS-S RC with a rate of 10% less than its rate in the non-native speaker students' texts, accompanied on the other hand with slightly higher rates of most of the other RCs than their corresponding rates in the non-native speaker students' texts, denoting some more variation in construction usage by native speaker students.

With the slight ups and downs noticed upon comparing the percentages of these other RCs in the two corpora, we find that the RC construction hierarchy varies in them, with the NS-S construction remaining at the top of this hierarchy in all cases. Being so frequent, this last construction is hypothesized to be the easiest

for all students to apply, and in consequence, to take place at the top of ‘RC acquisition developmental order’.

In the following table (9.6), all the final hierarchies (i.e. head noun, gap, and construction hierarchies) which have emerged from the two corpus analyses are presented, for them to be compared easily and to see to what extent native and non-native speaker students’ preferences in RC implementation are different or similar.

Table 9.6: Head noun, gap, and construction final hierarchies in the NS and NNS corpora.

Hierarchies	NNS corpus	NS corpus
HN frequency hierarchy	NS > S > PMVNS > Sent > Amb	NS > S > Sent > PMVNS
Gap frequency hierarchy	S > C/DO > CPrep/OPrep > Ad > Gen	S > C/DO > CPrep/OPrep > Ad > Gen
Construction frequency hierarchy	NS-S > S-S > NS-C/DO > NS-Ad = NS-CPrep/OPrep > Sent-S > S-C/DO = Amb-S = PMVNS-S > NS-Gen > S-CPrep/OPrep > S-Ad = Amb-Ad = PMVNS-Ad = PMVNS-CPrep/OPrep = PMVNS-C/DO	NS-S > NS-OPrep > S-S = NS-DO > NS-Ad > Sent-S > S-DO > S-Ad > PMVNS-S > S-OPrep = PMVNS-Ad > NS-Gen > Sent-DO = PMVNS-OPrep = PMVNS-DO

It would also be possible through this table to compare all the orderings it provides with the orderings hypothesized by ‘the Parallel Function Hypothesis (PFH)’, ‘the Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis (PDF)’, and ‘the Accessibility

Hypothesis (AHH)', which have been listed and explained in Doughty's (1991: 240) figure that we displayed in chapter seven (section 7.3.2) to compare the hierarchies resulted from the Syrian students' corpus analysis with these three hypotheses' hierarchies. In all cases, such comparison though would reveal some similarity between the gap hierarchies of this study and the gap hierarchy of the AHH, it would show on the other hand a clear difference between the construction hierarchies of this study and the construction difficulty hierarchies of the PFH and PDF.

9.3.2. Conjunctive adjunct analysis findings

The analysis of conjunctive adjuncts in the British student writers' data has been based on the same conceptions and methods identified in chapter 8 for the analysis of conjunctive adjuncts in the Syrian student writers' data. In this section, the presentation and discussion of this analysis' findings will also take the same form and organization as the presentation and discussion in chapter 8 (section 8.4), according to which, the raw frequencies of all conjunctive relations' occurrences in general are demonstrated first, and the raw frequencies of the individual conjunctive adjuncts subsumed under each conjunctive relation are detailed next. The conjunctive (or cohesive) relations that are meant here are those basic five semantic relations identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976): *Additive*, *Adversative*, *Causal*, *Temporal*, and *Continuative*, in addition to a sixth category allocated to include *Actuality* expressions found operating cohesively in the data and not referred to by Halliday and Hasan under any of their five relation categories.

9.3.2.1. Frequencies of conjunctive relations

In the first place, to have a general idea about the proportions of the six cohesive relations in the L1 corpus – divided into the three NS student groups' sub-corpora, a table is provided below (table 9.7). It helps compare the total number

of conjunctive adjuncts that belong to each category in the three groups' writings.

Table 9.7: The frequencies and percentages of conjunctive adjuncts in the three NS student groups' writings.

Conjunctive relation	First year	Second year	Third year	*Total*
1. Additive	**40 (36.03%)**	**25 (32.05%)**	**23 (28.04%)**	**88 (32.47%)**
2. Adversative	**22 (19.81%)**	**20 (25.64%)**	**28 (34.14%)**	**70 (25.83%)**
3. Causal	**27 (24.32%)**	**20 (25.64%)**	**16 (19.51%)**	**63 (23.24%)**
4. Temporal	**22 (19.81%)**	**9 (11.53%)**	**11 (13.41%)**	**42(15.49%)**
5. Continuative	**-**	**1 (1.28%)**	**4 (4.87%)**	**5 (1.84%)**
6. Actuality	**-**	**3 (3.84%)**	**-**	**3 (1.10%)**
Overall	**111 (40.95%)**	**78 (28.78%)**	**82 (30.25%)**	**271**

Broadly speaking, as the results show, the group who is responsible for the largest number of conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus is the first year group (40.9%), and the conjunctive relation that is most frequent in the corpus is the additive one (32.4%). However, apart from the categories of 'continuative' and 'actuality' conjunctive adjuncts, which only have few occurrences, there seems to be slight differences, on the one hand, among the proportions of the various conjunctive adjuncts in the one group's texts, and on the other, among the proportions of each conjunctive adjunct type in the three groups' texts. Such slight differences are further clear among the total percentages of the conjunctive relations in the whole corpus. One interesting thing noticed about the application patterns of additive, adversative, and temporal conjunctive adjuncts in the three groups' corpora is that while the percentages of additive and temporal conjunctives decline by 8% and 7% respectively from first year group to third year group, the percentage of adversative conjunctives increases by 14%. This would be consistent with improvements in writing as it suggests a development of discussion genre over exposition genre.

In first and second year essays, additives are on the top of the most frequent conjunctive adjuncts (36% and 32% respectively), whereas in third year essays,

it is adversatives that occupy this top position (34.1%), followed by additives. There is no one shared frequency order for conjunctive adjuncts among the groups. In our next comparative discussion about the frequencies of conjunctive adjuncts in NS students' corpus and NNS students' corpus, we consider a general ordering for the whole L1 corpus that is established according to the total results shown in table 9.7. It is: *Additive* > *Adversative* > *Causal* > *Temporal* > *Continuative* > *Actuality*.

9.3.2.1.1. Comparison of conjunctive relation frequencies: L1 corpus vs. L2 corpus

Table 9.7` helps compare quantitatively the use of conjunctive adjunct categories by the Syrian and British students involved in this study putting the total frequencies of these categories' occurrences in the two corpora together. Such comparison, as we assumed at the beginning of this chapter, plays a part in highlighting conjunctive adjunct overuse or underuse tendencies, in case they exist, as far as L2 writers are concerned, but only on a general base at this stage. A more specific determination upon the patterns of overuse and underuse that might exist in the output of these writers is proposed in a following stage when dealing with individual conjunctive items.

Table 9.7`: The frequencies and percentages of conjunctive adjuncts in their different types in the writings of NNS and NS students.

Conjunctive relation	NNS	NS
1. Additive	**156 (35.69%)**	**88 (32.47%)**
2. Adversative	**93 (21.28%)**	**70 (25.83%)**
3. Causal	**124 (28.37%)**	**63 (23.24%)**
4. Temporal	**40 (9.15%)**	**42(15.49%)**
5. Continuative	**16 (3.66%)**	**5 (1.84%)**
6. Actuality	**8[3] (1.83%)**	**3[4] (1.10%)**
Overall	**437**	**271**

[3] All of them are the conjunctive adjunct '*in fact*'.
[4] All of them are the conjunctive adjunct '*indeed*'.

All in all, the number of conjunctive adjuncts used by non-native speaker students is considerably higher than that used by native speaker students, taking into account that the two groups' data are approximately of the same size (around 30,000 words). Orderings of conjunctive adjunct types from the most to the least frequent in the two corpora are almost the same; they only do not coincide in the case of adversatives and causals, for adversatives occupy the second position after additives in the NS ordering, while it is causals that occupy this second position after additives in the NNS orderings. All the other types are arranged similarly.

If we are to judge the Syrian students' use of one conjunctive adjunct type as an 'overuse' and that of another as an 'underuse' on the basis of these general results and in the light of these types' proportions in the 'target' native speaker students' writing, we could say that there is a general overuse of conjunctive adjuncts as cohesive tools, particularly conjunctive adjuncts of the causal and additive types (they are almost double in NNS essays), and to a lesser extent conjunctive adjuncts of the adversative and continuative types.

In the next stage of findings' presentation, we provide more detailed information about the individual items used under each of the six headings shown in tables 9.7 and 9.7`, which might help us get clearer vision on what is specifically overused or underused, and consequently come up with more reliable information. The notion of acquiring different and more accurate realizations regarding conjunctive adjunct overuse/underuse when looking more closely into individual conjunctive adjuncts' frequencies than those acquired when looking into overall conjunctive adjuncts' frequencies has been in fact pointed at by Granger and Tyson (1996) in their study when they found that the overall figures of "connectors" in the native and non-native speakers' texts demonstrated that there was no overuse of connectors by learners as they hypothesized, but a more interesting pattern of overuse and underuse began to

emerge when they looked at the use of individual connectors. They discovered that learners tended "to overuse connectors which perform particular functions: corroborating the argument ('indeed', 'of course', 'in fact'), giving examples ('e.g.', 'for instance', 'namely'), and adding points to the argument ('moreover')". On the other hand, they noticed an "underuse of connectors which contrast ('however', 'though', 'yet') and develop the argument ('therefore', 'thus', 'then')", though such cases of underuse were 'unexpected' by these researchers (p. 20).

However, conjunctive adjunct overuse by EFL learners in general has been expected and proved in a number of comparative studies, as we saw in chapters five and eight; and conjunctive adjunct overuse by Arab L2 learners in particular has been testified to by Hinkel (2001). Her quantitative analysis of different categories of conjunction in NS and NNS academic texts revealed that Arab L2 writers – together with other NNS writers – employed 'sentence transitions' at "significantly higher median frequency rates" than did NS writers, which reflected their attempt to "construct a unified idea flow within the constraints of a limited syntactic and lexical range of accessible linguistic means" (p. 111/128). What has led to such overuse (and sometimes misuse) in NNS texts, in Hinkel's opinion, is "the focus on transitions in writing and composition instruction for university level students" (p. 123). Conjunctive adjunct underuse by Arab learners on the other hand has been highlighted by researchers such as Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000), but not on the basis of comparison with native English speakers. They linked this underuse problem in L2 writing to a deep-rooted one in the students' L1 (Arabic) writing (Khuwaileh & Shoumali's study (2000) is reviewed at the end of chapter 5).

9.3.2.2. Individual conjunctive adjunct frequencies

In this section, we organize all the conjunctive adjuncts that are found in the NS texts in 6 tables (9.8.A to 9.8.F) according to the conjunctive relation they

belong to. Each table demonstrates which of the three NS groups use which conjunctive items, as well as how many. In this way, each table helps illustrate not only the raw frequencies of these items, but also their variety in each group's texts. Comparing and contrasting these frequencies and varieties with those formerly given in chapter eight in relation to the NNS corpus was also intended here, but because of space limit, the tables where such detailed information was displayed in chapter 8 will just be referred to rather than being reproduced. For ease of comparison however, a column is added to each of the six tables presented here showing the 'total' numbers of only the corresponding conjunctive items in the NNS corpus (i.e. not all the conjunctive items used in the NNS corpus, but only those equivalent to the ones used in the NS corpus).

9.3.2.2.1. Additives

Table 9.8.A: Additive conjunctive adjuncts in the NS corpus and their frequencies in each group's texts

Additives	First year	Second year	Third year	*Total NS*	*Total NNS*
1. also	17	10	10	37	53
●2. again	3	2	5	10	3
3. in addition	4 (in one text)	2	1	7	5
4. moreover	3	2	1	6	14
5. for example	2	3	-	5	14
6. furthermore	3	1	-	4	6
7. similarly	2	1	-	3	1
8. in contrast / in contrast to this	1	1	-	2	-
●9. above all	-	1	1	2	-
10. nor	-	-	2	2	-
11. neither	-	-	1	1	-
12. likewise	-	-	1	1	3
13. on one hand	1	-	-	1	-
14. on the other hand	-	1	-	1	2
15. by contrast	1	-	-	1	-
16. in other words	1	-	-	1	3
●17. once again	-	1	-	1	1

●18. from another point of view	1	-	-	1	-
●19. to expand on this idea	1	-	-	1	-
●20. what is more	-	-	1	1	-
Total	**40**	**25**	**23**	**88**	**156**

Note: The black dot next to some items in tables 9.8.A – 9.8.F marks those conjunctive expressions that are found in the native speaker student corpus but not referred to by Halliday and Hasan (1976) or listed within their examples of conjunctions that express any of their five semantic relations; yet, these expressions do seem to exemplify the semantic relation they are subsumed under.

The additive expressions traced in the corpus as table 9.8.A reveals are twenty in number, and there is a general decrease in their appearance frequency from first year group to third year group – which is further emphasized by the steady decline in additives' percentage shown previously in table 9.7. The word '*also*' is the most recurrent additive in all groups' texts compared to the other words and phrases. In the second position after '*also*' comes '*again*', and in the third comes '*in addition*' – even though they are employed at considerably lower frequencies than '*also*'. The rest of the additives listed in the table are distributed in very few places within the corpus, probably reflecting a low diversity in the implementation of this cohesive relation's expressions.

Recalling the results in chapter 8 (table 8.2.A) for comparison, the non-native speaker students employed 24 different additive adverbials; i.e. more than those employed by native speaker students, and with higher 'raw' frequency rates in many cases (e.g. '*also*', '*and*', '*moreover*', '*for example*'), but with lower 'raw' frequency rates in some other cases (e.g. '*again*', '*in addition*'). Adverbials like '*besides*', *'for instance'*, '*that is'* were used by few NNS students but not by any NS student. Interestingly, *'and'* as a conjunctive adjunct, which was the second most common additive in the texts of the two undergraduate NNS groups (32 incidences), is not used at all by NS students (nor by the Diploma group of the NNS students). This seems to support Halliday and Hasan's (1976: 233-34) account discussed in chapter 8 (section 8.4.2.1) that "the 'and' relation is felt to

be structural and not cohesive, at least by mature speakers; this is why we feel a little uncomfortable at finding a sentence in written English beginning with *And*"; and this is probably why NS students in this study are not spotted using it at the beginning of their sentences. Despite this, Halliday and Hasan include the 'and' relation "among the semantic relations entering into the general category of conjunction" because, as it is justified by them, "it is a fact that the word *and* is used cohesively, to link one sentence to another, and not only by children". The NS British students in Bolton *et al*'s (2003) study did use '*and*' cohesively on 11 occasions; but still, it was much more frequently used by the EFL Hong Kong students involved in the same study (77 occasions), and was considered the second most overused connector in their corpus after '*so*'.

The top one most common cohesive additive tool in the British students' corpus, which is '*also*', happened to be the most common cohesive additive tool in the Syrian students' corpus as well, with a higher raw frequency (53). In contrast, this conjunctive was not highlighted at all by Biber *et al* (1999) among the recurring linking adverbials in their multi-genre corpus, neither was it included under their list of the most common linking adverbials in the corpus (p. 887). Moreover, in the published academic writing corpus that Bolton *et al* (2003) analyzed and used as a benchmark against which to measure overuse and underuse in both Hong Kong and British students' writings, '*also*' was found among the least occurring connectors, with a very low raw frequency (1). However, this was not the case in the students' corpora they analyzed, for in the British students' corpus, the frequency of '*also*' was slightly higher (7) and it occupied eighth position among the top 10 most overused connectors; while in the Hong Kong students' corpus, it was markedly more frequent (43) and was ranked third among the top 10 most overused connectors (p. 177).

9.3.2.2.2. Adversatives

Table 9.8.B: Adversative conjunctive adjuncts in the NS corpus and their frequencies in each group's texts

Adversatives	First year	Second year	Third year	*Total NS*	*Total NNS*
1. however	14	12	10	36	20
2. yet	3	3	6	12	7
3. but	1	-	7	8	38
4. rather / but rather	2	1	2	5	7
5. on the other hand	1	2	1	4	7
6. in fact	1	-	1	2	1
7. though	-	1	-	1	-
8. in any case	-	-	1	1	-
●9. better still	-	1	-	1	-
Total	**22**	**20**	**28**	**70**	**93**

Conjunctive adjuncts signaling adversative relations are the second most common conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus after those signaling additive relations, but as clearly shown in table 9.8.B, they are considerably less varied as all their 70 incidences are confined within nine expressions only, and in more than half of these incidences (36) the conjunctive adjunct '*however*' is the one employed. All groups are noticed using this conjunctive most frequently compared to the other eight adversatives displayed in the table. Considering the total numbers of adversative words/phrases in the whole corpus, the word '*yet*', although two thirds less frequent than '*however*', comes second in the frequency hierarchy of adversatives after '*however*'. '*But'* comes third, but third year students are almost the sole users of it.

In comparison with NS students, the NNS students' implementations of the adversative relation were higher in their raw frequencies (93), and were realized by means of a little more varied collection of expressions (11), but were only the third most common in the corpus after additives (table 8.2.B in chapter 8, sec. 8.4.2.2). The most frequent adversative sentence connector in their corpus was

‘*but*’ (38), while ‘*however*’ was second (20). As for ‘*yet*’, it had the third highest frequency (7) along with ‘*rather*’ and ‘*on the other hand*’. The conjunctive phrase ‘*on the contrary*’ – which is not used at all by the British students – was used by the Syrian students on 6 occasions, and came immediately in the fourth order. In Bolton *et al*’s (2003) results, ‘*on the contrary*’ was also totally unused in the British students’ corpus, and only occasionally used in the Hong Kong corpus and in the academic writing corpus.

In short, on the basis of comparing both sets of results and measuring adversative frequencies in L2 writing against adversative frequencies in L1 writing, it could be distinguished that ‘*but*’ is one of the conjunctives that are clearly overused by L2 writers, whereas ‘*however*’ and ‘*yet*’, though the second and third most frequent adversatives respectively in their essays, are to a certain extent underused by them.

Looking into the findings of other comparative research in this field, we find some support for the patterns of adversative overuse/underuse reported above. In the three corpora involved in Bolton *et al*’s study for example, ‘*but*’ was found to be most frequent in the Hong Kong corpus (47) and least frequent in the British corpus (14), but measured against its appearance in the academic writing corpus (39), it was classified the fifth of the top 10 most overused connectors by Hong Kong students, and described as slightly underused by the British students.

In Granger and Tyson’s study (1996), ‘*however*’ and ‘*yet*’ were subsumed under those connectors underused by the French non-native speaker writers in the study due to the significantly higher frequency rates of these words in the control native speaker corpus; especially ‘*however*’, which occurred 197 times in the 77,723 words constituting this corpus. Bolton *et al* in fact attracted attention to the ‘British’ students’ tendency to highly overuse this last connector in particular – compared to academic writers. Their contrastive analysis revealed

that the British students used ‘*however*’ about twice as much as academic writers, and that the majority of the British overuse was attributable to the frequency of this word (101) (p. 177- 178). In another study carried out by Ebeling and Leedham (2006), in which they examined connector usage in essays written by British first and third year English Studies students (from BAWE-Eng corpus) and compared this with published academic writing usage, '*however*' was also found to be the most frequently used connector by the English Studies students, particularly by first year students, and was distinguished as overused by them compared to published academics. However, in Biber *et al*’s (1999) corpus, in particular in academic prose[5], ‘*however*’ was reported as one of the linking adverbials that occurred with notable frequencies and that was preferred to mark contrast.

9.3.2.2.3. Causals

Table 9.8.C: Causal conjunctive adjuncts in the NS corpus and their frequencies in each group’s texts

Causals	**First year**	**Second year**	**Third year**	***Total NS***	***Total NNS***
1. therefore	12	7	4	23	19
2. (and) thus	5	8	5	18	15
3. so	4	2	3	9	63
4. for	1	-	2	3	4
5. then	1	1	1	3	1
●6. In doing this / in doing all of this	2	-	-	2	-
●7. In this way	1	1	-	2	-
8. hence	1	-	-	1	1
●9. Owing to this	-	1	-	1	-
●10. As this point suggests[6]	-	-	1	1	-
Total	**27**	**20**	**16**	**63**	**124**

[5] Biber *et al*'s (1999) academic corpus includes a range of different genres including student handbooks.

[6] indicates respective relation: ‘with respect to’

As mentioned before, causals are third in the frequency hierarchy of conjunctive adjunct categories as employed by the British students involved in this research. The last horizontal column in table 9.8.C demonstrates that there is a gradual slight decrease in the total number of causal conjunctives from first year group to third year group. On the other hand, the fifth vertical column in the table (*Total NS*) shows that the words which most frequently occur in the corpus to indicate causal relations are '*therefore*' in the first place, '*thus*' in the second, and '*so*' in the third. The other seven words listed in the table are detected used by students, yet very infrequently.

The three words ('*therefore*', '*thus*', '*so*') declared here the most common causal relation indicators in the NS corpus are the same ones declared in chapter 8 the most common causal relation indicators in the NNS corpus. There is no big difference between the raw frequencies of '*therefore*' and '*thus*' in the former corpus (23 & 18 respectively) and their raw frequencies in the latter corpus (19 & 15 respectively), but the difference is large in the case of '*so*'. This word was so dominant in the NNS corpus (63) that it was the most common conjunctive of not only causal conjunctives, but also all the other conjunctives with their different types. In contrast, in the NS corpus, '*so*' is far less frequent (9), and even not as frequent as '*therefore*' and '*thus*' – probably reflecting its users' (British students) awareness that it is a marker not as suitable in written English as it might be in spoken English. According to Biber *et al*'s report of the most common linking adverbials in their corpus, '*so*' was especially common in conversation, to the extent that no other linking adverbial, whether in conversation or in other registers, occurred as frequently as it did. Conversely, in academic prose, '*so*' did not occur with as notable a frequency as was the case with '*thus*' and '*therefore*', and to a lesser extent '*then*' (which neither the native nor non-native speaker students in this research seemed very familiar with).

From comparing the raw frequencies of the individual causal items in the two corpora, it could be concluded that no causal conjunctive adjunct has been underused significantly by NNS students: only '*therefore*' and '*thus*' existed in their texts with unnoticeably lower frequencies than their frequencies in the NS students' texts. On the other hand, the NNS students have overused '*so*' more prominently than any other causal conjunctive they employed. '*So*' further turns out to be the most overused ahead of conjunctive items of other types, such as, '*and*' and '*but*'. Although '*so*' was also at the top of the 10 most overused connectors assigned by Bolton *et al* (2003) in the Hong Kong NNS corpus, it was not at all among the overused connectors detected by Granger and Tyson (1996) in the French NNS corpus, or even among the ones appointed in Field and Yip's (1992) and Milton and Tsang's (1993) Hong Kong based studies. Moreover, contrary to our findings, the NS British students in Bolton *et al*'s study used '*so*' so frequently (40) that it was the second of the top 10 most overused connectors – though they still did not use it as much repeatedly as the Chinese students did (98). The British (English Studies) students in Ebeling and Leedham's (2006) study also used '*so*' frequently (particularly third year students), and it was the fifth of the top five connectors in their writing.

9.3.2.2.4. Temporals

Table 9.8.D: Temporal conjunctive adjuncts in the NS corpus and their frequencies in each group's texts

Temporals	First year	Second year	Third year	*Total NS*	*Total NNS*
1. then	5	-	1	6	9
2. first of all	4	-	-	4	-
3. first	2	-	1	3	4
4. secondly	1	-	2	3	1
5. (and)finally	3	-	-	3	12
6. at this point / at this point in the novel	-	1	2	3	-
7. firstly	-	-	2	2	1
8. initially	1	1	-	2	-
9. soon	-		1	1	-
10. later	-	1	-	1	-

11. later in life	-	1	-	1	-
12. in later years	-	1	-	1	-
●13. at this stage in his life	-	1	-	1	-
14. meanwhile	-	-	1	1	-
15. simultaneously	-	1	-	1	-
16. eventually	1	-	-	1	-
●17. for a start	1	-	-	1	-
●18. after (him)	1	-	-	1	-
●19. following (him)[7]	1	-	-	1	-
20. in conclusion	1	-	-	1	5
●21. as a conclusion	1	-	-	1	1
●22. to finish	-	-	1	1	-
●23. in the end	-	1	-	1	-
24. here	-	1	-	1	1
Total	**22**	**9**	**11**	**42**	**40**

Table 9.8.D reveals that the set of conjunctive adjuncts used to express temporal relationships is the most varied of all the sets in the NS corpus; but at the same time, it reveals the low frequencies with which these temporal conjunctive adjuncts are distributed in this corpus. Obviously, none of the items listed in the table can be described 'frequent' or 'common', including '*then*', whose incidence is the highest (6) compared to the other items. Considering the items altogether in each group's sub-corpus, we notice that the highest proportion exists in the first year group's essays.

[7] Both conjunctives '*after him*' and '*following him*' in (19) and (20) are correlative with the conjunctive '*first of all*' and could be alternated with '*next*', '*second*', or '*then*' (context of use: "*However, before these three, there is the large group of the laity, the bottom rung of society in terms of rank, but not necessarily in terms of authority.* ***First of all*** *the prosperous merchant, a man with considerable finance and business acumen. In fact, the merchant probably had more currency than many of his noble betters ... .* ***After him****, there is the bookish clerk, who is a man of philosophical leaning, who prefers learning to earning in stark contrast to the merchant.* ***Following him****, there is a wily Sergeant of the Law, who would today be known as a lawyer. He is a man of power, despite a lack of titles ...*"). However, taking into consideration the context these conjunctives are used in and the meaning they indicate, a more suitable classification for them would perhaps be as 'enumerating' conjunctives (not 'temporal'), a category identified by Biber *et al* (1999: 875) as linking adverbials that "can be used for the enumeration of pieces of information in an order chosen by the speaker/writer".

The native speaker students in Bolton *et al*'s study also employed their temporal connectors infrequently, apart from '*then*' and '*firstly*', which had relatively moderate frequencies (28 and 13 respectively) in their corpus; yet, which were still not as frequent as the adversative connector '*however*' (101), or as the causal connectors '*therefore*' (47), '*so*' (40), and '*thus*' (36). However, it should be pointed out that it was not made clear by Bolton *et al* which '*then*' was that they included in their list of connectors: was it the temporal or the causal. When measured against their appearance in academic writing, the two words, '*firstly*' and '*then*', were anyhow assumed among those connectors overused by the British students involved in that study, and given the sixth and seventh positions respectively in the overused connectors' rank ordering (p. 176-177).

It is worth remembering here what was mentioned before in chapter eight (section 8.4.2.4) that in Biber *et al*'s corpus too, the distribution of the so-called 'enumerative' and 'summative' adverbials – which together can be equated with Halliday and Hasan's category of temporal conjunctions as they include more or less the same conjunctive items (see chapter 5, sec. 5.2.1) – was not as frequent as that of result/inference or contrast/concession adverbials. However, Biber *et al* reported that academic prose used enumerative and summative adverbials more commonly than the other registers (p. 880).

Looking back at the temporal conjunctive adjuncts used by the Syrian students involved in this research for comparison, it is noticed that they were smaller in range (11 different expressions) than the ones used by the British students (24 different expressions); but they were similarly characterized by notably low frequencies. The temporal conjunctive adjunct with the highest number of occurrences in their whole corpus was '*finally*' (12), followed by '*then*' (9), with the first indicating a 'conclusive' relation and the second a 'sequential' one. In contrast, '*finally*' as observed in table 9.8.D occurs only three times in the NS corpus, and only in the first year group's part of this corpus, which

suggests an overuse of some kind for this conjunctive adjunct on the part of the Syrian students.

The Chinese students in Bolton *et al*'s study, compared to the British students in the same study, also overused '*finally*', but only to a slight extent; and the difference in its raw frequency between the two student groups' corpora (4:11) was very close to the difference in its raw frequency between the Syrian and British students' corpora of the current study (3:12). When the same Chinese students of Bolton *et al*'s study were on the other hand compared with academic writers, the results again revealed that they overused this conclusive connector, yet, to an insignificant degree with which it was not even included among the top 10 most overused connectors by these students. In Milton and Tsang's (1993: 226) rank ordering of overused connectors by Chinese students as well, '*finally*' was not included. Instead, the temporal adverbials '*lastly*', '*secondly*', and '*firstly*' took places in that ordering, occupying the first, fourth, and fifth ranks respectively. At last, neither Field and Yip's (1992) study, nor Granger and Tyson's (1996) study, showed any indication of '*finally*' overuse by non-native speaker academic students (Chinese / French).

Broadly speaking, such mismatches, whether great or slight, between the quantitative results of the various corpus-based comparison studies in this area of research could be accounted for either in terms of the EFL writers' different L1s, and consequently the different influences these different L1s may have on these writers' use of the English (L2) conjunctive adjuncts, or in terms of the different methods these studies adopted in the measurement of conjunctive adjuncts' frequencies or 'ratios of occurrence' in their data, as suggested by Bolton *et al* (2003: 171 & 180), or in terms of the different writing genres they examined .

9.3.2.2.5. Continuatives

Table 9.8.E: Continuative conjunctive adjuncts in the NS corpus and their frequencies in each group's texts.

Continuatives	First year	Second year	Third year	*Total NS*	*Total NNS*
1. after all	-	1	2	3	-
2. now	-	-	1	1	3
3. surely	-	-	1	1	-
Total	**-**	**1**	**4**	**5**	**16**

Of the six continuative conjunctive adjuncts identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976): '*now*', '*of course*', '*well*', '*anyway*', '*surely*', and '*after all*', only the three adjuncts seen in table 9.8.E are detected occurring in the NS data; in specific, in a few second and third year students' texts only. Evidently, the overall frequency rate of these continuatives (5) is the lowest of all the other cohesive relations' markers' overall frequency rates in the corpus. In brief, the continuative relation is so uncommon in the writing of the native speaker students that it takes place only once in the second year sub-corpus, while never occurs in the first year sub-corpus.

The Syrian students were reported in chapter eight using in contrast the two continuatives '*now*' and '*of course*' only, with an overall proportion (16) higher than that of the continuatives used in the British students' data (5), but similarly the lowest compared to the other four main cohesive relations' markers' overall proportions. It was made clear then that the close examination of all these two words' incidences revealed that most '*of course*' insertions (13 in total) between sentences were redundant and had no apparent conjunctive significance in their contexts. This, in addition to the fact that no British student has used this expression conjunctively, allows for counting it as one of the overused conjunctive adjuncts by the Syrian students. According to Granger and Tyson's (1996) findings, the French students also overused '*of course*'. The other studies like those of Bolton *et al* (2003) and Milton and Tsang (1993) did not include

this expression within the lists of connectors they organized and based their contrastive analyses of connectors on.

9.3.2.2.6. Actuality conjunctive adjuncts

As pointed out in chapter eight, this category of conjunctive adjunct is devoted by us to embrace stance or actuality adverbials which are found working cohesively between sentences in the examined texts, and which are not included by Halliday and Hasan (1976) under any of their previous five categories of conjunction. Adverbials like '*in fact*' – when not indicating an adversative/contrastive relation – and '*indeed*', for example, are not classified by Halliday and Hasan as conjunctive adjuncts of any type. Usually, such expressions are referred to in Grammar as "attitudinal disjuncts" or "stance adverbials"; yet, it is acknowledged that they "can also have a connective function, like linking adverbials" (Biber *et al*, 1999: 858), or in other words, that they "have clear cohesive links" (Granger and Tyson, 1996: 20). As illustrated by Biber *et al*, the use of such adverbials "often not only shows actuality, but also connects the proposition to a preceding sentence, which it strengthens or makes more specific" (p. 858). Recognizing this, Granger and Tyson (1996) do include them within their set of analyzed connectors and refer to them as "emphasizers" or "corroborative connectors", "which seem to add a new point that strengthens the argument or, in the case of '*in fact*' for example, give a new turn to the argument" (p. 20).

Table 9.8.F: Actuality conjunctive adjuncts in the NS corpus and their frequencies in each group's texts.

Actuality conjunctive adjuncts	**First year**	**Second year**	**Third year**	***Total NS***	***Total NNS***
1. indeed	-	3	-	3	-
Total	**-**	**3**	**-**	**3**	**8**

In the analyzed native speaker students' essays, as table 9.8.F reveals, '*indeed*' is the only actuality conjunctive adjunct that has been spotted employed cohesively, and only in one second year student's text on three different occasions. Despite the fact that this word occurs quite repeatedly in the essays (which Ebeling and Leedham's study (2006) confirms), it is recognized after examination that it has a connective/conjunctive function only on these three occasions, while on all the other occasions it is a mere attitudinal disjunct. Interestingly, the expression '*In fact*' as an actuality cohesive marker (and not as an adversative one) has a nil existence in the British students' essays – though it was the only actuality conjunctive adjunct detected in the Syrian students' essays, where it had at least 8 different occurrences.

9.3.2.2.7. Summary of the non-native speaker students' most overused and underused conjunctive adjuncts

On the basis of the information that has been mentioned in the previous six sub-sections (9.3.2.2.1 – 9.3.2.2.6) with regard to the patterns of conjunctive adjunct overuse/underuse in the Syrian students' writing – which the comparison between the Syrian and British students has revealed, we conclude that conjunctive adjunct underuse is not evidenced in this writing as much as conjunctive adjunct overuse is. In the two following figures (9.1 & 9.2), a summary of the most prominently overused conjunctive adjuncts and underused conjunctive adjuncts in the NNS corpus is provided. It is important to remember here that 'overuse' and 'underuse' are descriptive and relative, not evaluative, terms.

Figure 9.1: The non-native speaker students' most overused conjunctive adjuncts (raw frequencies & percentages)

Conjunctive adjunct	NS	NNS
So	9 (3.3%)	63 (14.4%)
And	0	32 (7.3%)
But	8 (2.9%)	38 (8.6%)
Also	37 (13.6%)	53 (12.1%)
Of course	0	13 (2.9%)
Finally	3 (1.1%)	12 (2.7%)
For example	5 (1.8%)	14 (3.2%)
Moreover	6 (2.2%)	14 (3.2%)
In fact (Actuality)	0	8 (1.8%)
On the contrary	0	6 (1.3%)

Figure 9.2: The non-native speaker students' most underused conjunctive adjuncts (raw frequencies & percentages)

Conjunctive adjunct	NS	NNS
However	36 (13.2%)	20 (4.5%)
Again	10 (3.6%)	3 (0.6%)
Yet	12 (4.4%)	7 (1.6%)

9.3.2.3. Conjunctive adjunct variety

9.3.2.3.1. Conjunctive adjunct variety in the NS corpus

For measuring conjunctive adjunct variety in each NS group's essays, we use the same type-token ratio (TTR) measure that we used for measuring conjunctive adjunct variety in the NNS groups' essays in chapter 8. The type-token ratio, as mentioned before, refers to the number of different conjunctive adjuncts divided by the number of tokens of conjunctive adjuncts (or the total number of conjunctive adjuncts). Hence, table 9.9 below provides the numbers of different conjunctive adjuncts in the three NS groups' sub-corpora, as well as the total numbers (or total raw frequencies) of conjunctive adjuncts in them, and illustrates the percentages resulting from dividing the first numbers by the second numbers, representing conjunctive adjunct type-token ratios. In general terms, a low type-token ratio indicates that there are conjunctive adjuncts which

are repeated many times. Therefore, the higher the ratio is, the less the repetition times are and the more the different conjunctive items are; that is, the higher the level of conjunctive adjunct diversity is.

Table 9.9: Type-token (variety) ratios of conjunctive adjuncts in the NS groups' writings

NS Group	First year	Second year	Third year
Number of different conjunctive adjuncts	39	34	33
Frequency (or total number) of conjunctive adjuncts	111	78	82
Type-token ratio	35.13%	43.58%	40.24%

Looking at the information given in the table above, it is noticed that the numbers of different conjunctive adjuncts in the three groups' writings – though steadily decreasing from the first year group to the third year group – are not considerably different from each other. The calculation of the type-token ratios in these writings also does not reflect a great difference among them. It reveals however that the group whose products have the most varied use of conjunctive adjuncts is the second year group, with 43.5%; whereas the group whose products have the least varied use is the first year group, with 35%.

The question that arises here is that if variety of conjunctive adjuncts is important to writing quality because it can indicate the scope of vocabulary mastered by writers, bearing in mind that possessing a large vocabulary is undoubtedly one of the characteristics of high proficiency writers, could it be predicted here then as it was done in the case of the NNS student groups that the higher the conjunctive adjunct variety in a group's writing the more developed the quality of this writing is? The type-token ratio decline from second to third year suggests that this can only hold for this feature, and the claim cannot extend to the overall quality of the writing. Further research is needed to explore how more advanced writers express conjunctive relations if not through conjunctive adjuncts.

9.3.2.3.2. Conjunctive adjunct variety in the NS corpus vs. NNS corpus

To measure conjunctive adjunct variety in the British data and Syrian data each as a whole so that this variety could be compared in the two sets of data, we first calculate the total of all the different conjunctive items that were traced in each set of data and organized under the six categories of conjunctive adjunct according to the semantic relation they express, as we have just seen in section 9.3.2.2 above, as demonstrated in the following table (9.10):

Table 9.10: Numbers of different conjunctive adjuncts in the NNS and NS corpora

Conjunctive adjunct category	Number of different conjunctive adjuncts in NNS corpus	Number of different conjunctive adjuncts in NS corpus
Additive	24	20
Adversative	11	9
Causal	15	10
Temporal	12	24
Continuative	2	3
Actuality	1	1
Total	**65**	**67**

Then, we calculate the type-token ratios of conjunctive adjuncts in the two corpora, dividing the above resulted total numbers of different conjunctive adjuncts by the total frequencies of conjunctive adjuncts. Table 9.11 below helps illustrate this procedure:

Table 9.11: Type-token (variety) ratios of conjunctive adjuncts in the NNS and NS corpora

Student group	Total number of different conjunctive adjuncts	Total (raw) frequency of conjunctive adjuncts	Type-token ratio
NNS	65	437	14.87%
NS	67	271	24.72%

It is evident in this table that despite the significant discrepancy between the total frequencies of conjunctive adjuncts in the two corpora, the total numbers of

different conjunctive adjuncts are very close to one another. It even turns out that the NS corpus, which has a considerably less frequent use of conjunctive adjuncts, contains the higher number of different conjunctive adjuncts, the result of which is a higher conjunctive adjunct type-token ratio in that corpus; i.e., a higher conjunctive adjunct variety level. This result is in direct agreement with the expectation that the British students, because they are undoubtedly more competent writers of English and users of its norms, would implement the English conjunctive adjuncts more variedly than the EFL students – even though there might be conjunctive items that the EFL students have made use of while the British students have not.

Chapter Ten: Findings Summary, Pedagogical Implications, and Limitations

10.1. Introduction

Although the focus of this thesis has been on relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts as the two English grammar features identified by its author as problematic in the writing of EFL university students from Syria, it has been demonstrated in chapters 2 and 6 that these are not the only problematic grammar features in the written output of these students – as there are many others (e.g. preposition, article, subject-verb agreement, tense). The English writing performance in general of these students, especially the undergraduates, has been revealed in chapters 1 and 2 to be of poor quality at all levels: form, content, and organization; but because our interest lies in grammar specifically, we confine our investigations on application of grammar forms/norms. The determination to study relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts in particular was also based on considerations (sec. 6.2.3) including the fact that there has been little research on their use in the writing of Arab learners of English, particularly Syrian Arab learners, and the fact of their being important skills that students should adequately acquire and apply in their writing, as they contribute to improving the syntactic and semantic maturity of that writing, providing students with a wider choice of crafting sentences and organizing ideas in them. Employed effectively, they further contribute to improving text quality, as they both enhance textual linkage and cohesion.

In short, like many studies of features of L2 texts, the study in this thesis is motivated by pedagogically driven needs of a particular group of L2 learners in a particular location, and like the majority of these studies, it seeks to compare and contrast the implementation of the targeted features in L2 texts with their implementation in L1 texts to derive better comprehension of students' needs with regard to the use of these features and more resourceful implications for teaching them in L2 composition classes. It is argued by Hinkel (2005: 620) that "in L2 writing instruction, such comparisons can (and often do) lead to fine-

tuning course curricula, added attention to specific areas of teaching, or individualized assistance for L2 learners". More broadly, Hinkel further reports that "research into how L2 discourse and texts are constructed, as well as contrastive analyses of discourse, have proven to be very useful in the teaching of L2 writing and creating more appropriate curricula (e.g., Leki, 1992; Reid, 1993)" (2005: 619).

In a somewhat similar vein, Flowerdew (1998), in her study of "Integrating 'expert' and 'interlanguage' computer corpora findings on causality", emphasizes that a comparison of the findings from both learner and native-speaker corpora has important pedagogical applications. She mainly argues against the exploitation of native-speaker corpora alone to inform materials design for L2 learners, and suggests that when choosing which causative markers to teach, decisions made should also be based on findings from parallel student corpora to ascertain where students' main deficiencies lie (p. 338). Flowerdew also points out that although she agrees with the notion of Fang and Kennedy (1992: 63) that "the most frequently used causative markers [in the native-speaker corpus] are likely to be the most worth teaching and learning especially for academic purposes", she believes that without a student corpus to compare with, "there is a danger that the emphasis on teaching the most frequent markers may focus on ones already familiar to and correctly used by students, or in this case, exacerbate the problem with their overuse" (Flowerdew, 1998: 338).

In this chapter, the pedagogical implications suggested for the teaching of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts in the writing classes of the intended group of EFL students are drawn from this thesis' research findings. These findings are two-fold: a. findings from the analysis of the Syrian students' use of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts, as well as the analysis of their misuse / erroneous use of these grammar forms; and b. findings from the comparison of the Syrian (NNS) student and British (NS) student corpora. Both sets of findings have informed us about the students' main problems in the use of these forms, or in other words, about the particular aspects in their use that need more attention in teaching/learning. We start the following sections with a summary of these problematic aspects, accompanied with specifications of the students' learning

needs and with implications for some pedagogical treatments. Later on, we point to certain pedagogical approaches and instructional techniques to teaching grammar in writing, such as the process approach and the technique of sentence-combining practice. Finally, we discuss the research limitations and conclude with some suggestions for future research.

10.2. Summary of the Syrian students' problematic areas and learning needs in the use of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts in English writing and implications for pedagogical treatments

10.2.1. Relative clauses

We start this discussion of the main issues raised by the analysis of relative clauses by revisiting the research questions that guided this analysis. At the beginning of chapter seven (sec. 7.1), four research questions were identified, as summarized here:

1. How frequently are different types of relative clause employed by the Syrian student groups?
2. What is the rate of RC errors or inaccuracies in L2 texts?
3. Is there any evidence of RC avoidance or of expected RC use not fulfilled?
4. Is there any evidence of L1 interference?

Briefly, the main aim behind the first research question (the answer to which was given in sections 7.3, 7.3.1, and 7.3.2) was to investigate the occurrence frequencies of relative clauses in their various types so that a frequency/difficulty hierarchy of these types could be created and compared with hierarchies predicted by theories like the AHH and PDH. The second question (answered in section 7.3.3) aimed to explore how many RC errors were made and what RC types and relativization aspects were most affected by errors. The objective of the third question was to trace any incidences where a RC type or structure was

possibly avoided by students, and to see whether more complex RCs were the ones avoided (answer found in sections 7.3.3.1.1 and 7.4). The last research question was intended to examine whether differences between Arabic and English with regard to RC formation represented a source for their errors (i.e. L1 interference errors), and to identify what particular relativization aspects were affected by these errors (answer in sections 7.3.3.1.1 and 7.3.3.1.2). The rest of this section synthesizes the answers to these separate questions in a summary and discussion of the main findings.

The analysis of relative clauses in the Syrian students' essays has revealed that this grammatical form – though it occurred frequently and served in most cases finely the parameters of idea connectivity (on the sentence level) and syntactic complexity essential for academic text – was employed inaccurately and/or inappropriately on a number of occasions, and its sentences lacked structural diversity, for students over-relied on the one hand on 'full' RC structure, and on the other on 'non-subject-subject' (NS-S) RC construction type. 'Reduced' RC structure was notably underused even by advanced writers (Diploma students), and one prominent problem noticed in its application was confusing it with full RC structure, specifically in terms of verb form. This confusion resulted in a number of ambiguous structures that were grammatically inaccurate and was thus categorized as one source of students' RC errors. Another source of errors was L1 interference, which particularly affected the 'pronoun retention' aspect of relativization. RC misapplication analysis has disclosed other frequently affected aspects like 'agreement of head NP with verb in RC', 'choice of relative pronoun', 'relative pronoun omission' and 'auxiliary verb omission'. At the end of the analysis, it was argued that any of students' misapplications might be the result of either their incompetence or obliviousness; or might be due to exam anxiety and lack of time.

In terms of relative clause construction, students did not make use of all construction types equally. The NS-S construction, whose components are the easiest to process as hypothesized and proved by researchers (chapters 4 & 7), was overwhelmingly the most recurring one; whereas other constructions with components marked as more difficult to process, such as subject head noun and

non-subject gap (which could be object/complement, object of preposition, adverbial, genitive, or object of comparison), were much less common, and some of them were either rare or unused, like those containing genitive, object of comparison, and indirect object gaps.

Although Diploma students to some extent exploited a wider range of RC types with more complex constructions than that of the undergraduate students, it was concluded that the appropriate, as well as the accurate, use of relative clauses was difficult to master for all students at their different stages of study, including Diploma students; the group representing advanced writers in this study. This conclusion was drawn not only because Diploma students misused RC almost as frequently as undergraduate groups did, but also because the types/sources of their misuse were similar to those of the undergraduate groups. Generally speaking, form errors constituted the majority of all groups' RC misuses.

In chapter 7, with reference to a study by Suh (2003), the last finding was confirmed and given some possible explanations. In one explanation, Suh justified his subjects' poor performance on relativization stating that in spite of their being above intermediate level of proficiency, "they did not seem to have sufficient knowledge of correct usage of relative clauses, i.e., how they are formed and function in relation to a main clause". In another explanation, he suggested that "though subjects would have had sufficient amount of learned knowledge in Krashen’s (1982) term about relativization, this cannot guarantee accurate judgment or correct use of relative clauses for communication"; and therefore argued that "learned knowledge needs to be changed into acquired knowledge through continuous practice". The third possible explanation had to do with subjects' failure to pay careful attention to what they had to do in the task they were given (grammaticality judgment task) due to tiredness or sleepiness (Suh, 2003: 139). Although these explanations are specific to Suh's own subjects' behaviour in a particular task on relativization, they help in providing us too with reasonable suggestions to justify our own EFL students' comparable behaviour. That is to say, our students' deficiencies in the use of relative clauses could be attributed to their carelessness, lack of sufficient knowledge, or/and lack of "acquired" knowledge resulting from lack of sufficient practice. In all cases,

students need to increase their awareness of their points of weakness, self-editing, and the importance of practicing the implementation of relative clauses in their various forms and constructions within text.

The comparison of the Syrian students' writing corpus with the British students' writing corpus (chapter nine) did not reveal a significant discrepancy between their relative clause use patterns. The quantitative analysis of RC occurrence frequency showed a similar total frequency rate for the two corpora. However, the more specific quantitative analysis of RC forms' and constructions' frequencies uncovered a slightly more varied application of these forms and constructions on the part of the British students compared to the application of the Syrian students. On the one hand, the reduced form of relative clause – though remarkably less frequent than the full form in both corpora – occurred in the British corpus with a frequency (36.5%) somewhat higher than its counterpart in the Syrian corpus (14.5%). Students in both corpora made use of all types of reduced RC (e.g. *ed*-clause, *ing*-clause, and adjective clause) – though with variant proportions; but the non-native speaker students seemed much less familiar with the adjective clause type. On the other hand, various relative clause constructions were distributed in the British corpus with a diversity level slightly higher than the one in the Syrian corpus. This diversity, of course, involved the components (head noun & gap) these constructions were composed of. To illustrate, the comparative study showed that the native speaker students employed the dominant NS-S construction 10% less than the non-native speaker students, accompanied at the same time with slightly higher rates for most of the other constructions than in the non-native speaker students' texts (section 9.3.1).

As for relative clause accessibility (i.e. difficulty / frequency) hierarchies, it was found that the sequence of gap categories, and also that of head noun categories, from most frequent (or least difficult) to least frequent (or most difficult) in the Syrian students' hierarchies was almost identical with their sequence in the British students' hierarchies, indicating that both native and non-native speaker students shared similar preferences in the employment of these categories. Not only did Syrian students employ the 'subject' gap and the 'non-subject' head noun which were predicted to be easiest much more frequently than any other gap and

head noun, but British students also did. This led to the dominance of the non-subject-subject (NS-S) construction category over all other RC construction categories in both student groups' outputs, so that it was placed at the top of both their construction difficulty/frequency hierarchies, and was in conclusion hypothesized to be the easiest for all (L2 & L1) students to apply, and in consequence, to take the place at the top of ‘RC acquisition developmental order’. However, the comparison of the other RC constructions' percentages in the two corpora revealed that their construction hierarchies were someway different from each other (section 9.3.1.3.1).

What might be concluded from all this is that teaching relative clause norms to the EFL student writers involved in this study probably need not focus on the developmental order of RCs as acquired by native English-speaking students or on the most common RCs in their writing – which represents the target / model writing for these EFL student writers – as this seems to be knowledge already acquired by them. What they need more essentially to be instructed in is the formation of relative clauses and how they function in relation to a main clause. They specifically need to be familiarized more with all English RC constructions other than the NS-S construction, and with how they are employed by more proficient writers (such as native speaker students) in texts of comparable type. Providing EFL students with model texts contextualizing various RCs, with which they are allowed to compare and contrast their own use of RCs in their own texts, we suggest, would help to develop their knowledge not only about the correct usage of RC, but also about the communicatively appropriate use of it within text, appreciating semantic factors related to its use, such as 'end-weight' and 'given & new information'. Further, it would help to increase their awareness of all the English relativization system's parameters (e.g. pronoun retention, relative pronoun omission, agreement of head NP with verb in RC, choice of relative pronoun), and of the differences and similarities between English and Arabic relativization conventions. Cullen (2008: 228) generally remarks that comparing texts[1] "makes it easier to focus on form and to notice and record

[1] For Cullen (2008: 224), this could be comparing learners' texts with other learners' texts, or with more proficient users' texts, for example, a sample text, or a written transcript of native speakers doing the same task.

features of grammar which might otherwise be overlooked". He also points out that the comparison process enables learners to notice gaps in their own use of grammar (p. 224).

As a final note, the relative clause, as argued by Andrews (2007: 7), is one of those complex structures in English grammar, whose rules "may be just too difficult to induct" through "implicit" teaching; and therefore, students may benefit more from the intervention of "explicit" explanation of these rules, for "explicit instruction may accelerate the process" of their learning. The findings of Andrews' (2007) study on "The effects of implicit and explicit instruction on simple and complex grammatical structures for adult English language learners" demonstrate that with regard to the relative clause, "the explicitly-taught groups' scores were significantly higher than the implicitly-taught groups' scores" (p. 6). In contrast, with regard to the teaching of simple rules, such as subject-verb agreement, her findings indicated that "implicit instruction is just as effective as explicit for simple rules" (p. 8), which made her suggest at the end that "teachers could spend the majority of their limited, grammar-teaching time on complex structures and allow the students to induct the simple rules themselves" (ibid).

In all cases, asserting once again Suh's (2003: 139) view mentioned earlier, "learned knowledge" about relativization needs to be changed into "acquired knowledge" through continuous practice, as learned knowledge by itself is not sufficient to "guarantee accurate judgment and correct use of relative clauses for communication". His argument is that:

> In order for subjects to have a good, perfect command of relativization either for metalinguistic tasks such as a grammaticality judgment task, or for communicative tasks, it seems desirable that after learners learn about relativization, they should be provided with plentiful opportunity to practice what they learn in a variety of communicative contexts (Ellis, 1994). By doing so, learned, explicit knowledge can be turned into acquired, implicit knowledge which is likely to play a key role in correctly judging sentence grammaticality, not to mention successfully getting message across for communication. (Suh, 2003: 139)

The last and most important pedagogical implication of his study for Korean learners of English (at university level) in particular, and for EFL classrooms in general is that:

> In light of the fact that the ability to correctly manipulate and use relative clauses is not only one important aspect of grammatical competence, but the cornerstone for the effective, clear transmission of message for communication, it is indispensable for teachers to help their students to fully understand what relativization is, and how it works in both sentence and discourse level. (Suh, 2003: 147)

The effectiveness of instructing relativization has been further testified to by a number of other researchers (e.g. Doughty, 1991; Aarts and Schils, 1995; Ammar and Lightbown, 2005; see a review of all in section 4.5); and we in this research would like to emphasize the necessity of adopting a selective and focused kind of instruction on relative clauses in the intended EFL context; for example, one that addresses the most problematic aspects in its use for students, and/or the underproduction of certain RC constructions and the overproduction of others by students.

10.2.2. Conjunctive adjuncts

The research questions which guided the conjunctive adjunct analysis in this work (section 8.2) can be summarized as follows:

1. What are the occurrence frequencies of conjunctive adjuncts, as types and as individual items, in the Syrian groups' texts?
2. What are the type-token ratios of conjunctive adjuncts in the groups' texts?
3. How are conjunctive adjuncts misused by students, and what conjunctive adjuncts are misused?
4. Is there a tendency among students to overuse or underuse certain conjunctive adjuncts? What conjunctive adjuncts does the comparison with native speaker students' writing show (or prove) to be overused or underused?

5. Does the students' L1 (Arabic) influence their use of conjunctive adjuncts?

In brief, the aim behind the first research question was to find what conjunctive adjunct type (additive, adversative, causal, temporal, or continuative) was used more or less frequently than others, as well as what individual conjunctive expressions were used under each type and how frequently (answer in sections 8.4.1 and 8.4.2). The main objective behind the calculation of conjunctive adjunct type-token ratios, which the second research question proposes, was to measure conjunctive adjunct diversity in each group's writing and check whether greater diversity was associated with higher proficiency level (answer in 8.4.3). The purpose of the third question was to look at incidences where conjunctive adjuncts appeared to be misused by students, investigating how they were misused, how frequently, and what types and expressions were misused (answer in section 8.4.4). The fourth question was aimed to test a quite common hypothesis in literature regarding EFL/ESL writers' tendency to overuse conjunctive adjuncts, and a less common one regarding their tendency to underuse them. The intention was also to approach more accurate judgements over overuse and underuse patterns through the comparison with native speaker students' use of conjunctive adjuncts (answer in sections 8.4.2, 9.3.2.1.1, 9.3.2.2, and 9.3.2.2.7). Finally, the fifth question was intended to find if any instances of conjunctive adjunct misuse, overuse, or underuse could be attributed to L1 interference (answer in sections 8.4.2.1 and 8.4.4.2).

The analysis of conjunctive adjuncts in the Syrian students' corpus revealed that each of the three student groups' sets of texts comprising the corpus (i.e. third year students', fourth year students', and Diploma students' texts) implemented all the five types of these devices, classified into additive, adversative, causal, temporal, and continuative (Halliday and Hasan, 1976), and with what frequency. In the two undergraduate groups' sub-corpora, additive conjunctives were most common, while in the diploma group's sub-corpus, both additive and causal conjunctives were equally most common. All in all, the frequency hierarchy of conjunctive adjuncts in the whole corpus was as follows: additives > causals > adversatives > temporals > continuatives (table 8.1). The (supposedly) least

skillful group, the third year students, was the producer of the highest portion of conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus; and most prominently, of additives. If we assume this indicates that this group has the misconception that "the more [conjunctives], the better" (Crewe, 1990), which many linguists have warned against (e.g. Crewe, 1990; Zamel, 1983; Granger and Tyson, 1996), we could suggest that particularly students at lower academic stages in the context of this study need to be guided into avoiding the excessive and redundant use of these conjunctive ties, as this may distract readers and result in "a prose that sounds both artificial and mechanical", as put by Zamel (1983: 27). Besides, they need to be familiar with other cohesive devices (e.g. reference, substitution, ellipsis) and lexical and syntactic means of constructing cohesive text. As emphasized by Hinkel (2001: 130):

> Teachers need to work to expand learners' accessible repertoire of grammatical structures and lexis because all these features play a crucial role in NNSs' ability to construct cohesive (and coherent) academic essays. No matter how much effort and work is expended on teaching the uses and meanings of discrete cohesive devices, for L2 writers, textual cohesion can be attained only when they have a sufficient language foundation to construct academic text.

The analysis of individual conjunctive item frequencies in the corpus helped in distinguishing the words/expressions that students used to connect their ideas and how frequently they used each one of them. All in all, 65 different conjunctive items were found to be employed; some of them were very frequent, and some others were moderately frequent, but most of them had only occasional (i.e. one/two/few) occurrences. The top five most frequent items as far as the whole corpus was concerned were *so, also, but, and, however*, which students over-relied on, in contrast with other conjunctives, to connect their sentences/clauses. The resultive word *so*, which the findings showed as the most reoccurring conjunctive in the corpus, is a marker more common in spoken than in written English (Biber *et al*, 1999; section 8.4.2.3 in this thesis). Therefore, students might need to be conscious of other resultive expressions which are more formal and appropriate for the kind of writing they are doing (e.g. *thus, therefore, hence*).

The additive conjunctive *and,* which was the fourth most common conjunctive adjunct in the data, permeated only third and fourth year students' texts, and disappeared totally from Diploma students' texts, possibly indicating that this last group avoided the "immature" option of starting a sentence with *and* to connect it to a previous sentence. As put by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 233), "the 'and' relation is felt to be structural and not cohesive, at least by mature speakers". A thorough examination into all the occasions where this relation was implemented cohesively in the undergraduate students' texts showed that it was many times unnecessarily established between sentences, simply to indicate to the reader that another point was being added (section 8.4.2.1). This, we conceived, could produce an adverse effect on the reader as it disturbs the logical or natural order of sentences, where keeping such relations implicit would be better for message clarity and text coherence in general (for examples from the data, see section 8.4.2.1). With regard to this, we suggest that undergraduate students should be warned that although *and* can be (and in fact it is) used cohesively, using it repeatedly as a sentence linker can affect the cohesiveness of their texts as a whole (ibid).

The redundant use of *and* was perceived as in some cases probably a sign of students' avoidance of complex sentence structures – a notion also suggested by Ting (2003: 5) – for *and* could be eliminated in a number of instances and other clause connectors (e.g. *which*) could be used instead, so that the two sentences it joined would be transformed into one longer hierarchical sentence. Finally, *and* overuse was also predicted to be a result of L1 interference, as in Arabic writing it is quite a common sentence/clause connector. In short, to help decrease the problem, an explanation of all the possible factors taking part in causing it should be provided to students, so that they build awareness of them and of ways for tackling them.

The examination of conjunctive adjunct diversity in each EFL student group's sub-corpus through the calculation of conjunctive adjunct type-token ratio (TTR) in it revealed no major differences among the three groups. It demonstrated that the group with the highest language proficiency level and most developed writing quality; i.e. the Diploma students' group, contrary to expectation, was not

the group with the highest conjunctive adjunct diversity level; rather, it was the fourth year group. The slight (3%) decline in TTR from fourth year to Diploma was pointed out as counter-intuitive since greater diversity was hypothesized to be associated with higher proficiency. Nevertheless, it was suggested as partly explained in the context of the Diploma group's drop of inappropriate conjunctive adjunct forms that the fourth year group has employed. Generally speaking, the importance of employing a variety of conjunctive expressions in the academic text should be highlighted to students at all levels, for it can indicate the scope of vocabulary mastered by them, and can play a role in improving the text quality.

The analysis of conjunctive adjunct misuse in the corpus disclosed 24 incidences where conjunctive adjuncts were diagnosed as misused, in terms of either meaning or form. The 24 misuses were distributed in the corpus as follows: 9 in third year texts, 9 in fourth year texts, and 6 in Diploma texts; and they were categorized within five types posited by us: 1. inappropriate choice of conjunctive adjunct (or, conjunctive adjunct inappropriacy for context, or, conjunctive adjuncts' functions confusion), 2. unnecessarily inserted conjunctive adjunct with an improper conjunctive relation implied, 3. using an incorrect form or structure of the conjunctive expression itself, 4. confusing a 'cohesive conjunction' (i.e. a conjunctive adjunct) with a 'structural conjunction' (i.e. a subordinator), and 5. L1 interference. Misuses of the first three categories were more common than those of the last two categories, which were spotted taking place at only a few occasions and in only fourth year texts. In general, students showed faulty knowledge on the semantic function of a number of conjunctive adjuncts, using them either inappropriately (e.g. confused with other conjunctive adjuncts) or unnecessarily, such as: *on the contrary*, *otherwise*, *furthermore*, *in accordance with that/accordingly*, *at the same time*, *thus*, *but* (these used inappropriately), *so*, *of course*, and *therefore* (these used unnecessarily). On the other hand, they displayed ignorance of, or maybe lack of concentration on, the correct form of some conjunctive adjuncts, like: *in contrast*, *in accordance with that/accordingly*, *on the one hand*, *or else*, *on the contrary*, and *besides that*. However, most of the affected conjunctive adjuncts were found to be misused not more than once or twice in the data.

The 'corrective-adversative' conjunctive adjunct *on the contrary* perhaps was the most notably misused one, in terms of both meaning and form. In most cases, it was confused with the 'comparative-additive' conjunctive adjunct *in contrast*, with this being sometimes a confusion between their forms, and sometimes a confusion between their functions. Lake (2004), in his experience as an EAP teacher, also finds that in academic writing, a large proportion of non-native speaker writers who use the phrase *'on the contrary'* appear to do so inappropriately, but in his case, it is often noticed being confused with *'on the other hand'*. He argues that the description of *on the contrary* as a phrase of 'contrast' or 'contradiction' in dictionaries and reference books is the source of confusion. His analysis of the phrase as usually encountered in written academic discourse explores that the two ideas being expressed directly to either side of the phrase "stand not in contrast or contradiction, … but in a degree of *complementarity* to each other" (p. 140). Accordingly, his pedagogical implication for EAP teachers and students is that

> In explaining the phrase, teachers need to focus less on its conceptual meaning and more on the common features of its lexico-syntactical context. Students can then have a checklist of those features that should be present for its appropriate use, which would help them towards correct production in their own writing. (Lake, 2004: 137)

Aside from this individual case of misuse, it was found that of the five main conjunctive adjunct classes identified in this research (i.e. additive, adversative, causal, temporal, and continuative conjunctive adjuncts), causal conjunctive adjuncts were the ones most frequently affected by various types of misuse, having a misuse frequency rate of 58.83% (i.e. 14 out of the overall 24 misused conjunctive adjuncts were causals). Even though no specific reasons were hypothesized for that (sec. 8.4.4.3), it reflected the need to pay more attention to causal conjunctives in teaching, helping students to thoroughly understand their logical meanings and how to employ them both appropriately and correctly.

Overall, the conjunctive adjunct misuse analysis results did not imply that the use of this cohesive tool was a really weak area for the Syrian writers of English

because the number of misuses in the whole corpus (24) was not markedly high; only 5.49% of all the conjunctive adjuncts used by students (437) were interpreted as misused. It was concluded that conjunctive adjuncts were difficult to master, even at a reasonably advanced level. It was nevertheless acknowledged that "more work on large samples would need to be conducted before reaching any firm conclusions" (Granger and Tyson, 1996: 24).

At the end of our investigation into conjunctive adjunct use in the Syrian corpus, we were able only to 'predict' patterns of conjunctive adjunct overuse and underuse, which represent other facets (other than misuse) of the problem that EFL students may have in the implementation of these cohesive devices. It was predicted that students tended to overuse the causal *so*, the additives *and* and *also*, the adversatives *but* and *however*, and the continuative *of course* – on the basis of their notably high occurrence frequencies in the corpus compared to other conjunctive items, together with their being observed used redundantly, or unnecessarily, at a number of occasions. On the other hand, it was predicted that students were likely to underuse many other conjunctive adjuncts due to their low frequencies, rare occurrence, or nonoccurrence at all in the data. However, with the comparison with conjunctive adjunct use in the British corpus, we were able to measure more accurately overuse and underuse patterns, and found that *so, and, but, also, of course, finally, for example, moreover, in fact* and *on the contrary* were the most prominently overused conjunctive adjuncts by the Syrian students, while *however, again,* and *yet* were the top most prominently underused ones (all ordered from most overused/underused to least overused/underused) (figures 9.1 & 9.2). Apart from these specific patterns, the comparative quantitative analysis demonstrated that there was a general overuse of conjunctive adjuncts as cohesive tools among NNS students, particularly conjunctive adjuncts of the causal and additive types (they were almost double in NNS essays), and to a lesser extent conjunctive adjuncts of the adversative and continuative types.

Despite the considerably higher total raw frequency of conjunctive adjuncts in the Syrian corpus compared to that in the British corpus (437:271), the measurement of conjunctive adjunct type-token ratio in both corpora

demonstrated that the conjunctive items employed in it were less varied than the ones employed in the British corpus (14.87%:24.72%). This indicated that the Syrian students attempted to explicitly unify text ideas relying on a restricted repertoire of conjunctive adjuncts. McCarthy (1991; cited in Tanko, 2004: 159) observes that “advanced L2 learners’ output data can seem unnatural because, unlike native speakers, they cannot employ a variety of appropriate connectors to express cognitive relations and this decreases the comprehensibility of their texts”. Teachers in our context hence need to help students expand their conjunctive adjunct repertoire and encourage them to use various conjunctive adjuncts appropriately in their writing, as this can affect positively the quality of the academic text, signifying the range of vocabulary mastered by writers. Still, students at the same time should be reminded that, as put by Tanko (2004: 179), "the presence, the frequency, and the distribution of connectors in a particular text cannot be considered the ultimate indicator of text quality. A text that contains an acceptable number of stylistically appropriate connectors applied in the right positions can still be devoid of either logic or content".

As argued in the case of relative clauses, we believe that providing the Syrian academic students of English literature with sample texts of comparable type to their own texts' type, which are specifically written by native English-speaking academic students of English literature, so that they can themselves compare and contrast their application of conjunctive adjuncts with native speaker students' application, could help reduce the misunderstandings that they may hold about the use of these devices and that may lead to them misusing, overusing, or underusing them in writing. It is worth mentioning here that there are some researchers, for example Milton and Tsang (1993) and Tanko (2004), who more specifically encourage involving EFL students in the process of examining concordances featuring conjunctive adjuncts in NS writing corpora for the same purpose of comparison. Milton and Tsang (1993) assume that this gives students the opportunity to find out the similarities and differences by themselves, and improve their writing in this aspect by imitating the NS writers’ implementation of these cohesive markers. Tanko (2004: 179) claims that such "a data-driven approach to learning" about conjunctive adjuncts allows students "to control the focus of their investigation" and can be effective in improving their deficiencies

and leading to "the disappearance of "pet" adverbial connectors through the informed exploitation of the variety of adverbial connectors available. It can, furthermore, directly improve the coherence of student texts through the informed exploitation of the functions of adverbial connectors".

However, the recognition among some writing researchers (e.g. Silva,1993; Hinkel, 2002) of the fundamental differences that exist between L2 (NNS) texts and L1 (NS) texts (with regard to the use of not only conjunctive adjuncts or cohesive devices, but also all text writing features), and consequently of the fact that L2 writers' learning needs are distinct from those of L1 writers, has lead them to recommend – with which we agree – that "teachers who work with L2 writers require special and focused training to deal with cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences of their students" (Silva, 1993; cited in Hinkel, 2005: 619) (section 5.3). There was, naturally, a difference in many respects between the Syrian and British students' applications of conjunctive adjuncts that is worth highlighting for teachers to be guided through when instructing the NNS students. However, some similarities also existed, and these too are worth underlining for teachers lest they fall in the danger of emphasizing certain behaviours by native speaker students which are already familiar to and finely accomplished by non-native speaker students, or even in this case, exacerbate problems like overuse and underuse (Flowerdew, 1998). For instance, the Syrian students in this study, like the British students, used additive conjunctives most frequently and temporal and continuative conjunctives least frequently. If we assume that L2 writing teachers are ignorant of this similarity and that they adhere to the opinion we referred to at the beginning of this chapter that the most frequently used cohesive markers in native speaker writing are likely to be the most worth teaching and learning (Fang & Kennedy, 1992), then, we should expect them to put emphasis in teaching most on additives and least on temporals and continuatives, causing possibly an increase in NNS students' tendencies to overuse the former conjunctives and underuse the two latter ones.

For tackling conjunctive adjunct overuse, which the analysis proved to be a salient problem in the Syrian students' writing, besides text modeling, avoiding placing over-emphasis on conjunctive adjunct use in composition classes is

strongly called for. In this author's experience as an English language learner and teacher in Syria, most teachers of English writing there tend to put excessive emphasis on the explicit teaching of these devices to their students. A possible explanation for this tendency is that they might be following the instructions given in a certain writing course book. As claimed by Carrell (1982; cited in Hinkel, 2001: 112), in teaching L2 writing and composition to NNSs, cohesive devices should play a secondary role to instruction on organizing the flow of ideas in a text. This is further asserted in Hinkel's (2001: 129) suggestion that learners "can be taught that sentence transitions alone cannot make the text cohesive but can merely enhance textual cohesion that exists largely independently of transitional words and phrases". Other researchers such as Crewe (1990) and Granger and Tyson (1996) argue for the necessity of teaching students that "connectors in English should not be used as ‘stylistic enhancers’ but should be thought of as higher-level discourse units" (Crewe, 1990: 316; Granger and Tyson, 1996: 25), as well as, of placing "more emphasis on *how* to use connectors, laying stress on examining their use in authentic texts" (Granger and Tyson, 1996: 25) (section 5.3.1).

To help diminish conjunctive adjunct misuse, of which the misuse analysis anyhow did not explore massive incidences, students' prominent and reoccurring forms of conjunctive adjunct distortion in written texts should be examined and targeted for focus in teaching. Additionally, providing students with lists of conjunctive adjuncts, where they are categorized according to function, should be abandoned, for such lists, according to Crewe (1990), cause students confusion: "not only are the students led into error, but they are not provided with sufficient information to resolve it" (Crewe,1990: 318). Zamel (1980: 24) also describes them as "ineffective" since learners need to know "how these links make *contextually* related ideas clear and logical" rather than just learning them as a class of items (section 5.3.1).

Finally, we would like to stress the part that EFL learners themselves should take in the process of learning conjunctives and in the attempts to achieve effective target-like implementation of them in writing. If EFL learners can have direct access to corpora (or key word in context concordances) of native speaker

academic student writing, or of published academic writing, as recommended by Tanko (2004), then their role in the learning process "becomes increasingly substantial": "whereas there are some aspects of the process that the teacher cannot hand over to the students, the students can discover the majority of the characteristics of adverbial connectors for themselves" (Tanko, 2004: 179). They can systematically collect information about these devices such as "their meaning and the cognitive relation they express, their grammatical function, their genre sensitivity, the linguistic units they span, and the various forms the same adverbial connector can have" (ibid). However, if students do not have such access to corpora, which is more likely the case in our Syrian context, their role is to be emphasized basically in their practice of reading good English texts in general, with focusing on conjunctives in them. Although the teacher can usefully present in class model texts and can highlight for students the conjunctives used in these texts while they are reading them, in the long run, improving the use of conjunctives (and other cohesive devices) in writing "relies on students' independent reading, since the time available for teacher-guided reading activity is inevitably limited" (Ting, 2003: 7). Yet, the problem remains that not all students "scrutinize" (borrowing Ting's term) these devices while reading so that they obtain the knowledge and awareness of how they should be used in English writing. With regard to this, Ting's (ibid) pedagogical implication is that:

> The neglect of essential text-forming elements – cohesive devices – in reading practice more or less contributes to students' difficulty in using cohesive devices in writing. Therefore it is necessary to guide students to form the habit of reading texts as a whole rather than focusing on the meaning of individual sentences, because only by scrutinizing properly used cohesive devices in English texts can students learn and internalize the way in which cohesive devices should be used in English writing.

10.3. Insights from some approaches to teaching grammar in writing and suggestions for teaching

Achieving the pedagogical goal of enriching and enhancing student academic writing in any EFL/ESL context requires in the first place that teachers have a

sense and understanding of their students' needs in all aspects of writing. In terms of the grammar aspect of writing in particular, and away from the debate over the effectiveness of teaching it in improving students' writing, Byrd and Reid (1998) note how students' needs must dictate the decisions teachers make regarding grammar instruction (cited in Sjolie, 2006: 35). Sjolie (2006: 39) in his own argument asserts this student needs dependency of grammar instruction and elaborates that "in academic situations, ESL/ELL students *must* write as proficiently as their peers. That reality dictates student need. As student need establishes high expectation, the teaching must rise to fulfill the need. That is the simple truth of the situation" (italics in original text). In light of this, the lack of grammar teaching could be detrimental to students in need of advanced writing skills, and indeed it has proven so as stressed by Scarcella (1996; cited in Sjolie, 2006: 36). Although Sjolie's argument focuses on ESL/ELL students who might be distinct from EFL students in several respects, it is still of relevance to us as it could be extended to academic students in all contexts (EFL or ESL/ELL contexts) where they are normally expected to write competent academic prose. Grammar after all, as Sjolie concludes, is not simply rules or forms; rather, it "aids writers in crafting their sentences. In this, it is the tool of the artist" (p. 39). With much a similar viewpoint, Noden in *Image grammar* (1999; cited in Weaver, Bush, Anderson, and Bills, 2006: 81) emphasizes the important role of grammar as "a means of helping students develop their text much in the same way that painters are able to use various brushstrokes to craft their art – or the ways that any artist or craftsman uses specialized skills to develop the craft".

In their article "Grammar intertwined throughout the writing process: An "inch wide and a mile deep"", Weaver *et al* (2006) enhance the notion of grammar as a means of enriching one's writing, provided it is taught both selectively and effectively, and integrated into the writing process. Their advice for teachers is to "decide what aspects of grammar are really worth teaching and then teach them well – throughout the production of one piece of writing, and over weeks, as needed" (p. 87). The following extract from their abstract illustrates their main argument:

> Rather than trying to "cover" all grammatical skills, something traditionally done in many classrooms, and with limited results, teachers can more successfully teach less grammar with better results by focusing on key grammatical options and skills in the context of actual writing, throughout the writing process and over time. (Weaver *et al*, 2006: 77)

As Weaver *et al* remark, the specific grammatical skills, topics, or conventions a teacher may choose to teach often come either from the "teacher's own knowledge of universal (or close to universal) problems teachers want to focus on", or from what he/she "observes as a "high needs" area: usually something a majority (more than 80%) of the class needs at the time" (p. 91). These authors, being teachers themselves, know that they have to focus on what is important first. For this, they suggest to start with looking at the kinds of errors students make. In the current study, an initial procedure like this was carried out when grammar errors in the Syrian corpus were investigated prior to the main analyses of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts in the corpus (chapter six). Enlightened with the results of that initial investigation, together with the results of the two former exploratory studies presented in chapter two, we were able to identify students' most salient problems or frequent errors in grammar, and were able to determine (on the basis of other considerations alongside) what grammar points were worth going deep into in research, and in teaching as well – advocating the notion of "teaching fewer (grammar) concepts but teaching them more effectively"; that is, to teach "an inch wide and a mile deep" (Weaver *et al*, 2006: 87).

For an effective teaching of "complex" areas in English grammar, such as relative clause structures and conjunctive adjuncts, "explicit" instruction is commonly recommended – distinguished as more facilitative for learning than implicit instruction (e.g. Gass, Svetics & Lemelin, 2003; Hulstijn & de Graaf, 1994; both cited in Svalberg, 2007: 290; Andrews, 2007). As we saw in section 10.2.1 in this chapter, Andrews (2007) introduces the relative clause in particular as one of the complex structures in English grammar, and claims, on the basis of the findings of her study, that students may benefit more from the intervention of "explicit" explanation of its rules, for "explicit instruction may accelerate the process" of their learning (p. 7). The system of conjunctive adjuncts too is

described as complex (Wei-yu, 2006), and "several researchers (Basturkmen, 2002; Bolton *et al*, 2003; Crewe, 1990; Granger and Tyson, 1996; Zamel, 1983) claim that students must be explicitly informed of the semantic, stylistic and syntactic properties of each conjunctive word" (Tseng and Liou, 2006: 271). Tanko (2004: 179) furthermore encourages teachers to "make explicit, relevant and therefore effective comments based on particular instances taken from student texts concerning the question of when to use and when not to use adverbial connectors". Tseng and Liou (2006) are one of the proponents of the necessity of teaching these devices to non-English writers in order to achieve effective written communication. They advocate a "form-focused instruction that clearly illustrates form-function mapping through authentic examples" (p. 271; 281) and relate this approach to teaching to achieving coherence in writing:

> To center on the teaching of coherence in writing, explicit form-focused instruction promises to arouse learners' awareness of coherence-creating devices, including cohesive connectors (Cheng and Steffensen, 1996; Lee, 2002) because it helps learners notice the features in the input and has the opportunity to become part of their acquired knowledge. … Especially for style and register, teachers must play the role of informants to alert students to their non-native usage in order to attain coherence in writing. (Tseng and Liou, 2006: 273)

At this point, an emphasis over providing students with written model texts (e.g. native English-speaking students' texts or/and published texts) to study and compare with their own already composed texts reinforces itself, as it makes it easier for them to focus on form (relative clauses or conjunctive adjuncts), notice and record features of form use which might otherwise be overlooked, and discover gaps in their knowledge of form use, which work can then begin on trying to fill (Cullen, 2008). What we by emphasizing such an approach of focus on form throughout text comparison tend to advocate is a "task-based" pedagogy principle, in that the focus on form activity comes after students being indulged in a freer activity of text writing in which they "use whatever language resources they can muster: the teaching progression is thus from fluency to accuracy rather than vice versa" (Cullen, 2008: 228). At the same time, what we are likely to enhance is a process approach to teaching grammar rather than a product-oriented approach, as selecting and presenting specific grammatical items for students to attend to and use is implied to be done not in advance, prior to

engaging them in a writing task, but rather in the context of doing the task, or maybe subsequently, according to the grammar problems and communication needs arising or discovered (Cullen, 2008; Weaver *et al*, 2006), accompanied with text-modeling for form contextual use comparison.

As a matter of fact, although "as a general policy a balanced combination of the two approaches is likely to be the most effective teaching strategy to adopt" (Cullen, 2008: 228; see also Badger and White, 2000), a process-oriented approach to teaching grammar is preferable to a product-oriented one for students at more advanced stages of English language learning, such as university students (especially those majoring in English language and literature like the ones targeted in this research). Students like these may need not be controlled by pre-selected grammar forms or structures instructed to them before they being their writing – as a product approach might suggest – because they most probably have already learned them, among others, in the grammar (or language) classes of their university course and/or during earlier stages of school education, and restored them in their repertoire of language sources. From our findings and observations, we realize that what makes the Syrian EFL students in the academic context identified in this research still composing English texts of low grammatical accuracy and/or adequacy, and consequently of low overall quality, is not their lack of knowledge of grammar forms, structures, or rules; but rather, it is their lack of sufficient proficiency in manipulating them in writing and ignorance of certain (not all) aspects of their contextual use – whether syntactic or semantic (e.g. 'reduction' and 'pronoun retention' aspects of relativization). Sjolie (2006: 36) quotes two writing scholars: Leki (1992) and Greaney (1997), whose arguments confirm ours:

> Ilona Leki argues that "after ten years of studying English in classrooms abroad, ESL students still may have trouble writing effectively in English and … students who can recite grammar rules, as many ESL students do quite well, are not always able to use those rules in producing language" (23). Likewise, George L. Greaney asserts that students who for years have studied English grammar and syntax may lack "passive knowledge of such structures as relative clauses [and may] not automatically generate such structures in their writing" (par. 1). (Sjolie, 2006: 36)

Students' inability to use and manipulate certain grammar aspects in their writing despite the conscious knowledge they might possess of them, we suppose, could be the result of teaching grammar in "out-of-context" lessons as "isolated events" from the writing process, which Weaver *et al* (2006) warn against, noting that it leads students to think of grammar as a skill disconnected from their writing process when they are supposed to see it as meaningful and inherent to their writing (p. 78). To help solving the problem, we suggest, echoing Weaver *et al*'s own suggestion as advocators of the process approach to teaching grammar, that "during the writing process is an excellent time to introduce some grammatical skills that can then be practiced in authentic writing, whether the writing assignment be only a paragraph or multiple pages in length" (p. 79). For them, a good teacher is one who seizes opportunities that arise from students' own writing to teach the use of effective language structures, which help them enrich their writing, and one who brings grammatical practice as part of the natural process of writing rather than as isolated activities. As conceived by them, there are many spontaneous opportunities, within the "ebb and flow" of the writing process, "for knowledgeable and prepared teachers to intervene" and teach grammar features (p. 100); and particularly at the stages of revising and editing, still more opportunities arise for teaching how to revise and edit the features in question.

Editing is a crucial stage for enhancing and reinforcing different writing skills, among which are grammatical skills; and "focused editing experiences (Spandel, 2005) are the most powerful" (Weaver *et al*, 2006: 97); that is, when for example only one or two items are picked to edit for. Applying Weaver *et al*'s illustrative instruction (which targets compound sentences and comma splices) in this regard to the teaching of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts to the Syrian student writers at the editing stage, students can be asked after doing a freewrite to do a quick reread of it and look only for relative clauses or conjunctive adjuncts. If they find they do not have any, then the teacher can ask them to add one or some. "Besides correcting errors they find in their writing, students should also highlight when a concept was used correctly. … Afterward, [the teacher and students] can share the successes, errors, and stumbling blocks, and problem-solve together" (Weaver *et al*, 2006: 97-98). After all, it is important to help

students build their ability of self-editing; i.e. to become independent editors of their own writing (Wingfield, 1975; Hendrickson, 1978; Leki, 1992; Ferris, 1999; Weaver *et al*, 2006), with some guidance and instruction of course, especially where large numbers of students exist in the writing class with which the teacher's limited time does not allow for individual conferences – as it is indeed the case in the EFL context of this research. Generally speaking, independence from teachers is something that is worth helping students seek for. Weaver *et al* mention that one of their most important means of attaining this independence is "to help students learn to diagnose, understand and independently revise their own convention and style errors" (p. 93).

We consider the two points of interest in this research; that is, relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts, as two important grammatical options for enhancing the organization, elaboration, and flow of ideas; a matter in the writing craft which student writers need not only attend to while composing, but also revise and edit for at later steps. In short, teaching such structures as relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts offers students effective tools for both structuring and editing their texts. Teaching them according to the process approach entails that this teaching can be integrated at all stages of the writing process. What remains to be pointed at is the activities and techniques that could be adopted in their teaching to academic students in the context of writing. In the following section, we introduce and discuss one of these techniques, namely 'sentence-combining practice'.

10.3.1. Sentence-combining practice as an instructional method

Relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts can be instructed through model presentation and explicit (formal grammar) teaching – as it has already been highlighted and discussed in previous passages – and also through mechanical activities known as 'sentence-combining'; all are instructional strategies that are, we assume, better adopted simultaneously and complimentarily rather than alternatively. In this section, we focus more on the last strategy of sentence-combining.

"Sentence-combining practice" was originally developed in the 1960s as a syntactic approach to teaching writing providing systematic instruction in sentence construction skills (Cooper, Morain, and Klivoda, 1980; Andrews *et al*, 2006; Saddler and Preschern, 2007). The core of its exercises was making students practice "sentence-embedding transformations" by involving them in a process of combining groups of kernel statements into single sentences that are more complex structurally than those students would normally be expected to write. In Andrews *et al* (2006: 42 & 48), it is defined as "a range of practical [teaching] techniques for moving from existing sentences and elements of sentences to compound and complex sentences". "It can also cover sentence-embedding and other techniques for expanding and complicating the structure of sentences". Additionally, it is noted that "the embedding and sentence-combining processes can work in reverse, by simplifying complex, ill-expressed or ill-structured sentences" (other more or less similar definitions are presented by Saddler and Preschern (2007: 7) and by Chin (2005: par. 12; cited in Sjolie, 2006: 37)). Andrews *et al* distinguish these techniques from traditional formal grammar teaching as being "practical", while the latter is "abstracted from practice and usage, formulated into rules, and then 'applied'" (p. 48). Despite this, they try to make it clear that teachers of writing may need to know about formal grammar, alongside sentence-combining, so that they "help their pupils to make appropriate choices in the act of composing" (ibid).

At the time it was developed, sentence-combining was widely adopted by several researchers in L1 and L2 contexts (e.g. Mellon, 1967; Hunt and O'Donnell, 1970; O'Hare, 1973; Klassen, 1976; Combs, 1976, 1977; Kameen, 1978; Diaker *et al*, 1979), and its positive effects were documented "with writers from elementary age (Gale, 1968) through college (Smith & Combs, 1980)" (Saddler and Preschern, 2007: 7). It was perceived usefully applicable to second and foreign language learners (as much as to native speaker learners), helping them consciously develop an awareness of syntactic possibilities, and consequently, accelerating growth towards syntactic maturity in their writing (Cooper *et al*, 1980). Zamel (1980: 84) asserted that "Sentence-combining practice surely has a place in the ESL writing classroom, for it is one of the best ways to help students learn about the grammar of the sentence" – though at the same time she raised

doubts about its appropriateness as a total course of instruction for non-native speaker students in particular. More significantly even, it was commonly perceived a cause of overall writing quality improvement (Sjolie, 2006). In the findings of one study (Combs, 1977), for instance, "sentence-combining practice seemed to affect more than syntactic gains, indeed, gains that were incorporated in what teacher-raters consider improved quality of writing" (p. 321; cited in Andrews *et al*, 2006: 50). However, this last perception was subject to criticism (Marzano, 1976; Zamel, 1980; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 44), and results like those of Combs were called to be interpreted with caution (Andrews *et al*, 2006).

Most importantly, sentence-combining, as a recent study by Saddler and Graham (2005) suggests, "is not a practice or a topic for research confined to the 1960s to 1980s" (Andrews *et al*, 2006: 49). The researchers in that study examined the effectiveness of sentence-combining instruction, including peer-assisted practice, with more and less skilled young writers "for improving a basic foundational writing skill, sentence construction" (p. 43). Their assumption was that facility in generating sentences should make available more cognitive resources for other aspects of composition. Students in the study (44 fourth-grade students from schools in the United States) received either sentences-combining instruction or grammar instruction. The findings showed that: a. "sentence-combining treatment can improve the sentence construction skills of more and less skilled young writers" (p. 53); b. "such instruction can promote young students' use of sentence-combing skills as they revise" (p. 53); in other words, it can improve revising ability; c. sentence-combining has a positive impact on writing quality (qualitatively better stories were created) – though its impact was seen to be stronger in the development of syntactic maturity than in the improvement in writing quality; d. students who received sentence-combining instruction became more adept at combining simpler sentences together to create more complex sentences than students who received grammar instruction. These findings, as Saddler and Graham concluded, "replicate and extend previous research" (p. 53) (these findings are also cited in Andrews *et al*, 2006: 49, and in Saddler and Preschern, 2007: 7).

In addition to Saddler and Graham's study, the effectiveness of sentence-combining has been emphasized in a number of other recent sources. For example, Sjolie (2006), in his article 'Phrase and Clause Grammar: Tactics for the ESL/ELL Writing Classroom', shows "how sentence-combining activities can lead to comprehension of different types of phrases and clauses as well as improved student writing" (p. 35). Also, in two papers by Saddler (2005: 468) and Saddler and Preschern (2007: 7), it is claimed that "sentence-combining can provide systematic instruction in sentence construction skills within an overall framework of the writing workshop". More precisely, Saddler and Preschern (2007: 7) suggest that it can be easily taught alongside the writing process approach and its exercises "can be introduced and practiced at any time, although writers may most effectively apply it during the revising stages". They believe that "fostering revising skills" is one of the ways in which sentence-combining practice participates to improve writing. Moreover, Weaver *et al* (2006) report that this approach "has repeatedly been found effective for enriching writing (Andrews, Torgerson, Beverton, Freeman, Locke, Low, Robinson & Zhu, 2004)" (p. 77-78), and like Saddler (2005) and Saddler and Preschern (2007), they advocate teaching its strategies in conjunction with writing; that is, guiding students in combining sentences within their own writing. For them, it is a "rhetorical skill" which students should be able to connect with their own acts of writing (p. 79).

Apparently, in all the above sources, both old and recent ones, sentence-combining has been introduced as 'sentence-level instruction', which may entail its being appropriate for teaching relative clause structures but not conjunctive adjuncts as cohesive devices working normally beyond sentence boundaries. Nevertheless, we do conceive that it can still be designed in a way that supplies students the opportunity to work at gaining control of the logical relationships indicated by conjunctive adjuncts as much as it can be designed to supply them the opportunity to work at gaining control of syntactic skills, such as relative clause structuring. In fact, Witte and Faigley (1981: 201) have drawn our attention to this applicability of sentence-combining to conjunctive adjunct teaching when they noted under their "implications for the teaching of composition" that "many exercises not explicitly designed to teach cohesion do

in fact demand that students form cohesive ties. Open sentence-combining exercises, for example, offer as much practice in forming cohesive ties as they do in manipulating syntactic structures, a fact which may explain the success of certain sentence-combining experiments". The other source which has made us aware of this applicability is Cullen's (2008: 225) "synthesis task" (adapted from an idea in Graver 1986), as described in the extract below (see the figure Cullen provides to exemplify this task in Appendix F). The second sentence in the extract helps clarify the relation of this task to sentence-combining tasks and justify our perception of sentence-combining as being not only a sentence-level task for manipulating the use of only syntactic constructions like relative clauses, but also a text-level one which can manipulate the use of cohesive devices like conjunctive adjuncts as well.

> Synthesis tasks (Graver 1986) … take the form of exercises which start with a short text, consisting of a string of short, non-complex sentences which the learners are required to combine in some way so as to reduce the number of sentences and create a more natural piece of text. The technique is a traditional sentence combination task done at *text* rather than sentence level, and requires the use of various grammatical devices needed for the construction of complex sentences, such as relative clauses, purpose clauses and subordination, as well as *cohesive devices such as linking words*.
> (Cullen, 2008: 225) (Emphases added)

Generally speaking, creating sentence-combining exercises requires in the first place that the particular skills, or particular aspects of a skill (e.g. relative clause reduction, the contextual function and appropriate use of the conjunctive '*on the contrary*'), students need to acquire are determined. To attain this, a sample of students' writing must be analyzed as a first step (Saddler and Preschern, 2007) – in a way similar to the one attempted in this research. Aiming at improving linguistic skills in the English literary writing of Syrian university students (or EFL academic students in general), sentence-combining exercises, including ones like the synthesis task suggested by Cullen above, can be created from original literary texts from the students' own literature course books; or even more helpful, from passages on literature topics written by more professional writers, who could be the teacher him/herself, skillful EFL academic students (e.g. postgraduate students), native English-speaking students, or specialized authors. The passages or texts for example can be reduced into shorter non-

cohesive ones with kernel or non-complex sentences to be rewritten by students employing the taught skills with attaining maturity of expression – which "involves much more than grammatical correctness" (Tyndall, 1991: 201). Students' versions could be then read and discussed for meaning and rhetorical effect in the first place, because "the overall goal of writing is *meaning*, not just *grammar*" (Saddler and Preschern, 2007: 10, emphasis in original text).

In conclusion, sentence-combining practice is a helpful tool in the teaching of grammar in writing. Experimental research has sometimes shown it to be more effective than a number of other instructional strategies such as free writing and model presentation (Hillocks, 1986; cited in Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 45-46) and also direct grammar instruction (Andrews *et al*, 2006; Saddler and Graham, 2005). However, we tend to go with the argument that alone, sentence-combining does not provide all the instruction necessary; and we tend to doubt, as Combs (1976; cited in Zamel, 1980: 82) did, that students can do without grammar instruction at all and achieve the prospective success, that is, the development of their writing's syntactic maturity, textual cohesion, and quality. Echoing Saddler and Preschern's (2007: 10) conclusion in our own, "although sentence-combining exercises have proven effective in increasing the syntactical fluency of writers (Saddler & Graham, 2005), they only represent one component within a writing program" that may include other components like ample time for writing, mini lessons to increase skills, modeling, etc.

10.4. Limitations of the research and suggestions for future research

In spite of the effort that has been put into making this research a scientific and objective one; and in spite of its significant and encouraging findings that may effectively participate in the attempts to understand the features of EFL students' writing in English, explore prominent distortions in it, and address students' learning and writing needs, some weaknesses can be identified which concern its procedures and methods of analysis and which may be overcome in future research.

Firstly, the "generalizability" of the research findings to the writing of all EFL students in the identified context is open to question for two reasons. The first one has to do with the size of each of the two studied corpora of Syrian and British students writing (30,000 words each approximately), which might not be large enough to draw firm conclusions or make generalizations. Conducting 'large-scale' empirical studies using larger samples of student writing is important to enhance generalizability (Silva, 1993), and has an advantage, particularly in contrastive analyses, of drawing attention to differences that otherwise go unnoticed (e.g. conjunctive adjunct underuse patterns) (Granger and Tyson, 1996). In their study focusing on 'Connector usage in the English essay writing of native and non-native EFL speakers of English', Granger and Tyson (1996: 18) remark that "there is a pressing need for large-scale studies in order to obtain a more accurate description of cohesion/coherence problems in EFL/ESL student writing". They point at the problem with many studies in this field being small-scale ones; nevertheless, they account for it stating that "of course, when one considers the amount of time needed to identify cohesive ties/coherence relations manually, the limitation is understandable" (p. 17). Hinkel (2005: 625) too makes this clear in her account that "tagging and hand-counting features are extremely work- and time-consuming processes that impose limitations on the amounts of text that can be analyzed by a single researcher or even a group of researchers".

The second reason for questioning the generalizability of the research findings has to do with the type and nature of the EFL student writing studied, being timed exam essays. While this type of writing is beneficial to our research in that we know it has been written by the students themselves in their own words, it no doubt has its own impacts on the linguistic features of the produced texts. Thus, we must be careful in drawing conclusions and we must limit our generalizations to this type of writing (Grant and Ginther, 2000: 141). As put by Grant and Ginther, in whose study L2 students too wrote timed essays, "we should take care in extending any of our claims to writing situations in which there is ample time for attending to the writing process" (ibid). Giving these two reasons, this first limitation of the research concerning its generalizability could be addressed in

future research by investigating student writing corpora of larger size, as well as, of writing types other than exam/timed writing.

The discussion raised right in the previous passage about timed writing in fact leads to the second limitation of the current research, which relates to the "comparability" of the two non-native and native speaker student corpora analyzed and compared. We know that in contrastive analysis studies of any kind it is essential that the data under investigation be comparable if to draw any reliable conclusions (Granger and Tyson, 1996). Although most variables of the two sets of data were controlled in a way to achieve a high degree of comparability between them as much as possible (see 9.1), the circumstances in which the texts of each data set were written were different: the Syrian students' texts were produced under the conditions of exam tension and time limit, while the British students' texts were composed freely with no time limit. This difference can affect, in part, the reliability of the comparative analysis conducted assuming that the Syrian writers might have performed better (or at least differently), and might have avoided or revised many of the slips or inaccuracies they committed, had they been placed in an ordinary free situation for writing and given sufficient time to attend to the writing process and its requirements in all stages. Therefore, for future comparative studies between Syrian and British academic students' English writing, we suggest including untimed well-attended to essays for Syrian students at different proficiency levels, undergraduate and postgraduate.

Thirdly, this research in its analyses of the two linguistic features of relative clauses and conjunctive adjuncts in student writing did not make use of any computerized tagging programs, which could have saved a great deal of time, given reliable quantitative results concerning the features' occurrence frequencies, and revealed detailed differences among the writer groups in each corpus and between the native and non-native speaker writers (Grant and Ginther, 2000). With the recognition of the limitations and complexities associated with computer analysis of L2 writing, researchers (e.g. Grant and Ginther, 2000; Hinkel, 2005) testify to its significant contribution to our understanding of L2 texts. Hinkel (2005: 623) reports that "the innovations

brought about by the advances in computerized L2 text analyses permit insights into the characteristics of L2 text that cannot be attained by means of manual studies (Granger, 2002; Granger & Tayson, 1998)", for example, overuse and underuse of particular lexis or grammar constructions, and L1 to L2 transfer of specific lexical and syntactic patterns. However, as Hinkel later demonstrates, "in light of the fact that reliable automatic analyses of L2 text still lag behind those of published or transcribed L1 English language corpora[2], most L2 text studies published to date have relied on manual analyses of discourse, syntactic, lexicalized, and rhetorical features" (p. 624-25).

After all, given that computer-tagged analysis is particularly functional for examining "large numbers of texts for large numbers of features" (Grant and Ginther, 2000: 143), our choice of hand tagging and counting in our analyses of the relatively small-scale text samples, and of only two features in grammar, may be justifiable and thought of as more appropriate. Moreover, while computer analysis "appears to hold promise for future work", it might be of no help at all at points of working with L2 writing samples of low proficiency levels, where "it sometimes becomes difficult to understand what the writers are trying to say" (ibid), as much as was the case in many of the undergraduate Syrian students' texts involved in the research. It is therefore most likely that, echoing Grant and Ginther statement, "essays at these levels are not served well by automatic analysis systems and are more appropriately analyzed by hand, on a case-by-case basis" (ibid). Generally speaking, it is the nature of the L2 texts themselves that dictates "human interaction" with these texts if to gain a complete picture of their characteristics (Grant and Ginther, 2000).

[2] In Grant and Ginther's (2000) review of computer programs used in certain studies, it is reported that one of the major limitations of these programs is that "they have been specifically designed according to standards of *native speaker* language use and are being utilized for *nonnative speaker* text analysis. A number of years ago, Bley-Vroman (1983) pointed out the problem of using L1 standards to evaluate the language of L2 users rather than trying to understand the interlanguage of the L2 users at various stages of their development" (p. 141).

10.5. Conclusion and future research

In conclusion, with all the above limitations in mind, the analysis of certain language features use in a corpus of specific EFL students' writing in the way attempted in this research is expected to have its valuable contribution to the understanding of these EFL students' L2 texts. It is important that the findings of analyses as such have their pedagogical impact and be applied directly to writing teaching rather than remaining at the level of implications. Designing corpus-informed materials that address the specific problems EFL students encounter in their L2 writing, showing in context the types of errors they make, as well as the items they tend to underuse or overuse, could fulfill a great deal of what EFL students need to help them improve their writing skills (Gilquin *et al*, 2007).

Future research into L2 writing in the Syrian context – or maybe in other EFL contexts where similar teaching deficiencies and learning needs might be recognized – can build on the current research findings and pedagogical implications in several ways. One significant project might be to attempt an implementation of some of the suggestions given in this chapter for the teaching of relative clauses and/or conjunctive adjuncts in L2 writing classes. Then, an evaluation of this implementation and how successful it is can be conducted. Another future project might be to look at some of the other grammar features which this research has not examined, such as other cohesive ties or other subordinate clauses, contributing by this further to the understanding of the nature of grammar implementation in L2 writing, and to the fulfillment of students' needs in this implementation.

The very suggestion of finding a place for grammar component in composition courses is aimed to give students further opportunities to refine the accuracy of their production. In this research context, grammar, as pointed out at the very beginning (chapter 1), does have a central place in composition classes; yet, without attaining noticeable refinement in students' writing accuracy. As implied in this chapter, this is probably due to its being displaced from the writing process itself, and to its being taught for the sake of introducing rules and out-of-

context forms – without practicing them in real writing tasks. At the end, we borrow Byrd's statement (2005: 559): "the grammar isn't the purpose for the lesson but is required for the students to successfully carry out their academic task".

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Appendices

Appendix A

Survey:
Evaluation of Student Writing

<u>Please answer these pages in order (don't look at the back pages before you have finished pages 1-7).</u>

I am a research student in The Centre for Applied Linguistics at The University of Warwick preparing for the preliminary stages of my doctoral thesis. I would be very grateful if you complete this survey for me.

Here are six essays written by different students in The English Language and Literature Department at a top University in Syria. As an English or English writing teacher, you may kindly help by reading these essays and answering the questions attached. Your answers could effectively serve in clarifying certain points regarding the considerations that L2 teachers usually have in mind while marking students' writing and evaluating their language proficiency.

First, please answer this question:

1. **Have you ever taught writing? If yes, for how many years? And has it been in school or university?**

   ………………………………………………………………………………………

   ………………………………………………………………………………………

Now please read these written texts while taking the following two questions into consideration as you are required to answer them after you finish reading each text.

2. **If you are asked to evaluate the overall quality of each text, what score out of 20 would you give it?**

3. **Give reason(s) for your evaluation of each text alone.**

Please feel free to write on the texts as you do when marking (e.g. circling weaknesses and ticking strengths).

Text 1

Television

1 There are a lot of people believe that watching TV is waste of time, but there are
2 many different ideas proved that watching TV is not a waste of time because there
3 are a lot of useful programs showing on TV like the science and education ones. So it
4 is very useful when it shows a rich programs in so far as it is dangerous when it
5 shows a fatile programs and when it use as a machine to waste a time, so we can say
6 that the TV is tow edges weapon.

7 On the one hand, there are many affirmative point make TV useful, that the TV gives
8 our children a good answers for their questions, and helps them to take the good
9 method in life, and learns them our habits by giving them a real examples from our
10 life and the best way to process their examples and helps them a lot in learn their
11 lessons that the children preffer to learn their lessons by the TV more than the
12 lessons which given to them in the school, because by studying on the TV the student
13 is learned in a simply and fun way. Whereas in school teached them in a tradition
14 way and monotonous way. But TV is not useful for student only, but the other can
15 advantage from it too by knowing what is happened in the world by watching the
16 news and the inventions which the scientist provided to people.

17 On the other hand, there are a lot of fatile programs is shown on TV, and a lot of
18 them have a dangerous effect on our generation, especially on the students, and the
19 most dangerous one is the satelite channel, that there are many channels show
20 unmoral programs, and programs aim to destruct our habits and the moral side of the
21 Arabic human until they control his mind and slave him.

- Score ……………...
- Reason(s) ……………………………………………………………………………
  ....…………………………………………………………………………
  ……………………………………………………………………………

Text 2

The advantages and disadvantages of T.V.

1 It is clear nowadays that programs of T.V expanded, and they become more
2 comprehensive and various. Therefore, their effects on each generation become
3 larger and more effective. These effects generally are classified into positive and
4 negative. By the way, the positive effects are equal to the negatives. Sometimes, one
5 of them might be larger that it may prevail on the other. So, while the advantages of
6 T.V are related to the positive sides, the disadvantages are related to the negatives.

7 According to the advantages, they are really large and useful. There are many
8 educational programs which include many useful lessons. By the way you may inrich
9 your mind with wide knowledge that reflects on your normal and educational life.
10 For instance, Wild Life is an important program. On the other hand, the
11 entertainment programs just as musical and song programs help to calm oneself at
12 leisure time. For example, language of Arts is a main example for entertainment
13 programs.

14 Since some programs are not worthy to be watched, people recognized some
15 disadvantages of TV. In this respect, the immoral channels courrupt human conduct.
16 For example, the sexual films learn an immoral things. Similarly, there are terrible
17 programs that affect the psychology of man negatively. For instance, horror films
18 cause many psychological illnesses.

19 In conclusion, I think that T.V is not responsible for man's choice of advantages and
20 disadvantages, but you are the main cause of this problem. According to your choice
21 you will be the winner or the loser. So, I think that T.V is an enough source for your
22 knowledge if only you know how to think of it.

- Score ………………..
- Reason(s) …………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………

Text 3

Improving your English language

1 English is the most important, there are many ways by which in fact you can improve
2 your English language, by reading, writing, listening and above of all attend the
3 lectures at the university. First way: you must read English as much as you can,
4 reading is very important, you have your books, you can read for example: a short
5 story, children's stories in English language, you know how the ideas are expressed
6 in terms of word and sentences, you know the structure of English sentences, this is
7 something we must used to do because we were student at the preparatory school, we
8 must used to read short stories in the summer, to read news paper, magazines. When
9 you find a word which you don't understand, you use to look up in the dictionary, try
10 to depend as much as you can on the dictionary, the dictionary is very big teacher,
11 and you learn a lot from it therefore reading is very important.

12 Another way to improve you English language, you are required to write English
13 correctly in composition, Drama, Poetry, and in all the subjects you are going to
14 study, you are required to write English correctly, correct English language, if you
15 cann't, you will not pass and you will not succeed. When you write something in
16 English you will need someone who can tell you what is right and what is wrong in
17 your composition, essay, you start with your home, your father, your mother, sister,
18 brother or any one of your relatives who knows English very well, or you can show
19 what you write in English to your seminar paper teachers, and teachers have already
20 tell that their main task is to ask student to write English, and to correct any mistake
21 which the students might make in their seminar paper, so that student will be able to
22 know various things, you need someone to tell you what is right and what is wrong
23 in your writing, so writing is a very important thing in improving you English
24 language.

25 The third way to improve your English language is attend your lectures, you mustn't
26 miss any lecture in any subject because English language isn't easy.

27 Finally; you must make a lot of efforts to improve you English language by reading,
28 writing, listening and attend your lectures in the university.

- Score ………………..
- Reason(s) ……………………………………………………………………………
  ……………………………………………………………………………
  ……………………………………………………………………………

Text 4

How to improve your English language

1 English language is very important in our society. Every person have to learn it. It is
2 spoken by a lot of people. It is very important to learn it after your home language.
3 There are many ways to improve English language. Speaking with the forigen
4 persons. Read the sentences in the right ways. Try to learn the grammer of language.

5 Speaking with the forigen persons are very important to improve your language. You
6 can talk with them about the culture subjects. You can talk with them about their
7 lives in their society. So, if I don not speak with them I will not learn anything.

8 You have to read the sentences in the right ways. You may lesson the British News.
9 You must read and write literary books. You can read magazine in your English
10 language

11 Try to learn the grammar of language and practic it. You have to know the capital
12 letter and small letter. You must write composition subjects and give it to your
13 teacher. Farthermore, you have to translate your texts from one language to another.

14 Finally, you have to practice your English language because it is very easy to forget
15 it. So, Read the sentences and learn the grammer of language can help you to
16 improve your English language.

- Score ………………
- Reason(s) ………………………………………………………………………………
  ………………………………………………………………………………
  ………………………………………………………………………………

Text 5

Equality between men and women

1 Ought women to have the same rights as men? A hundred years ago, the answer in
2 every country in the world would have been, ‘No’. If you had asked ‘why not’? You
3 have been told that women were weaker and less clever than men, and had worse
4 characters. Even now there are many countries where women are still treated almost
5 like servants, or even slaves.

6 It is certainly true that the average women has weaker muscles than the average man.
7 Thousands of years ago, when men lived in caves and hunted animals for food,
8 strength of body was the most important thing; but now brains are more important.
9 Even strength of body is still needed for a few kinds of work but the new century
10 doesn’t think that muscles are of very great importance.

11 But what about women’s brains? of course, in countries where girls are not given so
12 good an education as boys they know less. But in countries where there is the same
13 education for both, it has been clearly shown that there is no difference at all between
14 the brain of the average woman and that of the average man. There have been women
15 judges in Turkey, women ambassadors in America, women ministers in Syria and
16 women university professors in many countries.

17 Women do one thing that men can not; they can produce children. Because they do
18 this, and not men, they usually love their children more and are better able to look
19 after them since they are more patient and understanding with small children.

20 At last women were not weaker and less clever than men and even they can produce
21 children where men can not.

Score …………………

Reason(s) ……………………………………………………………………………......

……………………………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………………..

Text 6

Equality between woman and man

1 Feminism is one of the issues that draws much attention in the field of modern writers.
2 Feminists state that a woman is equal to a man. This equality is, they say,
3 unquestionable since a woman helps in building and developping her country. Such
4 equality as work and joining the army is subject to dispute. Somepeople consider a
5 woman equal to a man. However, I believe that a woman is not, if one consider the
6 above subjects.

7 It is true that a woman is a member of society and that she has the right to work as a
8 man does. Yet, the man has an advantage over her. She cannot perform some kinds of
9 work such as mechanic; she had better not dip her hands into gasoline in order to
10 clean some parts of an engine nor is she able to touch burnt oil, but the man can do
11 all these things. Physically speaking, It is crucial that a woman works from dawn to
12 dusk as a carpenter does.

13 An army is established for war. Since war leads to fighting and killing, (or needs to
14 fight and kill) it needs someone who has a hard heart and has no mercy in the battle
15 field. A woman is tender-hearted. So, a woman cannot join an army. She cannot bear
16 seeing blood-shed. Besides, the moans of the wounded enemy soldiers causes her to
17 show mercy, which leads to losses in combat. Furthermore, soldiers may lose a part
18 of their bodies, unlike women neither of whom would rather have her nail broken;
19 what if she had her arm or leg dislocated.

20 In brief, a woman is more sympathitic and hesitant than a man. She is, physically
21 speaking, weaker and cannot bear hardship. Consequently, she is not equal to the
22 man in all scopes of life.

Score …………………

Reason(s) ………………………………………………………………………………......

………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………...

Now, please answer the following questions:

4. Do you think that the different grammatical mistakes/errors made by these students have influenced your evaluation of the overall quality of their texts? If yes, to what extent have these different grammatical mistakes (syntactic or morphological) influenced your evaluation in comparison to other deficiencies in the texts (e.g. lexical, semantic, spelling, or coherence and organization deficiencies)?

....

....

....

5. Do you think that there are certain grammatical structures or features that any of the students have missed or avoided in specific occasions when they should have used them? If yes, give examples.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………….......

……………………………………………………………………………………………

6. In your own way, try to rank the various grammatical mistakes you have come across in the texts starting from the most serious in affecting the overall quality of these texts.
(Note: you may consider your answer to questions 3 and 4 in your ranking).

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

7. If possible, give any reasons for or comments on the order of the grammatical mistakes you have just suggested in the previous question.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you very much for your help in piloting this survey.

- **How long did you spend on it?**

  ……………………………………………………………………………………

- **Do you have any suggestions how I could improve it?**

  ……………………………………………………………………………………
  ……………………………………………………………………………………
  ……………………………………………………………………………………
  ……………………………………………………………………………………
  ……………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix B

Analysis of grammar errors in the survey texts

Table 2.6.B: Text 2 grammar error analysis

Linguistic category	Errors in the text
Morphological errors	
Derivational morphology *Parts of speech misuse*	L16 'sexual films' → 'sex films'
Section total	**1**
Syntactic errors	
Noun phrase ***Determiners*** *Addition of indefinite article* *Addition of definite article*	L16 'an immoral things' → 'immoral things' L10-11 'the entertainment programs' →'entertainment programs' L15 'the immoral channels' → 'immoral channels' L16 'the sexual films' → 'sex films'
Verb phrase *Tense*	L1 'It is clear *nowadays* that programs of T.V **expanded**, and they **become** more comprehensive' → '…are expanding, and they are becoming…' L2 'their effects on each generation become larger' → '…are becoming / have become…' L14 'people recognized…' → 'people have recognized…'
Word order *Misplaced adverb*	L3 'These effects generally are classified...' → 'These effects are generally classified' L17 'programs that affect the psychology of man negatively' → 'programs that negatively affect the…' L21 'T.V is an enough source for your knowledge if **only** you know how to think of it' → '…**only** if you know…'
Broken coordination	L1 '…programs of T.V **expanded**, and they **become** more comprehensive'
Prepositions	L9 '…wide knowledge that reflects **on** your normal and educational life' → '…reflects **in**…' L12 '…is a main example **for** entertainment programs' → '…example **of**…' L21 '…source **for** your knowledge' → '…source **of** (your) knowledge'

Unnecessary constituents	L5 'it may prevail **on the other**' → 'it may prevail' L21 'T.V is an enough source for **your** knowledge' '…source of knowledge'
misformation	L11 'entertainment programs **just as**…' → '... **such as**…' L14 'some programs are not worthy to be watched' → '…are not worthy of being watched' / '…are not worth watching'
Miscellaneous	L5 'one of them might be larger that it may prevail…' → 'one of them might be so large that it may prevail…'
Cohesion *Conjunctive misselection* *Substitution*	 L4 '**By the way**, the positive effects are equal to the negatives' → ? L8 '**By the way**, you may inrich your mind…' → ? L7 '**According to** the advantages, they are really large and useful…' → ? L4 'the positive effects are equal to the negatives' → '…negative ones' (repeated in line **6** 'while the advantages of T.V are related to the positive sides, the disadvantages are related to the negatives' → '…to the negative **ones**'
Section total	**24**
Total	**25**

Table 2.6.C: Text 3 grammar error analysis

Linguistic category	Errors in the text
Morphological errors	
Nominal morphology *Adding apostrophe –s* *Omission of Plural -s*	 L5 'children's stories' → 'children stories' L6 'in terms of word and sentences' →'…words and sentences' L7 'we were student' → 'we were students' L20 'to ask student' → 'to ask students' L20 'to correct any mistake' → '…any mistakes' L21 'in their seminar paper' → '…papers' L21 'so that student…' → '…students'
Derivational morphology *Parts of speech misselection*	 L2 'attend the lectures' → 'attending the lectures' *(repeated in line **25** 'The third way to improve your English language is attend your lectures' → '…is attending your…' / '…is to attend' (also repeated in the last line **28**)
Section total	**10**

Syntactic errors	
Noun Phrase ***Determiners*** *Added(Overused) / omitted definite article*	L3 ‘at the university’ → ‘at university’ *(repeated in line **28** ‘in the university’ → ‘in university’) L3 ‘first way’ → ‘the first way’ L5 ‘the ideas’ → ‘ideas’ L7 ‘at the preparatory school’ → ‘at preparatory school’
Omission of indefinite article	L10 ‘the dictionary is very big teacher’ → ‘…is **a** very big teacher’
Verb phrase *Tense*	L9 ‘When you find a word which you don’t understand, you *use* to look up in the dictionary’ → ‘…, you (have to / should) *get used* to look up…’ L19-20 ‘teachers have already tell…’ → ‘have already told…’
Missing constituents	L7 ‘this is something we must used to do’ → ‘…we must *be / get* used to do’ *(repeated in line **8** ‘we must used to read short stories’ → ‘we must *be / get* used to read…’). L9 ‘When you find a word which you don’t understand, you use to look up in the dictionary’ → ‘…, you (have to / should) *get* used to look up…’ (see imperative below for another possible structure)
Missing modal verbs	L5 ‘you know how the ideas are expressed’ → ‘you *should / have to* know how…’ L6 ‘you know the structure of English sentences’ → ‘you *should / have to* know …’ L9 ‘When you find a word which you don’t understand, you use to look up in the dictionary’ → ‘…, you *have to / should* get used to look up…’ L17 ‘you start with your home’ → ‘you *can* start …’ (see imperative below for another possible structure).
Imperative ♦ *Unnecessary words*	L17 ‘*you* start with your home’ → ‘start with your home’
♦ *Misformed imperative*	L9 ‘When you find a word which you don’t understand, *you use to* look up in the dictionary’ → ‘…which you don’t understand, *try to get used to* looking up…’
Relative clause formation	L19 ‘…to your seminar paper teachers, and teachers have already…’ → ‘…seminar paper teachers *who* have already…’ L10 ‘try to depend as much as you can on the dictionary, the dictionary is very…’ → ‘…on the

	dictionary, *which* is very…'
Prepositions	L23 'writing is a very important thing in improving your English' → '…for improving…' L28 '*in* the university' → '*at* university'
Unnecessary words	L2 'and above **of** all' → 'and above all'
Missing constituents	L9 '…to look up in the dictionary' →'…to look **it** up in the dictionary' L20 'to write English' → 'to write **in** English'
Word order *Misplaced words*	 L1 'there are many ways by which *in fact* you can improve your English' → 'there are *in fact* many ways…'
Missing coordinators Broken coordination	L4-5 'you can read for example: a short story, children's stories in English language' → '…a short story **or** children's stories…' L8 'we must used to read short stories in the summer, to read newspaper, magazines.' → '…to read short stories in the summer, **and** to read newspaper **and** magazines'. L17 '…in your composition, essay' → '…composition or essay' L2 'by reading, writing, listening and above of all attend the lectures' → '….attending the lectures' *(repeated in line **28** 'by reading, writing, listening and attend your lectures)
Cohesion *Sentence fragments / incomplete sentences* *Comma splices* *Run-on sentence*	 L12 'Another way to improve your English language, you are required to write…' → 'Another way to improve your English is to write…' L1-2 'there are many ways by which in fact you can improve your English language, by reading, writing, listening…' → ? *(This extract provides only one example of the 17 cases of comma splice traced in the text) L10-11 'the dictionary is very big teacher, and you learn a lot from it therefore reading is very important' → ?
Section total	**33(+16 comma splices=49)**
Total	**59**

Table 2.6.D: Text 4 grammar error analysis

Linguistic category	Errors in the text
Morphological errors	
Nominal morphology *Omission of plural -s*	L9 'You can read magazine' → '…magazines'
Derivational morphology *Parts of speech misuse*	L6 'culture subjects' → 'cultural subjects' L15 'So, **Read** the sentences and **learn** the grammer of language can help you…' → 'So, read**ing**… and learn**ing**…' / '…to read… and to learn…'
Section total	**3**
Syntactic errors	
Noun phrase ***Determiners*** *Addition / omission of definite article* ***Pronouns*** *Change of subject*	L3-4 '**the** forigen persons' → 'foreign persons (people)' *(repeated in line 5) L4 'read the sentences' → 'read sentences' *(repeated in lines 8 and 15) L4 'learn the grammer of language' → 'learn the grammar of **the** (English) language' *(repeated in line 11) L6 '**the** culture subjects' → 'culture (cultural) subjects' L6-7 '**You** can talk with them… **You** can also… So, if **I** don not speak … **I** will not learn…' → '**You** can … So, if **you** do not speak… **you** will not…'
Verb phrase *Agreement* *Modal verbs*	L1 'Every person have to learn it' → '…has to…' L5 'Speaking with the forigen persons **are** very…' → 'Speaking…**is**…' L8 'you **may** lesson the British News' → 'you **can** listen to…'
Missing constituents	L3 'There are many ways to improve English language' → '…to improve **your** English language' L8 'You may lesson the British News' → '… listen **to** the British News'
Unnecessary constituents	L9 'You can read magazine in **your** English **language**' → '…in English' L15-16 '…can help you **to** improve your…' → '…can help you improve…'
Cohesion *Reference*	L12 'You must write composition subjects and give **it** to your teacher…' → '…give **them** to…'

Fragments (or incomplete sentences)	L3-4 'There are many ways to improve English language. Speaking with the forigen persons. Read the sentences in the right ways. Try to learn the grammer of language'.
Section total	**18**
Total	**21**

Table 2.6.E: Text 5 grammar error analysis

Linguistic category	Errors in the text
Morphological errors	
Section total	**0**
Syntactic errors	
Verb phrase *Tense (in conditional sentence)* *Subject-verb agreement*	L2-3 'If you had asked 'why not'? You have been told that…' → '…you would have been told…'. L6 'the average women has weaker muscles than the average man' → 'the average woman has …'.
Wrong choice of connector	L21 'they can produce children **where** men can not' → '…**while/whereas** men can not'.
Section total	**3**
Total	**3**

Table 2.6.F: Text 6 grammar error analysis

Linguistic category	Errors in the text
Morphological errors	
Section total	**0**
Syntactic errors	
Noun phrase ***Determiners*** *Addition of indefinite article* *Addition of definite article* ***Pronoun misuse / wrong choice of pronoun***	L2 'Feminists state that a woman is equal to a man' → '…that woman is equal to man'. (repeated in lines **3**, **4-5**, **5**, **7-8**, **11**, **15** twice, and **20)** L8 'Yet, the man has an advantage over her' → 'Yet, man has an advantage…'. (repeated in lines **10** and **21-22**). L18 'unlike women **neither** of whom would rather have her nail broken' → '… **none** of whom/them …'.

Verb phrase *Subject-verb agreement (missing or added third person 's')*	L1 'Feminism is one of the issues that draws much attention' → '…that draw …' L5 'if one consider…' → '…considers…'. L16 'the moans of the wounded enemy soldiers causes her to show mercy' → '…cause…'
Choice of tense & choice of verb	L9 'she **had** better not dip her hands…' → a/ 'she has …'. b/ 'she should …'.
Missing auxiliary verb	L5 'Some people consider a woman equal to a man' → '…a woman **is** equal to…'.
Cohesion *Wrong combination of clauses*	L9 'she had better not dip her hands into gasoline…**nor** is she able to touch burnt oil'.
Section total	**9 (+ 10 repeated erroneous structures = 19)**
Total	**9 (+10) = 19**

Appendix C

Samples of exam questions

University	Third Year
Faculty of Arts	
Department of English	January, 1999

DRAMA

I- Identify and comment briefly on the following extract:

But she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies; for vilest things,
Become themselves in her, that the holy priests
Bless her when she is riggish..

(5 lines) (15 points)

II- Write a Short essay on the following:

- Can **Antony and Cleopatra** , in your point of view, be seen as an invitation to encourage immorality and corruption as it celebrates a central hero who is wanton, degenerate and weak? (whether your answer is yes or no, support your argument by referring to the text of the play).

(15 lines maximum) (35 points)

III- Comment on *All for Love* in the light of this extract considering its relation to the Neo-classical school:

Antony: Again you break your promise.
I loved you still, and took your weak excuses,
Took you into my bosom, stained by Caesar,
And not half mine. I went to Egypt with you,
And hid me from the business of the world,
Shut out enquiring nations from my sight,
To give whole years to you.

(10 lines maximum) (30 points)

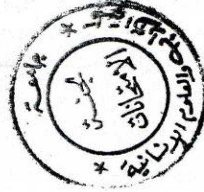
SEMINAR

Answer One of the following questions:

A- The role of Octavia in *All for Love*.

B-The scene of the drinking party in **Antony and Cleopatra.**

University
English Department
Fourth Year



American Prose

21\ June \1999

1- Write an essay one ONE of the following topics: (50)

a-
According to the transcendentalists the ultimate reality is not material but ideal, 'spiritual'. Analyze this statement by making a special reference to Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter and Thoreau's Walden. Use exmaples to support your views.

b-
For the puritans man is viewed as a creature of God, but born in depravity as a result of the Original Sin of Adam. How does Hawthorne challange this view in his novel The Scarlet Letter? Does Thoreau agree or disagree with him? Use examples to support your views.

2-Answer the following question: (30)

Very briefly, examine the following passage in terms of Thoreau's innovative concept of Nature:

"I have penetrated to those meadows on the morning of many a first spring day, jumping from one hummock to hummock,... when the wild river valley and the woods were bathed in so pure and bright a light as would have waked the dead, if they had been slumbering in their graves, as some suppose. There needs no stronger proof of immortality. All things must live in such a light. O Death where was thy sting? O Grave, where was thy victory, then?"

3-Seminar Question: (20)

Do you consider Arthur Dimmesdale to be a tragic hero? If yes, why?

GOOD LUCK

Appendix D

Samples of students' texts and the second expert check

Student: Ghadeer **Year: Third** **Subject: Drama**

QI. This extract is said by Enibarbus addressing Cleopatra and celebrating her to the people of Rome. Every one loves her and when one says her he is not satisfied his desires and feel still hungry because of her infinit variety which charms every one even the priests and here we have contradiction that even the priests who are religious people and supposed to condemn Cleopatra, instead of condemning her they bless her and celebrate her even in her bad deeds. Also, this extract presents to us the idea of objectivity that Enobarbus who is a Roman character is celebrating Cleopatra not Antony.

QII. Antony and Cleopatra is ambigious, rich and complex play and Shakespear in this play is establishing and defending a new kind of heroism "human heroism" which based on weakness and which is a mixture of fault and virtue. This play must not be judged by standerds such as "social – political and moral" because if we judge it by one of these standards we will lessen its importance and then we will agree with the idea that this play encourage immorality and corruption and it will be degraded. But we notice that Shakespear created the feeling to judge it that we admire Antony much, when he is in Egypt. From the beginning of the play he presented to us the world of Rome which is a symbol of honour and fame and the world of Egypt represented by Antony which is a symbol of love and sex.
Shakespear cunningly uses many verdicts and techniques to prove to us the contrary such as the objectivity when Caeser him self talked about Antony and charaterises his faultd as stars shine in the world of darkness which is the world of Rome. Another technique is used by Shakespear whis is his establishing the legend of love which elevated Antony to the high position. So we notice that Shakespear redeemed Antony by presenting to us the element of fortune represented by the priest and by the ides of loyality represented by Cleopatra and Enobarbus that both of them commited suicid and redeemed Antony. The last theme which redeemed Antony is the legend of love that Antony staged the first show of it when he died in the arms of Cleopatra and finished by Cleopatra by her suicide So we must not be limited in our judgement that we notice that Antony and Cleopatra are elevated at the end but Ceasar remain in his position. and we could not reach this feeling until the end of the play. And the feeling which I reached is the feeling of admiring of Antony and of all of this play.

QIII. Tis extract represents to us the idea of love that Antony wants to get rid of his business and be beside Cleopatra. We notice that this extract reoresents to us the characteristic of the Neo classical school that the character of Cleopatra is idealized and we notice the conflict inside Antony between love and honour. But here e don't notice the poetic justice. But we notice the blank verse and the unity of time and place. It is limited to the las t24 hours of life of Antony. the character of Antony here is not rich and complex. But he is sad and swayning between honour and love. But here he chooses love.

44 **Seminar question.** The drinking party showes us the hide reality of the world of
45 Rome which is based on corruption and conspiracies. This part took place after the
46 ceas-fire and the peace between the three triumvirs and Pompey the enemy of the
47 Rome. In this party we notice that all of them plan and conspire against each other.
48 The only person who was enjoying this party is Antony and Lipidus to some extent.
49 This party is a verdict against the Roman world which made Antony not care about
50 the loss of his Roman identity and to return to Egypt.

Figure D.1: Numbers of RCs and RC errors in Ghadeer's writing as detected by this researcher and by the second expert in the 'second expert check'.

	This researcher	Second expert
Number of RCs	23	20
Number of RC errors	3	2

Student: Fotoon **Year: Fourth** **Subject: American Prose**

QI. Symbolism is skillfully used by Hawthorne in representing his ideas and thoughts cleverly in his great and distictive work, namely, The Scarlet Letter. Hawthorne's Symbolism is represented through the letter "A", some characters who stand for symbols, and the needle which is used by Hester.

Concerning the letter "A" as a symbol, it is the symbol of shame and adultery which is connected with Hester. At the beginning, this letter is shamful. It is the sentence of Puritanism upon Hester. It is associated firstly with being only adultress according to her society. Then, the time is passing and the letter takes it positive side in Hester's life. It becomes the symbol of ability and agent, which motivates Hester to strive her identity and her survival. It is now a good representative of self-reliance.

Hawthore's characters also stand for sertain connotations and symbols. For example, Pearl who is the symbol of love and life. She is always connected with nature. She is the bright shining beautiful girl in a gloomy dark puritan society. Pearl also stands for the embodiment of adultery. She is the illegal product of illegal relationship between Hester and Dimmesdale.

The needle can also be a good illustration of Symbolism. When Hester is kicked out of the town, she lives alone with he girl. Her strong character motivates her to utilize her skills of needle usage. The needle is her weapon to survive and stand strongly on her feet. The needle her is the symbol of self-reliance by which Hester proves her self as a transcendental woman.

QII. Being a transcendentalist, Thoreau escapes to nature because it is the place where he is protected from corruption and poisonous sides of his society. In nature, he will be purified. He will find the chance to lesten to the voice of his inner self. Even, he will be able to communicate with God through every single small or big part of nature. By doing so, he finally gains the complete entity of the oversoul, namely self, God and nature.

Concerning the connection between nature and religion, Thoreau strongly believes that to to nature is the suitable way to connect with God. You will find this religious touch in every part in nature. Man himself will find himself divine. Nature is the place where man realizes his great creater. Church according to Thoreau is that place of worshiping God in nature.

Building the house in nature is a good illustration of the connection between nature and religion. By doing so, Thoreau becomes part of the house, and consequently part of nature, in which this house exists. During the process of building the house, the upward movement is a movement towards God. This is metaphorically speaking. Thoreau communicates with the religious power through nature.

There is another example of the relation ship between nature and religion. This is when Thoreau used to go to the Pond and using its pure and fresh water in cleaning his body. This connotates a religious connection with nature and represents a kind of spiritual cleanness.

Figure D.2: Numbers of RCs and RC errors in Fotoon's writing as detected by this researcher and by the second expert in the 'second expert check'.

	This researcher	Second expert
Number of RCs	9	9
Number of RC errors	1	0

Student: Afra Year: Diploma Subject: An era in English literature

QI. (A) Jimmy is one of the post-war generation who feels helpless and unable to do anything; he feels that he lacks the revolutionary fire of old times where people had 'good, and noble causes' which trigered them to act. He feels that he is stuck in a static world where there is no changes which gives him the feeling of being alive as a human being. Jimmy is angry of his current situation which makes him rage at everybody around him, and paralysis him. This passive reaction (being angry) is reflected negatively on himself and on everybody around him. Therefore, he spends his life complaining about everything without any positive action.

(B) The murdering scene of the grave digger's boy and the raping of his wife (Cordelia) shows the violence of the people who has the power. This brutal scene is shocking to the audience and illustrates the social morality which is the morality of powerful people. Cordelia suffers much from the current power and this triggers her to rebel against it yet unfortunately in a more powerful and oppressive way. While the boy becomes the ghost who accompanions Lear in his jeournay of change.

Bodice is trapped by having power. She is driven by the current and she can't stop. When she had no power she thought that by power she would be more free and a master of her life. Unfortunately, power corrupts and destroys. The destructive effects of power are uncontrolled. Bodice has entered the vicious circle of power which bounds her and makes her feel the tension of being helpless and unable to direct the authority she has as she wants. She wants to pull the wall down (the wall is the symbol of oppression of the previous regime) and to save people from working, but she falls in the same trap by oppressing men to work and to fight her enemies (Cordelia & the farmers).

QII. Theatre is about society's problems and its structure. Theatre asks questions to solve the problems of the society but doesn't incline to give much answers to these questions as much as makes the audience think and engage in the action of the plays and try to make sense out of them. Play is a medium for the audience to find solutions and answers for the questions of the society and its problems. The audience tries to find meaning to what he/she sees on the stage and extract answers from it if any. Contemporary (post-war theatre) succeeds in making the audience involve in the action and in thinking how to solve his/her social problems. "Look Back in Anger" by John Osborne and "Lear" by Edward Bond are the kind of theatre which invite the receiver to think, but each play in its own style.

"Look Back in Anger" reflects the young post-war generation who feels inactive and helpless which is represented by the character of Jimmy living in a static social situation. Jimmy is raging all the time about everything, this makes the audience think of the reasons of his anger and that by being engaged in the action of the play and asking why Jimmy is angry, how he can change his situation, how the other people around him can change the situation and help him, how I as an audience would react if I am in the same situation or maybe I am in the same situation, but living without thinking of my situation and my society structure (this is an example

44 of how really audience can feel when they are in front of theatre). “Look back in
45 anger” gives this alienation effect which makes the audience find and construct
46 answers and give meaning on what they are facing.
47 Bond’s play “Lear” discusses the political structure of society and how power
48 corrupts the political structure. Bond resorts to use the aggro-effect in order to shock
49 the audience and make them get engaged in the action. Bond shows the destructive
50 effects of power and makes audience think on the need of breaking the vicious circle
51 of power and to think in ways to break it. Bond couldn’t show right answers to face
52 power and oppression, but he wants the audience to think in methods of change and
53 to try to find the right answers for questions rised by the play. Also, Bond allows the
54 audience to think about the political structure of the society and about the prevailing
55 social morality.
56 Thus, contemporary theatre makes audience try to find sense of what he/she sees
57 on stage and to think how he/she can change the social structure arround him/her.
58 Each writer, Bond and Osborn, has his own way to make audience get involved and
59 engaged in the theatre infront of them in an effective way.

Figure D.3: Numbers of RCs and RC errors in Afra’s writing as detected by this researcher and by the second expert in the ‘second expert check’.

	This researcher	Second expert
Number of RCs	16	17
Number of RC errors	5	7

Appendix E

Summary table of conjunctive relations (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 242-43)

Summary Table of Conjunctive Relations

	External/internal	Internal (unless otherwise specified)		
Additive	Additive, simple: Additive *and, and also* Negative *nor, and . . . not* Alternative *or, or else*	Complex, emphatic: Additive *furthermore, in addition, besides* Alternative *alternatively* Complex, de-emphatic: After-thought *incidentally, by the way*	Apposition: Expository *that is, I mean, in other words* Exemplificatory *for instance, thus*	Comparison: Similar *likewise, similarly, in the same way* Dissimilar *on the other hand, by contrast*
Adversative	Adversative 'proper': Simple *yet, though, only* Containing 'and' *but* Emphatic *however, nevertheless, despite this*	Contrastive: Avowal *in fact, actually, as a mater of fact* Contrastive (external): Simple *but, and* Emphatic *however, on the other hand, at the same time*	Correction: Of meaning *instead, rather, on the contrary* Of wording *at least, rather, I mean*	Dismissal: Closed *in any case, in either case, whichever way it is* Open-ended *in any case, anyhow, at any rate, however it is*

	External/internal	Internal (unless otherwise specified)		
Causal	Causal, general: Simple *so, then, hence, therefore* Emphatic *consequently, because of this* Causal, specific: Reason *for this reason, on account of this* Result *as a result, in consequence* Purpose *for this purpose, with this in mind*	Reversed causal: Simple *for, because* Causal, specific: Reason *it follows, on this basis* Result *arising out of this* Purpose *to this end*	Conditional (also external): Simple *then* Emphatic *in that case, in such an event, that being so* Generalized *under the circumstances* Reversed polarity *otherwise, under other circumstances*	Respective: Direct *in this respect, in this regard, with reference to this* Reversed polarity *otherwise, in other respects, aside from this*
Temporal	Temporal, simple (external only): Sequential *then, next, after that* Simultaneous *just then, at the same time* Preceding *previously, before that* Conclusive: Simple *finally, at last* Correlative forms: Sequential *first . . . then* Conclusive *at first . . . in the end*	Complex (external only): Immediate *at once, thereupon* Interrupted *soon, after a time* Repetitive *next time, on another occasion* Specific *next day, an hour later* Durative *meanwhile* Terminal *until then* Punctiliar *at this moment*	Internal temporal: Sequential *then, next, secondly* Conclusive *finally, in conclusion* Correlative forms: Sequential *first . . . next* Conclusive *. . . finally*	'Here and now': Past *up to now, hitherto* Present *at this point, here* Future *from now on, henceforward* Summary: Summarizing *to sum up, in short, briefly* Resumptive *to resume, to return to the point*

Appendix F

Synthesis task (adapted from an idea in Graver 1986) (Cullen 2008: 226)

1 Combine each group of sentences to form not more than three complex sentences. Make any necessary changes to the order and wording of the information given, but you must not change the sense of the original. The first one has been done as an example:

The thief looked around. He wanted to make sure no one was watching. He then climbed up a drainpipe. He climbed up to a window on the first floor. The window had been left open. He entered the house through the window. He was not observed.

Possible reconstructions

a *The thief looked around to make sure that no one was watching. He then climbed up a drainpipe to a window on the first floor, which had been left open. He entered the house without being observed.*

b *Having first looked around to make sure that no one was watching, the thief climbed up a drainpipe to a first floor window which had been left open, and, through which he entered unobserved.*

2 Now continue the story:

He quickly made his way to the master bedroom. He opened all the drawers. He scattered the contents on the floor. He found some jewellery, and a small transistor radio. He took a pillowcase from the bed. He put these things in the pillowcase. He heard a car pull up outside. He ran downstairs. He unlocked the french window at the back and ran into the garden.

3 Now compare your reconstruction with those of other students.