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CORPUS ANALYSIS OF CONJUNCTIONS: ARABIC LEARNERS' DIFFICULTIES WITH COLLOCATIONS

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Abstract

This paper examines Arabic majors use of conjunctions in their essays both in the application (qualitative) and frequency of conjunctions used (quantitative). The essays serve as a corpus for this study where conjunctive use and misuse among learners of Arabic are described and how certain combinations of words are preferred. Sketch Engine was employed to track the frequency of conjunctions used and to identify the concordance lines of Arabic conjunctions and the collocates. A simple frequency counts reveals that out of more than 83 conjunctions available in Arabic, only 48 were used and the rest 35 were not employed at all by the students. However, the use was not necessarily correct. There seemed to be a confusion in the application of these conjunctions, particularly those which carry similar meanings with the ones in L1. Another problem with its usage lies in the use of collocations; where translation of L1 was applied to the Arabic conjunctions. Mother tongue interference could be the reason for the confusion since direct translation of the word can be used in the same context, but the contexts of their applications are different. This study highlights the need to focus on these errors when teaching Arabic to second or foreign language learners.

Keywords: learner corpus, collocation, Arabic conjunctions, mother tongue interference, second language

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INTRODUCTION

The advance in educational technology has made it possible for learners to submit their works to the teachers online; somehow many teachers did not make full use of the technology in the teaching and learning exercises until the Covid-19 hit the world. The pandemic has negatively impacted everyone and all sectors around the world. The education sector was inseparable where schools and colleges were closed. However, the crisis had left some opportunities particularly where most education systems had obliged to adopt alternatives to face-to-face teaching and learning. Students and teachers alike accepted online teaching and learning as a new norm. Answer scripts and assignments were among other assessment tools that had been submitted online; and this had become an advantage for the language researchers as their works could be compiled as learner corpus.

Studying learner corpus interests second language researchers as it is an evidence-based approach to language teaching where it provides a useful resource for them to gain concrete evidence and a wider perspective on learners' inter-language acquired during the process of language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several studies conducted on the use of conjunctions in essays produced by French EFL/ ESL students (Granger & Tyson, 1996), Chinese (Meisuo, 2000), Japanese (Narita et al., 2004), Taiwanese (Lai, 2008), Libyan (Hamed, 2014), Iraqi (Darweesh et al., 2016), Malaysians (Nuruladilah, 2016), Saudis (Alsharif, 2017; Abumelha & Alyousef, 2019), Arabs (Basheer, 2019), Tunisian (Ons Abdi, 2021) where overuse, underuse, and misuse have been reported, with overuse being the most predominant, leading to problems of coherence or readability of the discourse (Yeung, 2009; Mahmoud, 2014).

A corpus-based study on the use of conjunctions among Japanese EFL learners has been conducted by Narita et al. (2004) and it was observed that conjunctions such as 'for example,' 'of course,' and 'first,' have been overused whereas 'then,' 'yet,' and 'instead' have been underused. Lai (2008) compared the use of conjunctions in the writings of skilled and unskilled Taiwanese EFL undergraduates. His quantitative findings revealed that the unskilled learners applied conjunctions more frequently

than the skilled ones. Both groups applied conjunctions appropriately. However, wrong use was observed in some conjunctions such as 'furthermore', 'in other words', 'besides', 'on the contrary', 'nevertheless', 'by contrast', 'hence', 'therefore', and 'because'.

Hassan (2004) described the wrong use of connectives among Malaysian AFL learners appeared mainly due to the interference between L1 and L2. However, little work has been done based on second or foreign language learners of Arabic written works, let alone concentrating on Malaysians Arabic major learners and far less work has been undertaken investigating conjunctive use and collocation behaviors among them.

This study is mainly focused on the use of Arabic conjunctions among Malaysians L2 learners. It aimed to investigate the capabilities of Arabic major students of the use of conjunctions through their writings and to deepen the understanding on the collocational awareness among them. Besides, it provides accurate descriptions of conjunctive use among learners of Arabic, and how certain combinations of words are preferred.

METHODOLOGY

This is a corpus-based research. Sixty essays produced by Malaysians L2 Arabic learners were collected and compiled as learner corpus for this study. The size of the corpus is about 24000 words and was built by using Sketch Engine software available online (https://www.sketchengine.eu/).

The learners who provided the data enrolled in the "Computer Applications in Language and Literature" course, offered by the Department of Arabic Language and Literature in one of the universities in Malaysia. They were predominantly in their first and second year of Arabic major degree programme with 97% of them Malaysians. The students were requested to submit a comparative essay of not less than 400 words entitled: Studying abroad is better than studying locally. They were instructed to write the essay on Microsoft Word on the first day of class without any help from native speakers of Arabic.

It is worth mentioning that this is a regular exercise taking place every semester which serves as a reference for the instructor to refer to for the purpose of checking the authenticity of the students' written works throughout the semester; particularly their language use.

The main reason for this approach among others is when AI text generators software begin to gain significant dominance in the market; where undetected language barrier text can be produced. Simonsen (2021) is in the opinion that "AI

writing technologies seem to be highly relevant in language classes just as the calculator was in Math classes 50 years ago".

Another threat faced by instructors is a high dependency on the internet resources among the students; where the tendency to copy and paste the content of the web pages is very likely. Oftentimes, the written works submitted to the instructor contain no language mistakes, however the errors were detected in the conclusion part of the works where usually the students write it on their own; or when they communicate with the instructor and their language is very hard to understand.

The essays collected for the purpose of this study could be considered as authentic data because the students were not requested to produce them using certain words or structures. Data authenticity is a factor that has to be considered in data collection for learner corpus. The essays were then sent to the instructor of the course through the university's Learning Management Platform called *i-ta'leem.* The learners' role ended at the point where their essays were submitted to *i-ta'leem* and the rest of the procedures were handled by the instructor. Each essay was given an ID number and uploaded to Sketch Engine as learner corpus by the instructor. Mistakes have been retained in all the essays included in the corpus. The average length of the essays is about 400 words.

This study applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the use of conjunctions. Wordlist of learner corpus was generated by Sketch Engine in determining the frequency of conjunctive use in the learner corpus. For the purpose of analysing the actual application of Arabic conjunctions in context and examining closely the word combinations produced by the students, the concordance lines are applied. The lines are also helpful in identifying the recurring patterns of words combination occurred in the corpus.

Arabic Conjunctions

Combined words that signal a logical connection between ideas are classified as conjunctions. They are not single words, or a repetition of word but rather among other grammatical devices used to realize cohesion and textuality of a discourse. Conjunctions function as a driver who guide readers of where the writers are and the locations that they are heading to. Arabic conjunctions are normally found as a result of the following combinations (Hassan, 1999):

1. noun +noun
2. noun +preposition
3. noun + preposition + preposition
4. noun + preposition +noun
5. preposition + preposition

6. preposition + preposition +preposition
7. preposition + preposition +preposition + preposition
8. preposition + preposition + preposition + noun
9. preposition + preposition + verb +preposition
10. preposition +preposition +noun
11. preposition +preposition +noun +noun
12. preposition +noun +preposition +noun
13. preposition +preposition +preposition +noun +reference
14. preposition +noun
15. preposition + noun +noun
16. preposition +noun +preposition
17. verb + noun + preposition + preposition
18. verb + preposition +noun

The table below shows examples of different combinations of words that form Arabic conjunctions.

Table 1. Words Combination that Form Arabic Conjunctions.

No.	Words combination	Examples of Conjunctions
1.	noun +noun	صفوة القول إزاء ذلك
2.	noun +preposition	فضلا عن وأخيرا بالتأكيد ذلك أن
3.	noun + preposition + preposition	اللهم إلا إذا
4.	noun + preposition +noun	جدير بالذكر إضافة إلى ذلك
5.	preposition + preposition	كما أن إلا أن بينما غير أن إلى أن ليس إلا إلا إذا
6.	preposition + preposition +preposition	من حيث أن ولا بد وحتى لو مع +فإن

No.	Words combination	Examples of Conjunctions
		ومن ثم
7.	preposition + preposition +preposition + preposition	وإلا فلا وعلى أي حال
8.	preposition + preposition + preposition + noun	وما إلى ذلك
9.	preposition + preposition + verb	أما إذا كان
10.	preposition +preposition +noun	من أجل هذا/ من أجل ذلك بلا شك وبالتالي ولا بد ولا سيما فلذلك وبذلك وكذلك
11.	preposition +preposition +noun +noun	وعلى سبيل المثال وعلى أي حال
12.	preposition +noun +preposition +noun	ونتيجة لذلك بالإضافة إلى ذلك والأنكى من ذلك وعلاوة على ذلك
13.	preposition +preposition +preposition +noun +reference	ولهذا كله
14.	preposition +noun	في حين لذا لذلك فوق ذلك مع ذلك من ثم ليس فقط ومثلا بالتأكيد فحسب وخاصة

No.	Words combination	Examples of Conjunctions
15.	preposition + noun +noun	و)من ناحية أخرى) إلى جانب ذلك بجانب ذلك والعكس صحيح وخلاصة القول بمعنى آخر لا سيما إلى جانب آخر على سبيل المثال
16.	preposition +noun +preposition	على رغم من بالرغم من لدرجة أن ثم سرعان ما
17.	verb + noun + preposition + preposition	تجدر الإشارة إلى أن
18.	verb + preposition +noun	زد على ذلك

Therefore, conjunctions could be considered as a type of collocations as they are pre-fixed patterns of words combination made of two to five-word combination consisting of noun, preposition and verb.

English conjunctions carry a variety of meanings: additive, adversative, causal, temporal, clarifying (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), on top of those, the Arabic conjunctions bear two additional meanings: hypothetical and limitation if attached to a complete sentence (Hassan, 1999). Depending on the context of use, conjunctions may have a strong tie with the sentence that comes before or after them.

Table 2. Meanings of Arabic Conjunctions (Hassan, 1999).

Arabic Conjunctions	Meanings
بالإضافة إلى ذلك/ إضافة إلى ذلك، بجانب ذلك، بلا شك، هلم جرا، والأنكى من ذلك، وبالتالي، والعكس صحيح، وكذلك، وعلاوة على ذلك، فوق ذلك، زد على ذلك، زيادة على ذلك، خلاصة القول /وخلاصة القول /والخلاصة/ خلاصةً، فضلا عن	Additive
إلا أنّ، بالرغم من، بل العكس، بينما، غير أنّ، في حين، اللهو إلا إذا	Adversative
إزاء ذلك، لدرجة، لذا، من أجل هذا، ونتيجة لذلك، والحاصل، وبذلك، ومن ثم، إلى أن، ولهذا كله	Causal

Arabic Conjunctions	Meanings
وأخيرا، أولا، ثم سرعان ما، دائما، عندما، عندئذ	Temporal
أيا كان، بالتأكيد، بمعنى آخر، تجدر الإشارة إلى، ذلك أن، طبعا، على سبيل المثال، ليس إلا، من حيث أنّ، مع +فإن، وبعد + ف، وعلى أي حال، ولا بد، وما إلى ذلك،	Clarifying
أما +ف، أما إذا كان، إذا ما + فإن، إذا، وإلا فلا، وحتى لو،	Hypothetical
فقط، فحسب	Limitation

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analyses are divided into three categories to give accurate patterns of conjunctive use among the learners:

1. frequency of conjunctive use,
2. description of the conjunctive use according to the meanings,
3. investigation of its misuse and preference of word combination.

Category no. 1: frequency of conjunctive use among learners of Arabic

It was shown that there were 241 conjunctive occurrences in the entire learner corpus. Every student employed at least one conjunction in their writing with an average of 4.016 of conjunctions being used in all the essays. The maximum number of conjunctive uses is 15 and the min is 1. Table 3 describes conjunctive use in the learner corpus.

Table 3. Distribution of Conjunctive Use in the Learner Corpus.

No. of conjunctions employed in the entire corpus	241
Frequency of correct use of conjunctions	178
Frequency of wrong use of conjunctions	63
Maximum no. of conjunctive use in one essay	15
Minimum no. of conjunctive use in one essay	1
Essays with no conjunctions at all	0
Average use of conjunctions in the entire corpus	4.016

It has to be mentioned that there are about 83 Arabic conjunctions available in the Modern Standard Arabic, out of which only 48 were used and the rest 35 were not employed at all by the students. It was observed that there were a number of preferred conjunctions among the learners. The frequency of conjunctive use was gauged by five scales: always, very often, sometimes, rarely and never. Table 4 shows the definition of scales adapted by the study:

Table 4. Definition of Scales Used in Describing the Frequency of Conjunctive Use in the Learner Corpus.

Scales	No of occurrence in the entire corpus
Always	26-15 times
Very Often	12-7 times
Sometimes	6-4 times
Rarely	3-1 times
Never	Not being employed at all

There are 6 conjunctions that have been highly employed by the learners as illustrated in Table 5; followed by Table 9, 10 and 11 that illustrate examples of Arabic conjunctions used by the students according to the scales defined in Table 4.

Table 5. List of Conjunctions that Have "Always" Been Employed by the Learners.

Frequency	Conjunction ID	Conjunctions
26	1	بالإضافة إلى ذلك/ إضافة إلى ذلك
25	34	لذلك
23	18	بجانب ذلك
19	19	ًخلاصة القول /وخلاصة القول /والخلاصة/ خلاصة
18	6	فوق ذلك
15	60	و) على سبيل المثال)

The conjunction: "وبالإضافة إلى ذلك" is the most frequent one applied by the students as shown in Table 5; and Table 6 illustrates how the conjunction was applied in the students' essays; both in the correct and wrong use.

Table 6. Examples of the Use of "وبالإضافة إلى ذلك" Among the Students.

Left context	KWIC	Right context
ا الى الاخرين .<s><s/>	اضافة	الى ذلك , ل اجل من الحصول على بركة العلم و مرضاة الله , يجب علي نا
ي خارج البلاد .<s><s/>	اضافة	الى ذلك , اذا نطلب العلم في البلاد غير بلاد نا , نمكن تحسين لغة نا و نزيد
ة الانجليزية .<s><s/>و	اضافة	عن الى ذلك , نحن نستطيع ان نعرف و نعلم الثقافات الاخرى ب سبب تو
ع , و غير ها .<s><s/>و	اضافة	الى ذلك , كان العلم و المعرفة مهمة جدا في حياة نا الان من اجل البحث .
الب في الجامعة و لكن	اضافة	على ذلك كسب معلومات عامة عن ذلك البلاد .<s><s/>و ثانيا , امكانية
ذه الجامعة .<s><s/>و	اضافة	الى ذلك , الطلبة الجامع س يختلطون ب قوم مختلفة من البلد متنوعة .'>
الفكرة و تبادل الراي ب	اضافة	المعرفة و ثقافة هم .<s><s/>و ايضا درب نفس هم لا توقف حياة هم ب
نفس هم .<s><s/>ب	اضافة	ذلك , حياة جميع الطلاب و الطالبات خاصة ل طالب جامعي س يحمل الـ
ث و غير هم .<s><s/>	اضافة	الى ذالك , الطالب دائما يجب ان يبحث عن الخبرة الجديدة و يريد ان يتح
يريد الرسب .<s><s/>	اضافة	الى ذلك الاخلاق و الادب من الشروط ل امتياز , ل ان النجاح و بركة العلم

It was observed in Table 7 that, "الذلك" was rightly employed by the students.

Table 7. Examples of the Use of "الذلك" Among the Students.

Left context	KWIC	Right context
علي هم ان يتعاونوا في الامور	ذلك	ه الجامعة عيشة مشتركة في المجتمع , و ل
, الشهادة التي تخرج من جامع	ذلك	لمجتهدة جاءت من انحاء البلاد .<s></s>ل
, نحصل على معرفة اجديدة ع	ذلك	م , و كيف نريد اخطلاط مع هم .<s></s>ل
, يستطيع الطلاب ان يدرسوا	ذلك	يعيشون و يتعاملون ب طريقة مختلفة , ل
, يكون الطالب محرر .<s></s>	ذلك	مراقبة الابوين .<s></s>و نتيجتهونتيجة ل
يوجد كثير من الطلاب الاجانب	ذلك	ط بل في جميع انحاء العالم .<s></s>ف ل
ان يكون ان نجد تخصصا في	ذلك	كل ه موجودا في الوطن واحد .<s></s>و ل
صار حتما على الطالب الجامع	ذلك	عو عصر العولمة و التكنولوجيا المتجددة , ل
نرى ان الطلاب في هذا اليوم	ذلك	ائ هما الى الرغبة في العلم , ل ذلك , ف ل
, كثير من الطلاب يقودون الس	ذلك	غرفة هم في الطبقة الخامسة .<s></s>ل
, توجد مائتان طالبا من خارج	ذلك	ماليزين و ايضا ل غير الماليزين .<s></s>ل
نرى ان الطلاب في هذا اليوم	ذلك	ائ هما الى الرغبة في العلم , ل ذلك , ف ل

The conjunction "بجانب ذلك" is among the most frequent one used by the students, however the application is not necessarily correct as captured in Table 8 below:

Table 8. Examples of the Use of "بجانب ذلك" Among the Students.

Left context	KWIC	Right context
ذللك , هناك طلاب من الغرب التى يتكلمون ب اللغ	جانب	ة ب الحوار في اللغة العربية .<s></s>و ب
الى ذلك , ان المحاضرة في الجامعة تبدا في الصباح	جانب	إجات البخارية , و الدراجات .<s></s>و ب
الى ذلك المسجد ليس مكانا ل العبادة فقط بل هو د	جانب	التلاوة ل الطلاب المستجدين .<s></s>ب
من اجل التعلم , ب هذه الطريقة سوف توسع مداركـ	جانب	و المعاملات و ما اشبه ذلك .<s></s>و ب
ذلك , و هم ايضا يريد ان يعرف عادات او تقاليد لدى	جانب	قاء جديد من جميع الاوطان .<s></s>و ب
ذلك , هذه الجامعة يوجد التخصص المختلفة .<s></s>	جانب	طين , و افريكا , و غير ذلك .<s></s>و ب
ذلك , الذين يسكنون في قارة اسيا : في الصين , و ت	جانب	دة , و الفلسطين , و الاردن .<s></s>و ب
ذلك هم يتعاونون مع المجتمع من حيث المال و الم	جانب	و الخبرات و العلوم مع الايتام و الفقراء ; ب
ذلك , يشارك الطلاب الجامعي الانشطات تعد ها الـ	جانب	شل الشباب , فشلت الامة .<s></s>و ب
ذلك , الغاية الاولى ل استخدام لغة الانجليزية و لغة ا	جانب	هم يتكلمون ب لغة العربية .<s></s>و ب
ذلك , يملك الطلاب تجربة واسعة من ناحية متعلم و	جانب	ب الطلاب في الكلام ب اجمل .<s></s>ب
يدرس الطلاب في خارج الوطن ان يعطون ايجابي اثر	جانب	ل الطول في في خارج الوطن .<s></s>في

Table 9. List of Conjunctions that Have Often Been Employed by the Learners.

Frequency	Conjunction ID	Conjunctions
12	62	ومثلا / مثلا

11	45	وأخيرا
8	3	زد على ذلك
7	41	وكذلك
7	46	أولا
7	78	فقط

According to Table 9, there are 6 conjunctions that fall under 'often' category.

Table 10. List of Conjunctions that Have "Sometimes" Been Employed by the Learners.

Frequency	Conjunction ID	Conjunctions
6	5	بلا شك/ ولا شك أن
5	2	زيادة على ذلك
5	25	بالرغم من/ على رغم من
5	36	ونتيجة لذلك
4	15	وكذلك
4	17	إلى جانب (كل) ذلك
4	83	ولا سيما

Table 11. Samples of Conjunctions that Have "Rarely" Been Employed by the Learners.

Frequency	Conjunction ID	Conjunctions
3	9	فضلا عن
3	50	دائما
3	79	ليس فقط +بل
3	82	وخاصة
2	4	ومن ناحية أخرى
2	12	وبالتالي
2	13	كما أن
2	81	فحسب +بل
1	7	مع ذلك
1	8	بما أن
1	10	هلم جرا
1	14	والعكس صحيح
1	16	وعلاوة على ذلك
1	20	صفوة القول
1	21	وختاما

Frequency	Conjunction ID	Conjunctions
1	22	وفضلا عن ذلك
1	23	في الختام
1	35	من أجل هذا/ من أجل ذلك

There are conjunctions that have never been applied by the students as illustrated in Table 12:

Table 12. Samples of Conjunctions that Have "Never" Been Employed by the Learners.

Frequency	Conjunction ID	Conjunctions
0	11	والأنكى من ذلك
0	24	إلا أن
0	26	بل العكس
0	27	بينما
0	28	غير أن
0	29	في حين
0	30	اللهم إذا
0	32	لدرجة
0	37	والحاصل
0	57	جدير بالذكر
0	75	إلا إذا
0	76	وإلا فلا
0	77	وحتى لو

Category no. 2: description of the conjunctive use according to the meanings

A deeper analysis of Arabic conjunctions based on the meanings: additive, adversative, causal, temporal, clarifying, hypothetical and limitation described earlier shows that 'additives' are by far the most frequent ones employed by the students regardless of the correct use or misuse, followed by 'clarifying' and 'temporal'. 'Limitation' and 'causal' conjunctions were found to be much less frequent, and the least frequently used were 'adversative'. It was observed that the rank order of conjunctive meanings employed by the learners are as follows:

Table 13. The Rank Order of Conjunctive Use According to Meanings.

Rank	No of occurrences	Meaning
1.	88	Additive
2.	81	Clarifying

3.	31	Causal
4.	21	Temporal
5.	15	Limitation
6.	5	Adversative
7.	0	Conditional

There are a number of conjunctions that have been applied correctly by the students in terms of meaning and words combination.

Table 14. Varity of Conjunctive Meanings Applied Correctly in the Learners' Essays.

Frequency	Conjunctions	Meaning
26	بالإضافة إلى ذلك/ إضافة إلى ذلك	Additive
25	لذلك	Clarifying
23	بجانب ذلك	Additive
19	خلاصة القول /وخلاصة القول /والخلاصة/ خلاصة	Additive
18	فوق ذلك	Additive
15	و) على سبيل المثال)	Clarifying
12	ومثلا/ مثلا	Clarifying
11	وأخيرا	Temporal
8	زد على ذلك	Additive
7	وكذلك	Additive
7	أولا	Temporal
7	فقط	Limitation

Category no. 3: investigation of the misuse of Arabic conjunctions among the learners

Generally, with increased proficiency, L2 learners tend to demonstrate their ability to utilize conjunctions to infer logical relationships in extended discourse (Geva, 1992). It was discovered that the average use of conjunction is 3 per essay; although all the students attempted to incorporate conjunctions in their writings, the main problem with its usage lies in the accurate use of collocations of the conjunctions.

The analysis revealed that, out of 241 conjunctive occurrences, 25.31% (61 occurrences) were wrongly applied by the students. It was observed that the students failed to choose the correct combination of two or more words, and the results supported what was noticed by (Fan, 2010) that this is due to the students' unawareness of collocational properties in vocabulary. Table 14 shows the wrongly used conjunctions in the learner corpus.

Table 15. Conjunctions that Have Been Wrongly Applied by the Learners.

Wrong use frequency	Arabic Conjunctions	Arabic Conjunctions applied in the essays	Meaning
16	فوق ذلك	وبعد ذلك وغير ذلك	additive
13	بالإضافة إلى ذلك/ إضافة إلى ذلك	وبالإضافة بالإضافة على ذلك إضافة من ذلك إضافة عن ذلك بالإضافة ذلك بإضافة ذلك	additive
9	لذلك	ومن ذلك بذلك بعد ذلك بسبب ذلك	clarifying
5	بجانب ذلك	وبجانب إلى ذلك إلى جانب	clarifying
5	خلاصة القول /وخلاصة القول /والخلاصة/ ًخلاصة	الخلاصة وبالخلاصة في خلاصة القول في الخلاصة وبالخلاصة في خلاصة القول في الخلاصة	additive
5	ونتيجة لذلك	وعقيبته	causal
3	زيادة على ذلك	في الزيادة الزيادة	additive
2	فضلا عن	من فضلك فضلا على ذلك	additive
2	بالرغم من/ على رغم من	وبرغم ذلك وبالرغم ذلك	adversative
2	ومثلا/ مثلا	ومثله	clarifying
1	زد على ذلك	زد ذلك	additive

Category no.4: preference of certain word combinations by the learners

Findings showed that when learners encountered a collocational problem, they tend to resort to one of the strategies of lexical simplification: synonym, avoidance, transfer and paraphrasing (Granger, 2003). Synonymous happens when a synonym substitutes a particular word of an actual conjunction. Avoidance refers to a strategy that omits or adds a new word to an actual conjunction. If there is an element of L1 lexical transfer in the use of conjunctions, the strategy could be considered as transfer. Paraphrasing occurs when the same number of words combination of a conjunction is retained with an element of word substitution.

Table 16 provides examples to illustrate each category of the four strategies applied by the students (adopted from Granger's):

Table 16. Examples of Wrong Use of Conjunctions.

Correct collocations	Problematic Collocations	Strategies Applied
بالإضافة إلى ذلك/ إضافة إلى ذلك	وبالإضافة بالإضافة على ذلك إضافة من ذلك إضافة عن ذلك بالإضافة ذلك بإضافة ذلك	Avoidance Paraphrasing Paraphrasing Paraphrasing Avoidance Avoidance
زد على ذلك	زد ذلك	Avoidance
زيادة على ذلك	في الزيادة الزيادة	Avoidance Avoidance
فوق ذلك	وبعد ذلك وغير ذلك	Synonym Transfer
بجانب ذلك	وبجانب إلى ذلك إلى جانب	Avoidance Avoidance
فضلا عن	من فضلك فضلا على ذلك	Paraphrasing Avoidance
خلاصة القول /وخلاصة القول /والخلاصة	الخلاصة وبالخلاصة في خلاصة القول في الخلاصة	Avoidance Avoidance Avoidance Transfer
صفوة القول	وفي صفوة القول	Paraphrasing
على رغم من ذلك	وبرغم ذلك وبالرغم ذلك	Paraphrasing Paraphrasing
إلى جانب ذلك	إلى جانب	Avoidance

Correct collocations	Problematic Collocations	Strategies Applied
	غير ذلك	Transfer
لذلك	ومن ذلك	Avoidance
	بذلك	Paraphrasing
	بعد ذلك	Transfer
	بسبب ذلك	Transfer
ونتيجة لذلك	بسبب على ذلك	Synonym
	ونتيجته	Transfer
	وعقيبته	Synonym
ومثلا	ومثله	Transfer
	في المثال	Transfer
وخاصة	والخاصة	Avoidance

Wrong use due to "synonym"

There seemed to be a confusion in the application of some of the conjunctions particularly those words that carry similar meanings in L1- since conjunctions are word- combination linkers-. It was observed that learners substituted a particular word with its synonym of an actual conjunction. The findings reiterate what was discovered by Lombard (1997) that major mistake found in the learner corpus is the use of a near-synonym where lexical transfer occurs. For example, "وعقيبته" was used instead of "ونتيجة لذلك", where "نتيجة" is translated to "عقيبة" in Malay.

Wrong use due to "avoidance"

Avoidance refers to a strategy that omits or adds a new word to an actual conjunction. The findings in this study support that mere exposure to collocations does not usually lead to their acquisition in Najda, Collocation, p 5). For example, the conjunction "بجانب ذلك" is highly employed in Malaysian Secondary Arabic Textbooks but has been wrongly applied in students' writings; e.g. بجانب إلى ذلك where another preposition of "إلى" was added.

Wrong use due to "transfer"

Mother tongue interference could be the reason for the confusion since it was observed that direct translation of the word was used in the same context. For example: ومثله was employed instead of ومثلا. A reason that may account for this is the aspect of intralinguistic transfer. In Malay when things are exemplified, the word '*misalnya*' is used, which is a combination of root word 'misal' +'nya' (reference); "*missal"* is a Malay word originated from Arabic. Learners may transfer the word directly to

Arabic together with the 'reference' "nya" as used in Malay. This may explain why such a pattern is found in the learner corpus.

Wrong use due to "paraphrasing"

Paraphrasing occurs when the same number of words combination of a conjunction is retained with an element of word substitution.

Avoiding unfamiliar collocations, learners tend to use high frequency words acquired prior to joining the university. It was observed that the students failed to choose the correct combination of two or more words; especially when it involves preposition, as a result they picked up any prepositions that they are familiar with and tried to substitute it with what they forgot. For instance, a conjunction بالإضافة إلى ذلك were quoted as إضافة **عن** إضافة , ذلك ذلك where the preposition إلى was replaced by عن ,من. It was noticed that this is due to their unawareness of collocational properties in vocabulary (Fan, 2010).

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to delineate the use of connectives among Arabic majors. Examining the conjunctive use identified in the learner corpus, it was noticed that the right use outweighs the wrong use. This finding indicates that the learners were competent in the use of conjunctions.

However, there are several factors contributing to the wrong use. Some of the Arabic conjunctions carry similar meanings with the ones in Malay but the contexts of their applications are different. Therefore, the confusion arose leading to the wrong use.

Another problem lies where translation was applied to the Arabic conjunctions. Mother tongue interference could be the reason for the confusion since the direct translation of the word can be used in the same context. The errors in translating and selecting appropriate Arabic words for proper use was probably due to inadequate exposure to Contrastive Analysis in the second language acquisition process where students would be unable to compare and contrast the differences between the vocabulary aspects between the L1 and L2 words (Pramela & Oh, 2020).

It is high time that a lesson on Arabic conjunctions be developed and introduced to L2 advanced learners. To date, there are only a few references available on the subject matter and as a result, the students are not properly exposed to different varieties of Arabic conjunctions let alone to apply them correctly in their writing and speaking. But exposure alone does not guarantee the right application of the conjunctions as described in the findings. Therefore, this study highlighted the need

to focus on the most commonly used conjunctions with a special attention to collocations.

Emphasis should also be stressed on errors in conjunctive use when teaching Arabic to second or foreign language learners, irrespective of their level of proficiency; this is because it was noted in this study that Arabic majors who are supposed to be highly competent fall into such mistakes.

Thorough analysis should be carried out in the future focusing on "language transfer" or the influence/ interference of mother tongue (L1) to the target language (L2), particularly on conjunctive use. This is not new, but teachers have to apply effective strategies that best suit the targeted learners to overcome the issue. Learner corpus should be predominately used in teaching and learning of second or foreign language. This is particularly relevant for error analysis studies where learner corpus record language production systematically.

There are about 35 conjunctions that have never been applied by the students but it should be underscored that comprehension is not affected without conjunctions. That kind of pattern may arise when learners do not have the necessary knowledge and mastery over the use of Arabic conjunctions which is true to some extent with regard to the data of this study. This study reiterates that students must be exposed to concordance lines of each conjunction where the semantic, stylistic and syntactic properties are clearly observed and comprehended (Yen-Chu Tseng, 2006).

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