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# Functions of Coordinators in Native English and Korean EFL Learner Corpora*

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This study attempts to investigate the usage patterns of coordinators used in Korean learner and native English(NE) written corpora. Traditionally, the phenomenon of using coordinate conjunctions like linking adverbials has been considered as misused ones in academic prose. However, sentence-initial coordinators are frequently found not only in L2 writing, but also in native written corpora. This study compares the distribution of *and, but, or* and *so* as focal examples across the corpora in terms of phrasal phrase/clause/sentence levels as well as local/ cohesive functions in contexts where they are used. With a morpho-syntactic analysis of cross-linguistic differences between the two languages in terms of conjunctives, this paper employs both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The result demonstrates that there are two types of coordinators; *and* and *or* mainly occur at a word/phrase level, while *but* and *so* quite often appear a sentence-initial position. Especially, *or* as a typical coordinators never occurs in a sentence-initial position, while *so* is the reversed case as an initiator of the following sentence. The overall function of coordinators is biased toward local use across all corpora. Interestingly, not a few inter-sentential coordinators are observed, especially in the use of *but* and *so*. Accordingly, coordinators need to be classified by two roles; as an initiator of the following sentence as well as an intra-clausal connector to link equal elements in a sentence-middle position. With an influence of L1-specific conjunction system as well as spoken register, this phenomenon refers to Korean EFL learners' tendency to share merely equivalent meanings between conjunctive adverbials and coordinators in L1. The findings of this study suggest Korean EFL learners need to be aware of the two texture functions of coordinators by being exposed to broader discourse to identify various discourse-pragmatic functions.

**[*but/so/and/*or/coordinators/corpus/initiator/texture functions]**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

With the advent of the development of corpus linguistics, one of the most vivid studies in the field of writing would be the investigation of linking words. Especially, the matter of overuse and misuse of cohesive markers between learner and native speaker corpora have been paid attention to many researchers (Altenberg and Tapper, 1998; Chen, 2006; Lei, 2012). According to Halliday and Hasan's *Cohesion in English* (1976), texts in written or spoken English have texture and it is cohesion that contributes to such texture. To maintain textual coherence, appropriate use of cohesive devices like connectors or connective adverbials (hereafter, CA) plays an important role for effective communication. Since the influential book sparked off interest in English discourse, focusing on the importance of the effective use of connectives, many studies have investigated cohesive markers in discourse (Altenberg, 1984; Beaman, 1984; Blagoeva, 2001; Connor, 1984; Crewe, 1990; Granger & Tyson, 1996; Kim, 1995; Mackay, 2000; Norment, 1994; Reid, 1992; Tyerney & Mosenthal, 1983). Recently, an increasing number of such studies have been carried out by taking experimental and corpus-based approaches by comparing learner and native speaker corpora (Altenberg & Tapper, 1998; Granger, 1998; Granger et al., 2002; Kim & Rhee, 2014; Lee, 2004; Oh, 2009; Zihan, 2015). Universally, it has been reported that EFL/ESL learners tend to overuse, underuse and misuse a certain type of cohesive devices compared to native English speakers.

Recently, concerning the use of English discourse markers by Korean EFL learners, corpus-based studies have been widespread, focusing on the statistical comparison between corpora of the target items compared with the native English corpus. Most studies have tried to identify the distribution or overuse patterns by conducting token or type analysis, providing detailed quantitative information on the use of cohesive device. However, it is hard to find a study that demonstrates whether there is an asymmetrical acquisition pattern related to morpho-syntactic features and the textual functions of connectors. Although there are only a few studies on the function of connectors (Schleppegrell, 1996; Oh, 2009), they are restricted to *because* clause only. EFL learners' interlanguage grammar is in the middle of developing a richer description on various functions used differently for the same structure. Thus, special attention needs to be paid to illustrating how grammatical resources of English are functioned to maintain textual coherence by Korean EFL learners.

This study starts from a question about why some coordinating conjunctions such as *but* or *so* are used as CAs. Such sentence-initial coordinators are frequently observed not only in EFL/ESL learner corpora but also native speaker corpora. To explore how often coordinators are used in phrasal/ clausal/sentential levels, native and non-native speakers' written corpora are examined and compared. Employing both quantitative and

qualitative analyses, this study aims to see whether there is an asymmetrical development caused by L1 interference due to different grammatical properties between Korean and English. Especially, in terms of textual functions of sentence-initial coordinators, local and cohesive links related to their textual scope are analyzed and compared between learner corpora with different proficiency levels as well as with native corpus. Thus, this paper is expected to contribute to better understanding of how Korean EFL learners develop the texture functions of coordinators, perceiving the differences between coordinators and CAs as discourse markers with different morpho-syntactic properties between L1 and L2.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Morpho-syntactic Properties of Coordinators

Although studies on discourse markers have been dealt with quite extensively, the notion of discourse marker is still disputable and there is no agreed classification of it. Due to multiple functions of various discourse markers and a wide range of linguistic approaches to them, this study focuses on coordinators and some linking adverbials related to them semantically to compare how they function as discourse markers in L2 written corpora.

Basically, coordinators are used to build coordinate structures, both phrases and clauses, linking elements which have the same syntactic role. The main coordinators in English are just three; *and, but*, and *or*, each of which has a core meaning of addition, contrast, and alternative, respectively (Biber et al. 1999). In terms of morphological aspects, all coordinators in English are free morphemes which stand alone as a word, whereas Korean coordinators are conjunctional endings, as a kind of bound morphemes. For example, one of Korean coordinators, '*-ko*', is a conjunctive morpheme as a suffix, which is translated into '*and*' in English. On the other hand, one of Korean linking adverbials, '*kuyriko*', existing as a free morpheme, is also translated into '*and*' in English. Like this, there is a morphological difference between coordinators and CAs in Korean, but not in English.

The very morphological difference between the two languages is considered to cause Korean EFL learners to misuse or overuse English coordinators as CAs. That is, Korean learners are likely to mistake English coordinators existing as free morphemes for linking adverbials. Because their semantically equivalent meanings are similar, the morphological difference may work as a salient point to distinguish the two. In short, English coordinators seem to be perceived as CAs as well as coordinators due to the

morphological form existing as free morphemes, especially by Korean EFL learners at beginners.

Syntactically, coordinators function as inter-clausal conjunctions, linking elements which have the same structures and syntactic roles. Because they connect not only words and phrases but also clauses, they can be classified into two types; phrase-level and clause-level coordinators. Especially, their position is fixed at the clause boundary. Thus, they cannot occur between a subject and a verb at clause-level as in (1). Above all, one of the outstanding features of coordinators that distinguish from linking adverbials in English is that coordinators are mutually exclusive. That is, coordinators are in complementary distribution, whereas CAs may be preceded by coordinators as in (2). Additionally, a comma is used after CAs, but not used after coordinators.

(1) a. **They but* carved out a 5.7 per cent share of the overall vote.
b. *They, nevertheless,* carved out a 5.7 per cent share of the overall vote.
(2) a. **And but* they carved out a 5.7 per cent share of the overall vote.
b. *And nevertheless,* they carved out a 5.7 per cent share of the overall vote.
(Biber, Johnsson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999; p.80)

Such phenomena are closely related to the distinction between inter-clausal conjunctions and inter-sentential conjunctions. Coordinators are typically used at a clause initial position as inter-clausal conjunctions, while CAs are considered as inter-sentential conjunctions. That is why CAs can occur for the most part medially, including sentence-final position, although they can appear initially, too. On the other hand, coordinators are restricted to clause final position. However, clauses beginning with coordinators are sequentially fixed into the consecutive clause after the previous one. That is why coordinated clauses cannot be transposed into the preceding clause as in (4).

(3) a. *They carved out a 5.7 per cent share of the overall vote *but*.
b. They carved out a 5.7 per cent share of the overall vote, *nevertheless.*
(Biber, Johnsson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999; p.80)

(4) a. They are living in England, *or* they are spending a vacation there.
*b. *Or* they are spending a vacation there, they are living in England.
(Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985; p. 921)

Ambiguously, *so* is blurred in the borderline between coordinators and CAs. *So* is used like coordinators in that it is fixed at the clause boundary as in (4a) and (5a). At the same time, like adverbials, it easily combines with coordinators as in (2) and (5b). That

is, '*and so*' is not ungrammatical unlike '*And but*' as in (2a).

(5) a. At least, we still get promoted, *so* our season's not been completely lost.
(Biber, Johnsson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999; p.80)
b. This method proved very helpful, *and so* they decided to choose it.

In the discussion of distribution of the coordinators, *and* is considered to be by far the most common coordinator in all the registers, while *but* is most frequently in conversation and fiction, and least frequent in academic prose. Typically, *and* is used as a phrase-level connector in academic prose, but more used at a clause-level in spoken language (Biber et al., 1999; p. 81). According to Pyo's (2017) study, there are no significant differences between Korean EFL learners' and native English speakers' written corpora in terms of overall distribution of coordinators used in academic essays. Her study also shows that the most frequently used coordinator in all corpora is *and*. Interestingly, *and* and *or* which are used mostly in a word/phrase level rather than a clause level rarely occur in a sentence-initial position. In contrast, it is reported that *but* and *so* used in a clause level appear in a sentence-initial position more frequently. Based on this result, Pyo (2017) claims that Korean EFL learners recognize *and* and *or* as coordinators more easily, using them as phrase-level connectors more frequently, whereas it is not the case in the use of *but* and *so*. In her study, the learner corpus is limited to essays from university students in intermediate levels and compares to native speaker's one. Thus, Korean learners' tendency to confuse coordinators with CAs needs to be examined in more various proficiency levels of English.

Conventions of academic writing do not allow coordinators in a sentence-initial position. Instead, coordinators are supposed to be linked with the same syntactic structures, both phrases and clauses in a relationship of parallel configuration. However, some coordinators at a clause boundary may occur in a sentence-initial position as an inter-sentential conjunction. This phenomenon is quite common in informal or spoken discourse, but there is no coincidence among researchers and grammarians who discuss the functions of such coordinators. Concerning inter-sentential coordinators used as CAs, some studies have regarded them as disjuncts occurring in a colloquial mode in English. In fact, there has been little mention related to propositional meaning of coordinators. In academic writing, however, coordinators are more readily interpreted as discourse markers to determine the meaning relationships between the clauses that are connected (Martin, 1983a, Schiffrin, 1987, Schleppegrell, 1996). In this respect, the following section discusses the textual functions of coordinators to explore further whether such inter-sentential coordinators function as turn-initial coordinators or merely as a substitute expanded from clause-level coordinators.

## 2. Textual Functions of Coordinators

It is well-known that conjunctions are signals of clause relation. Thus, they are more readily interpreted as markers of meaning relationships in texts (Schleppegrell, 1996). Especially, in academic writing, they naturally play pragmatic roles and function as cohesive discourse markers, structuring discourse because conjunctions, by their semantic meaning, presuppose the presence of certain other elements in a text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

One of the ways of creating cohesion in English is by conjunction, which serves as a discourse marker to indicate that a clause in a new turn relates to a preceding one. Thus, conjunctions play an important role in the system of continuity, holding conjunctive relations between text segments realized by clause complexes (Halliday, 2014).

(6) Jane: We were all exactly the same.
Kate: ***But*** I don't know that we were friends.
Jane: *Oh*, I think you were friends: you were friendly enough.
(Halliday, 2014, p. 605)

In (6), the conjunction, *but* serves as a marker to present a relationship between the *but*-clause, *I don't know that we were friends* and the previous one. Here the conjunction, *but* is used as a cohesive marker to link continuity. Such cohesive conjunctions are called 'clue words' (Cohen & Murphy, 1984), a term used in natural language processing. This cohesive system of conjunction provides 'clues' to indicate lexico-semantic relations cohesively within text (Halliday, 2014).

Here the sentence-initial coordinators like *but* in (6) have been considered as misused connectors in written academic prose. However, a number of studies have suggested that it is a universal phenomenon that EFL/ESL learners overuse or misuse connectors in their English writing. For example, Green, Christopher, and Mei (2000) reported that Chinese learners of English tend to overuse connectors as topic-fronting devices in English academic writing. In their research, they found that Chinese writers of English have a tendency to show more marked use of connectors in a sentence-initial position. In Lee's (2004) study, Korean students' preference for sentence-initial positioning of CAs was also noted, which is regarded as a common phenomenon in L2 English. According to Granger and Tyson (1996), the overused or misused connectors in a sentence-initial position may be considered as a developmental phenomenon because it is witnessed in learner corpora with different L1 backgrounds.

Meanwhile, other studies have reported that the tendency of overusing or misusing connectors is a universally observed property in language acquisition, regardless of L1.

Gardezi and Nesi (2009) compared the use of connective ties in Pakistani and British students' writing and found British students tend to overuse adversative connectors only while Pakistani students overused and misused all the other types such as causal, addictive and temporal. In Bolton, Nelson, and Hung's (2003) study, British and Hong Kong EFL students' use of connective adverbials were compared with that of professional academic writers. Their result showed that both British and Hong Kong EFL students overused various connectors.

Next, concerning functions of conjunctions, Altenberg (1984) classifies textual functions into local and global links to account for the importance of understanding various discourse functions. Local links are typically restricted to adjacent clauses, whereas global links may "encompass large portion of a text, pick out a distant or vaguely specified referent in the preceding discourse… "(Oh, 2009, p. 447). The common results found in Schleppegrell's (1996) and Oh's (2009) studies show that ESL/EFL learners' use of the focal example, *because*, is severely biased towards local links in their writing without creating cohesive ties in the larger text. In addition, Oh (2009) reports that their recurrent use of independent *because* clause may come from their native language transfer as well as spoken registers. For other several researchers, cohesive markers are assumed to function as the global or local referent. The globally used linguistic device refers to the salient referent in the whole discourse and is assumed to have the form of a proposition (Keenan & Schieffelin, 1976, Johnes, 1977, van Dijk, 1985, Kim, 2003). On the other hand, the local cohesion is defined as the salient referent at a given moment.

In this sense, this study operationally defines 'local function' as a linking device to connect the two linguistic units restricted to the preceding ones in an on-going event. That is, it refers to a conjunctive link between two linguistic units within a sentence. On the other hand, the term, global function refers to a linkage between larger chunks of text such as paragraphs. That is, global coherence is required to encompass large portion of a text to maintain the global topic in the whole discourse. Additionally, the present study suggests one more function of connectors, 'cohesive function', to cover a more detailed one between the local and global one. The cohesive function in this study operationally refers to linguistic devices to connect the previous unit to the following one beyond the sentence level, marking text cohesion between ideas conveying in each sentence. As one of typical cohesive devices, linking adverbials themselves involve cohesion to connect ideas by elaborating further the previously mentioned point, repeating or refining the prior information, or reinforcing conclusions and arguments (Schleppegrell, 1996).

**TABLE 1**

**Three Types of Textual Functions of Connectors**

| Types | Functions | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Local | Local links to connect two linguistic units within a sentence | Recently, the minimum wage system has just started, **so** people need to know the values of … [KEFL 2 – 055] |
| Cohesive | Cohesive markers to link the prior unit to the adjacent one beyond the sentence for cohesion | Gambling has been found to be addictive. **Therefore,** many people will take up the lottery without being able to stop. [NE -006] |
| Global | Global links to larger chunks of text to keep coherence in the whole discourse | … I don't think we are robbed out of our satisfaction because of the technology **because** you are a doctor and because of the technology, you are able to help more patients. (Schleppegrell, 1996, p. 279) |

According to Schleppegrell(1996), the conjunction *because*, in Table 1, is used to introduce an example, which violates the conventions of academic writing as a run-on sentence. Due to such inappropriate uses of an oral style and the fact that coordinators do not have a broad scope in linking the two linguistic units, the global function of connectors is excluded in this study.

Focusing on the local and cohesive functions, it is generally assumed that conjunctions play a role of signals of clause relations. However, at the same time, clause relations also clarify the meaning of conjunctions by examining the ideational content that the clauses convey (Schleppegrell, 1996). As discourse markers, coordinators have important interactive functions, forming the initiating move in a turn (Stenstrom, 1994). For example, *and* can be used to play a role of starting a new thought (Tannen, 1993) as a marker of continuation in interaction, not to speak of a coordination of idea units (Schiffrin, 1987). Thus, textual functions of conjunctions need to be figured out in the context in details. Also, both coordinating conjunctions and CAs serve as discourse markers to establish cohesive ties or links with preceding elements, L2 learners may be confused about the exact difference between them. Despite conventional difference between the two in academic writing, a linguistic attribute of the very inter-sentential coordinators needs to be identified based on the actual language usage, corpora.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research Questions

For the purpose of providing an account for the nature of inter-sentential coordinators in written academic prose by comparing Korean learner and native English corpora, the

following research questions are posed;

1. What is different about the usage patterns of English coordinators in academic prose between Korean EFL learner and native corpora?
2. Is the use of inter-sentential coordinators biased toward local function or cohesive one?

Based on the morpho-syntactic and functional properties of coordinators mentioned in chapter 2, this study explores the nature of coordinators used in a sentence-initial position by examining them in learner and native corpora. If the function refers to turn-initial coordinators, it may be an evidence to support the claim that coordinators are used as alternatives of CAs. However, if not, the inter-sentential coordinators are considered merely as extended use transferred from clause-level ones. The former refers to a misused case, and the latter corresponds to an overgeneralized one. The result of this study will be carefully interpreted considering different morpho-syntactic properties of coordinators between L1 and L2 and learners' awareness of textual functions across different proficiency levels.

## 2. Data

The data used for the current study was compiled as Korean EFL learner corpus (hereafter, KEFL) using 228 essays written by Korean university students in Seoul. In this university, all the students must enroll two three-credit English courses, English writing and English speaking, respectively because the two courses are mandatory. As determined by the placement, the students are supposed to choose a proper class according to their scores of the test. As a placement test, English essay writing and interview are conducted before each semester starts. Among the four levels, advanced, intermediate, low, and rudimentary, 114 essays in the intermediate level and in the advanced level, respectively to compile learner corpora. The essay data to construct learner corpora was collected from English writing-related classes, which the researcher taught from 2016 to 2017, for one and a half years. The learners' majors were considerably various because the courses are mandatory for all students. The majority were freshmen, but there were about 25 percent of sophomores, juniors and seniors including re-takers of the course. The compiled KEFL corpora consists 228 essays totaling 104,346 words, and 457.7 words per essay.

In this study, the overall proficiency level of the intermediate, based on the norm of MATE(Multimedia Assisted Test of English), corresponds roughly to intermediate to upper-intermediate levels and that of the advanced groups covers upper-intermediate to advanced levels. The current study focuses on intermediate to advanced learners of English for two reasons. First, in order to observe the use of various discourse markers, the data

must be obtained from the learners who are able to write English academic essays with several paragraphs. Second, in terms of language acquisition, the intermediate level is a stage where overgeneralization is observed most vigorously and starts to retreat gradually (Yang, 2005, 2016). Therefore, it is deemed appropriate to select the two levels because L2 learners in the levels, who start to write paragraph-level essays intensively, are expected to show dynamic features in the process of acquiring proper use of various connectors.

To compare with KEFL, the essays written by native speakers are used. The native English corpus (hereafter, NE) as a norm in analyzing the learner corpus was from the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS), which contains present-day American and British university students' academic essays. The data from the LOCNESS used in this study is composed of 114 essays randomly selected among a total of 347 ones. The overall description of each corpus is as follows;

**TABLE 2**
**Description of the KEFL and NE Corpora**

| Corpora | Number of essays | Number of words | words per essay |
|---|---|---|---|
| KEFL 1 | 114 | 34,844 | 305.6 |
| KEFL 2 | 114 | 69,502 | 609.7 |
| NE | 114 | 60,400 | 529.8 |

## 3. Procedures of Data Analysis

The current study focuses on usage pattern of coordinators and some linking adverbials which share similar semantic meanings to coordinators, such as *however, therefore,* and *furthermore.* The focal coordinators used in the study are *and, but, or* and *so.* As mentioned in the previous section, the main coordinators in English are *and, but* and *or* in terms of a syntactical aspect and *so* is in the borderline between coordinators and linking adverbials. Especially, *so* is regarded as the most frequently used connector in L2 learners' speaking and writing (Kang, 2004; Back 2012).

For quantitative analysis, the distribution and frequency of the coordinators are analyzed by AntConc 3.4.4w (Windows 2014 version). AntConc is one of the most prevalently used Corpus tools, where target words or phrases are presented in the manner of KWIC(Key Word in Context). Due to this, functions and usage of a target word can be figured out in context accurately. First, using KWIC of AntConc, the distribution and frequency of *and, but, or* and *so* are compared across the corpora in terms of phrasal, clausal and sentential levels. Additionally, some linking adverbials which have equivalent meanings to the coordinators are selected based on the frequency in the result of KWIC; *moreover, furthermore, in addition, also, however, thus, therefore, consequently*. Then according to

the semantic meanings, the distribution and frequency are calculated and compared with those of coordinators.

Next, qualitative analysis is added to investigate textual functions of connectors in contexts where they are used. Referring to Schleppergrell's (1996) study mentioned in the Chapter 2, the present study classifies the textual functions of connectors into local and cohesive ones other than global one. Operationally, the local function in this study refers to a conjunctive link restricted to the preceding linguistic units within a sentence. That is, local function is related to the information or meaning of the previous units only, not referring to overall content conveyed in the larger chunks of text than sentences. Next, cohesive function is operationally defined as a cohesive device to connect the previous linguistic units to the following ones beyond the sentence-level, marking textual cohesion. It is distinguished from global function, which refers to coherence to stick together to sustain the global topic in larger units such as paragraphs.

## IV. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Statistical Results

The frequency and distribution of coordinators analyzed across corpora between KEFL and NE and in terms of proficiency levels are presented in Table 3. As seen in Table 3, the most frequently used coordinator in all corpora is *and*, which is by far considered as the most common coordinator in all the registers (Biber et al, 1999).

**TABLE 3**

**Overall Distribution of Coordinators across the Corpora**

| Corpora | and | | or | | but | | so | | Total (per essay) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | raw token | per essay | raw token | per essay | raw token | per essay | raw token | per essay | |
| KEFL 1 | 722 | 6.33 | 131 | 1.15 | 159 | 1.40 | 123 | 0.86 | 9.96 |
| | 1.86% | | 0.37% | | 0.41% | | 0.32% | | 2.92% |
| KEFL 2 | 1,849 | 16..22 | 320 | 2.81 | 224 | 1.97 | 159 | 1.39 | 22.39 |
| | 2.66% | | 0.46% | | 0.32% | | 0.23% | | 3.67% |
| NE | 1,298 | 12.85 | 258 | 2.55 | 229 | 2.26 | 63 | 0.62 | 18.29 |
| | 2.41% | | 0.48% | | 0.43% | | 0.12% | | 3.43% |

(% per the total number of words used in each corpus)

Unlike the researcher's expectation that Korean EFL learners would overuse coordinators, compared to native speakers, the overall distribution of English coordinators does not show big differences across the corpora. As shown in the table above, Korean learners at intermediate level (KEFL 1) use 305.6 words and 9.96 coordinators per essay while 609.7 words and 22.39 coordinators at advanced level (KEFL 2). In the NE group, 529.8 words and 18.29 coordinators per essay are observed. Although the total number of coordinators used in KEFL 1 apparently seems to show a tendency to underuse, the percentages of the total coordinators per essay do not seem to demonstrate much difference among the three groups. Considering the total words used in each essay, the average percentages of coordinators used in each group are between 2.97% and 3.67%. The results of multiple comparisons, by one-way ANOVA indicate that there is no significant difference between groups ($p$=.969 between KEFL1 and KEFL2, $p$=.986 between KEFL 1 and NE, $p$=.997 between KEFL2 and NE, $p$<.05).

Following *and*, *or* and *but* are frequently used, and it is *so* that is least frequently used in all groups. These findings seem to be consistent with those of previous studies (Milton & Tsang, 1993; Bolton, Nelson, & Hung, 2002; Yoon, 2006). In fact, when the total number of '*so*' was counted, the actual numbers of it in all groups were much more than those presented in the table above. However, resulting from scrutinizing *so* in each context, it is revealed that 57.43% of the total number of *so* in the NE group, and 35.57% and 42.01% in the KEFL groups are not used as a coordinator, but as an adverb modifying adjectives mostly. Actually, there are considerably many cases in which *so* uses as other functions, not as a coordinator, such as '*so* that ~ (may)', '*so* plausible', '*so*-called', 'and *so* on'. Because such cases are excluded by checking one by one in context, *so* is the least frequently used coordinator in this study. In fact, it may be asked whether this matter was considered in previous corpus-based studies concerning the frequency of connectors.

Of course, *so* used to express a causal relationship holds a considerably high rank of overall connectors used in academic writing. Thus, to figure out the overall distribution of connectors, frequencies of several CAs whose discourse functional meanings (hereafter, DFM) are similar to those of the focal coordinators need to be examined.

**TABLE 4**
**Frequencies in Terms of Discourse Functional Meanings of Connectors**

| DFM | Connectors | KEFL 1 | | KEFL 2 | | NE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Addition | moreover | 5 | | 61 | | 1 | |
| | furthermore | 6 | 141 (19.5%) | 18 | 433 (23.4%) | 0 | 19 (1.5%) |
| | in addition | 10 | | 42 | | 1 | |
| | also | 120 | | 312 | | 17 | |
| | **and** | **722 (80.5%)** | | **1849** | **(76.6%)** | **1298 (98.5%)** | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contrast | however | 109 | (40.7%) | 189 | (45.8%) | 129 | (36%) |
| | **but** | **159** | **(59.3%)** | **224** | **(54.2%)** | **229** | **(64%)** |
| Result | therefore | 56 | 88 (41.7%) | 159 | 238 (60%) | 49 | 72 (55%) |
| | thus | 26 | | 69 | | 19 | |
| | consequently | 6 | | 10 | | 4 | |
| | **so** | **123 (58.3%)** | | **159 (40%)** | | **63 (45%)** | |

*Note*. DFM = Discourse functional meaning / raw number (% per DFM)

Table 4 presents in detail the identified types based on discourse functional meanings of each connector along with their frequencies in each corpus. Overall, since *and* is by far the most frequently used coordinator in all corpora, the percentages of the additive type of CAs are much lower compared to those of the other types of DFMs; 19.5%, 23.4% and 1.5% respectively. Interestingly, as far as the additive type of connectors is concerned, the NE group heavily depends on '*and*' (98.5%), while the KEFL groups show rather various usage patterns. Especially, *also* is frequently observed, followed by *and* in the KEFL groups.

On the other hand, in terms of contrast and result types, the difference between connectors and CAs is relatively less. Nevertheless, in the type of contrast, the coordinator, *but* is more frequently used than *however* in all groups, whereas in the type of result, the percentage of CAs is higher than that of *so* in the KEFL 2 and NE groups. Only in the KEFL 1 group, the percentage of *so* is higher than that of other CAs. The fact that percentage of using *so* to mark a result was high (58.3%) in the KEFL 1 group only can be interpreted that intermediate L2 learners tend to depend on *so* to express a result. However, it becomes clear that as their proficiency level develops, they start to try various CAs to mark a causal relationship such as *therefore, thus,* and *consequently* as seen in Table 4.

These findings may add a supportive and extended account to Pyo's (2017) study by providing developmental features in acquiring connectors. Firstly, the dependency of *so* at the intermediate level may be considered as overgeneralization when L2 learners build up a rule to mark a result in L2 grammar. That is, in the process of acquiring discourse markers to express signals of clause relations, they are regarded to undergo a kind of overgeneralization stage. Secondly, due to the morphological difference between L1 and L2, Korean L2 learners may be confused when they use coordinators and CAs in English. As mentioned in chapter 2, English coordinators and CAs are all free morphemes, but Korean coordinators are conjunctive morphemes as a kind of a bound morpheme, while Korean CAs are free morphemes. Such difference may cause Korean learners to mistake English coordinators for CAs until they reach a certain stage where they start to be aware of the linguistic properties because both serve as cohesive links with preceding elements.

As to the question whether coordinators are misused as CAs or as disjuncts, L2 learners' sensitivity to register needs to be considered by investigating the functions of coordinators in context to see whether they differ according to different proficiency levels. Especially, the functional property of inter-sentential coordinators is considered merely as extended use transferred to sentence level from clause level. To provide a more exquisite account for this, the actual use of coordinators needs to be probed in terms of phrase and clause level across corpora. The overall distribution of each coordinator used in the two levels is summarized in Table 5.

**TABLE 5**

**Distribution of Coordinators Used in Word/Phrase and Clause Levels**

| Corpora | and | | or | | but | | so | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | W/PL (%) | CL (%) | W/PL (%) | CL (%) | W/PL (%) | CL (%) | W/PL (%) | CL (%) |
| KEFL1 | 564 (78.1) | 158 (21.9) | 125 (95.4) | 6 (4.6) | 60 (37.7) | 99 (62.3) | 1 (0.08) | 122 (99.92) |
| KEFL2 | 1576 (85.2) | 273 (14.8) | 315 (98.4) | 5 (1.6) | 103 (45.9) | 121 (54.1) | 0 (0) | 97 (100) |
| NE | 818 (63) | 480 (37) | 237 (93) | 21 (7) | 65 (28.4) | 164 (71.6) | 5 (8) | 58 (92) |

*Note.* W/PL=Word/Phrasal level, CL= Clausal level

Interestingly, the comparison of the distribution of coordinators used in word/phrase and clause levels provides evidence that there are two types of coordinators; phrase-level coordinators and clause-level ones. As clearly seen in table 5, *or* and *and* are remarkably used more in a word/phrase level, whereas *so* and *but* are predominantly used in a clause level across all corpora. Especially, in the learner corpora, the percentage of *so* used in a clause level take up 99.92% and 100% respectively. This finding is closely related to the possibility that L2 learners are more confused about the coordinators mostly used in a clause level such as *so* and *but* than phrase-level coordinators, *or* and *and*. That is, concerning the clause-level coordinators, *so* and *but*, it seems that L2 learners are much more likely to confuse them with CAs. In other words, Korean learners' tendency to confuse coordinators with CAs is closely related to the levels where coordinators are used. Phrase-level coordinators such as *and* and *or* are perceived at an earlier stage as genuine coordinators, while coordinators frequently used in a clause level such as *but* and *so* are likely to occur at a sentence-initial position more frequently, which makes L2 learners confused with CAs.

Additionally, the frequencies of coordinators used in a sentence-initial position like CAs are probed to provide further analysis of this matter.

**TABLE 6**
**Frequencies of Sentence-initial Coordinators across the Corpora**

| Corpora | And | Or | But | So |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KEFL 1 | 24 (3.32%) | 0(0%) | 21 (13.21%) | 51(41.46%) |
| KEFL 2 | 28 (1.51%) | 0(0%) | 13 (5.8%) | 47 (29.56%) |
| NE | 5 (0.39%) | 2(0.78%) | 24(10.53%) | 15(23.9%) |

In accordance with the finding revealed in the distribution of the phrase- and clause-level coordinators, *or* is never used as a sentence-initial coordinator in the learner corpora and hardly in the native corpus either (0.78%). This finding presents that Korean EFL learners perceive '*or*' as a typical coordinator to connect the two phrases. That is why they never use '*or*' in a sentence-initial position like CAs. Next, the percentages of *and* used in a sentence-initial position are also considerably low in the all corpora (3.32%, 1.51%, 0.39% of the total numbers of *and*), which means that they are clearly regarded as phrase-level coordinators. On the other hand, the percentages of *so* and *but* used as an inter-sentential coordinator like CAs are relatively high. Especially, *so* used as an inter-sentential coordinator takes up 41.46% in the KEFL1 although the percentages are decreasing as English proficiency levels increase (29.56% in the KEFL2 and 23.9% in the NE). In case of *but*, about 10 to 13% of it is used as an inter-sentential coordinator in the intermediate level and the native group, but the percentage in KEFL2 drops by half, 5.8%. This finding shows that advanced learners seem to be more conscious and aware of the register more strictly when they start to learn academic writing intensively than ordinary native college students, at least, in terms of the use of *but* in formal writing.

## 2. Textual Functions of Coordinators

Typically, linking adverbials carry out cohesive function in a sentence-initial position because they present cohesive ties to the meaning of the previous sentence. On the other hand, coordinators are typically regarded to serve local function since they signal semantic relationships between the preceding and following clauses within a sentence. However, as for the inter-sentential coordinators used in a sentence-initial position, corpus-based studies with various data need to provide reasonable evidence to understand L2 learners' developmental sensitivity of register in acquiring appropriate connectors in academic

writing. In this respect, textual functions of coordinators were examined in each context where each coordinator is used.

As a result, the overall functions of coordinators are biased toward local use rather than cohesive one although there are clear differences depending on the types of coordinators. In the use of *so*, the gap between local and cohesive function is relatively little, especially in KEFL1 (17%), while the gaps in KEFL2 and NE are 40% and 52% respectively. This means that *so* seems to be used more as local function than as cohesive one as English proficiency level is higher, but 24~30% of *so* used in KEFL2 and NE groups still functions as cohesive link. Like this, the reason why the percentage of *so* used as an inter-sentential conjunction is the highest among other coordinators is closely related to the ambiguous syntactic status of *so* between a coordinator and a CAs. As mentioned in chapter 2, although coordinators cannot occur together as in **and but* due to a property of complementary distribution, *so* can occur with *and* together.

(7) Yet these people would get into a vicious circle where the only way to pay off gambling debts would be to win, ***and so*** the problem increases. (NE05-06)
(8) It is cheaper to shoot and bury that beef cattle than to raise those making a loss, ***and so*** it my soon become that many farmers who have a choice will stop rearing beef cattle. (NE09-03)

Interestingly, the use of '*and so*' as in (7) and (8) was found in NE corpus only (69 tokens), while not a single use occurred in KEFL corpora, which means that native speakers of English seem to perceive such an ambiguous attribute of *so* just like an adverb, not as a pure coordinator. Considering the tree diagram of '*and so*', it becomes clear that *so* in '*and so*' is identified as a CA like *then* in '*and then*' because *and* is positioned in CC(coordinating conjunction) and *so* in AdvP in a tree diagram. That is, native speakers of English are assumed to recognize such ambiguity between the two properties concerning *so*. However, unlike the other coordinators, Korean EFL learners show a strong propensity of using *so* in clause-level only and as an inter-sentential conjunction. It can be interpreted that Korean learners are in confusion on the syntactic status of *so*, leading to misuse or overgeneralization.

In terms of L2 learning mechanisms, the following scenario can be expected when Korean EFL learners acquire English coordinators. At first, they are assumed to perceive word/phrase-level coordinators such as *or* and *and* more clearly than clause-level ones. Gradually, as they come across clause-level coordinators such as *so*, they become to recognize a clause, which may lead to a confusion between a clause and a sentence because both consist of a subject and a verb. At this stage, when learners encounter CAs which are

similar in meanings to coordinators, they get to fall into confusion, not distinguishing between CAs and clause-level coordinators. That is, recognizing the distinction between a clause and a sentence may increase awareness of a distinction between CAs and clause-level coordinators because both are followed by a subject and a verb. Due to this reason, learners may fall into confusion in the process of acquiring properties of a clause-level coordinator, *so*.

Such confusion may be exacerbated by L1 transfer, as well. Morphologically, Korean coordinators are bound morphemes (ex. *-ko, -geeman; and, but*), whereas Korean CAs are free morphemes (ex. *Kuyriko* meaning 'addition', *Kuyruena* meaning 'adversative'). Due to such a morphological aspect, when Korean learners acquire English where both coordinators and CAs are all free morphemes, they are likely to confuse English coordinators as CAs, especially, in case of clause-level coordinators such as *so*. That is why *so* is often used in a sentence-initial position like CAs as in (10). The distinction between the two different functions of coordinators can be observed in the following examples;

(9) Very little freight is transposed by rail these days**, so** the railways have lost income due to this. (NE01-07)
(10) Because of this, the price of beef would have to decrease in order to attract more customers. **So,** as a result of the claim that beef containing contaminated offer may cause CJD in humans, farmers … (NE09-08)

Definitely, *so* in (9) is a coordinator functioning as local link within a sentence as an intra-clausal conjunction to link equal elements in a sentence-middle position. However, *so* in (10) as an inter-sentential conjunction fulfils a function leading to a conclusion about the point mentioned in the previous sentence, which is one of the cohesive functions Schleppergrell (1996) claimed. That is, *so* used in a sentence-initial position is an initiator of the following sentence as a cohesive marker to signify continuity, expressing a temporal result of the preceding sentence. Accordingly, *so* has two types of functions; a cohesive link as an inter-sentential conjunction is distinguished from a local link as an intra-clausal conjunction. The same principle may be applied to other coordinators such as *but*. In (11), ***but*** fulfils a local function as an inter-sentential conjunction, a typical coordinator, while ***But*** in (12) is used to mark adversative cohesion of the previous sentence as an initiator of the following sentence in a sentence-initial position.

(11) Sharing cars seems feasible, ***but*** is unpopular for various reasons. (NE01-01)
(12) Genetic manipulation has also been used to increase yields of crops this saving lives

in third world countries and reducing costs of raw food products. ***But*** this information can be used for the wrong purposes as such information has been used in the past …. (NE08-22)

However, there are considerably big gaps between the two functions in the use of the other coordinators; *and, but, or*. Especially, in case of *or* which is mainly used as a word/phrase-level coordinator, its textual function is 100% local in KEFL corpora, and 99% in NE corpus. This result means that because word/phrase-level coordinators are more likely for Korean learners to be recognized as a coordinators clearly, they seldom misuse the typical word/phrase-level coordinator, *or*, as an inter-sentential conjunction. Due to such clear awareness of *or* as a typical word-level coordinator, *or* is never found in a sentence-initial position in Korean learner corpora.

Additionally, another interesting point found in KEFL corpora is that Korean learners tend to use *or* in front of the second item as well as the third items when it connects three or more parts of a parallel structure as in (13) and (14). On the other hand, the use of *or* is limited to connect only two items in NE corpus, showing no case where *or* connects three or more parts. On the other hand, the use of *or* is limited to connect only two parts in NE corpus, showing no case where *or* connects three or more items.

(13) … because they need to interact with all kinds of people such as customers ***or*** business partners ***or*** supporters. (KEFL2 04-02)
(14) They are going to extreme measures, using laxatives, ***or*** vomiting, ***or*** using dieting pills. (KEFL2 01-07)

Considering the usage pattern of each coordinator across corpora mentioned above, L2 learners are required to develop their sensitivity to morpho-syntactic properties of coordinators between L1 and L2 at first. As their proficiency levels increase, they gradually become aware of more complex types of conjunctions and may confuse some coordinators with CAs, especially, in case of a clause-level coordinator such as *so*. However, even though L2 learners' awareness of textual functions is on the rise, some clause-level coordinators are still used like CAs functioning as a cohesive bond, which is also found in NE corpus. Taken together all the findings of the current study, two classifications of coordinators are suggested as in Table 7.

**TABLE 7**
**Two Classifications of Coordinators**

| by levels | by positions | by linking | by functions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Word/phrase-level clause-level (some) | Intra-clausal conjunctions | Local link within a sentence | Connectors of parallel items |
| Clause-level (some) | Inter-sentential conjunctions | Cohesive link between sentences | Initiators of the following sentence |

## V. CONCLUSION

The present study is to explore L2 learners' linguistic behavior with focus on usage patterns and functions of coordinators as discourse markers in English academic prose. In the process of restructuring L2 grammar, developing L2 learners' sensitivity to functions of cohesive markers is an indispensable condition to acquire cohesive devices such as conjunctions. Taken together from the findings of the study across learner and native speaker corpora, the current study provides several pedagogical implications in terms of using English coordinators in academic prose.

Firstly, the question arises about a traditionally well-known prescriptive reaction against starting a sentence with coordinators in formal writing. Actually, this study shows not a few cases where *so* and *but* as clause-level coordinators often play a role of an initiator as a cohesive bond. Considering the similar frequency of coordinators used as initiators in NE corpus compared to those in KEFL corpora, it would be difficult to say that Korean learners tend to misuse coordinators in a sentence-initial position. Especially, in case of *so* used in a clause-level only, the portions used as an inter-sentential conjunction are quite high (41.5%, 29.6%, and 23.9%). Thus, there is a controversial issue of considering sentence-initial coordinators as misused ones. In academic prose, the prescriptive norm on utilizing coordinators as cohesive ties needs to be reconsidered.

Moreover, Korean learners seem to be more confused about clause-level coordinators (*so* and *but*) as CAs than word/phrase-level ones (*or* and *and*) because they may have a difficulty in distinguishing between clauses and sentences. Since both a clause and a sentence are made up of a subject and a verb, they are considered to be under a process of overgeneralization until they become to tell a clause from a sentence. That is, in the process of restructuring L2 grammar, it would be difficult for L2 learners to judge whether clause-level coordinators are coordinators or CAs, while word/phrase-level coordinators tend to be easily recognized as coordinators. Accordingly, until they fully acquire the appropriate knowledge on a clause and a sentence, there is a high possibility

that clause-level coordinators are misused as CAs.

Such confusion may be exacerbated by L1 transfer, as well. Morphologically, Korean coordinators are bound morphemes (ex. *-ko*, *-geeman*; *and*, *but*), whereas Korean CAs are free morphemes (ex. *Kuyriko* meaning 'addition', *Kuyruena* meaning 'adversative'). Due to such a morphological difference, when Korean learners acquire English where both coordinators and CAs are all free morphemes, they are likely to confuse English coordinators as CAs at first. However, looking at the result of the study which shows the textual function of a word-level coordinator, *or*, is all local, word-levels coordinators are more easily recognized for pure coordinators. Considering that Korean learners seldom use the word-level coordinator, *or*, in a sentence-initial position, it becomes clear that they seem to acquire local links earlier than cohesive links beyond a sentence level.

So far as coordinators are concerned, the current study will contribute to understanding the actual usage patterns in written academic prose, not only in native speaker's corpus, but also across different proficiency levels of L2 English corpora. In this respect, it should be noted that the present study could have useful suggestions for facilitating L2 learners' awareness on functions of coordinators as discourse markers as well as inform L2 teachers of some fundamental causes of what is called 'misuse' of coordinators, both in linguistic and in functional aspects. By providing L2 learners with sufficient opportunities to use negative evidence such as explicit feedback or correction (Pyo, 2015), they should build up sensitivity to functions of conjunctions including coordinators, as local, cohesive or global markers. The current study rests on the conviction that L2 learners need to be exposed to broader discourse to identify various discourse-pragmatic functions when they learn English academic writing.

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**Examples in: English**
**Applicable Language: English**
**Applicable Level: Tertiary**

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