

英文要旨

The use of connectives and referential markers in English writing is somewhat problematic for Japanese learners of English. In order to gain an important clue with regard to solving the cohesion problem in writing in English, a close analysis of how cohesive devices are used by Japanese learners of English is highly required.

This paper investigates the characteristics of grammatical cohesion in English essays written by Japanese learners of English. The extent to which each essay is grammatically cohesive will be examined in terms of the four cohesive devices identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976): (i) reference, (ii) substitution, (iii) ellipsis, and (iv) conjunction. According to a number of studies that compared cohesive features in the writings of ESL/EFL learners with those in the writings of native English speakers, ESL/EFL learners tend to use more cohesive devices. In particular, the use of several conjunctions including *and*, *because*, *but*, and *so* is prominent in both narrative and argumentative essays written by novice and intermediate learners, who, however, tend to use fewer conjunctions such as *however*, *yet*, *therefore*, and so on than do native speakers of English. Other studies reveal that variation in the use of cohesive devices, not the total number of uses of those devices, is a sign that the learner is an advanced or proficient writer of English.

In order to examine cohesive features in the writings of Japanese learners of English, a study was conducted with the following two research questions:

1) Is there a difference in tendency to use cohesive devices in both narrative and argumentative essays between Japanese high school and university students?

2) How does a tendency on the part of Japanese high school and university students to use cohesive devices in both narrative and argumentative essays change over time?

To answer these two questions, a cross-sectional method was adopted for research question 1, and a longitudinal method for research question 2. In both methods, the number of appropriate uses of cohesive ties in each essay was counted and every use was categorized into one of Halliday and Hasan's four types of cohesive elements. Then, the number of uses of each element was analyzed statistically in order to determine whether there is a significant difference either between high school and university students or between each of the

identical groups.

One of the notable results of the first analysis was that the high school students overused the conjunction *because*. It can be presumed that the reason for this overuse is that the high school students were unable to keep writing within the first viewpoint that they initially expressed at the beginning of the essay, while many university students were able to develop their ideas within one domain. Because the high school students changed topics very frequently within the same essay, they needed to give another point of view at each change, supporting this tactic with the repeated use of *because*.

Another tendency that the high school students demonstrated was that they seemed to have difficulty using the subordinate conjunction *when*. One interpretation of their underuse of *when* lies in the difference in word order between Japanese and English. In Japanese, the translation of the word *when* (*-toki*) comes at the very end of the clause, while in English *when* is placed at the very beginning of the clause. It is possible that this difference made it difficult for the high school students to use the conjunction *when* in their writings.

Another cohesive device that the university students used more frequently was the adversative adverbial *however*. This suggests that the only device that the high school students were able to use to express adversative notions is *but*, while the university students had several choices, meaning that the university students were more proficient users of English.

One interesting result regarding the use of the definite article *the* is that the university students used it more frequently in the narrative essays. It can be presumed that they used *the* to avoid excessive use of personal pronouns such as *he*. The high school students, on the other hand, overused *he*, implying that they were not skilled enough to use *the+Noun* as a marker referring to a person or thing appearing in the preceding sentence. It is also possible that they concentrated too much on writing one single sentence, forgetting what they had written in the previous sentences. In either case, they did not have any choice but to refer to the same referent in the same way in every sentence where it appeared.

With regard to the variety of cohesive devices used as conjunctions or reference markers, the university students surpassed the high school students in both the narrative and argumentative essays. This result supports those of several previous studies showing that

advanced learners used more types of cohesive devices than intermediate or novice learners.

The result of the second analysis, relating to research question 2 was that the high school students showed a change in their use of cohesive devices while the university students did not. The comparison of the first and second essays written by the same high school students on the same topics revealed that they showed a tendency to use temporal conjunctions such as *later* and *then*. This means that their use of cohesive devices became closer to some extent to that of the university students, who showed in the first study a tendency to use several cohesive devices categorized into the same temporal group. The other main finding regarding the high school students was that they used a smaller number of *because*s, which also implies that their tendency to use it is almost as strong as that discovered about the university students in the first analysis.

As the results of both the cross-sectional and longitudinal studies show, students learning English at different developmental stages show a different pattern of use of cohesive devices in their writings. Having discovered these tendencies in students at each level, we can gain potential insightful pedagogical suggestions as to how to solve the problems of the use of connectives in essays written by Japanese learners of English.