

# Conjunction in Spoken English and ESL Writing

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*This paper compares strategies for conjunction in spoken English and English as a Second Language (ESL) writing. Using the conjunction because as a focal example, the paper illustrates how ESL writers use because clauses to indicate the knowledge base for their assertions, to introduce independent segments, and to display links between sections of discourse. While spoken English commonly uses because clauses for these functions, they are typically realized in different ways in academic writing. Recognizing such uses as inappropriate register choices identifies them as transfer of strategies common in spoken English into a genre of written English in which other strategies for clause combining are expected. This situates these infelicitous choices at the discourse rather than sentence level, showing that ESL writers' lack of experience with the lexical and grammatical resources of academic registers manifests itself even in conjunction and clause combining strategies. For ESL writers, developing their skills in new genres requires knowledge about how grammatical resources are typically used in realizing those genres. This study contributes to our understanding of the role of conjunction in the structuring of spoken and written texts, and of the role of register differences in shaping ESL writing.*

## INTRODUCTION

Speech and writing are different modalities which are difficult to compare directly, since discourse emerges in specific situations where language constitutes genres. Genres are understood here as text or discourse types such as informal conversations, narratives, or academic essays, cultural units which are constituted by lexical and grammatical resources (Halliday and Hasan 1989, Martin 1992). Different configurations of these lexical and grammatical resources can be characterized as registers. Different register choices are more or less appropriate, or more or less effective, in the realization of particular genres. This paper examines conjunction and clause combining in the essay writing of English as a Second Language (ESL) students, showing how they sometimes draw on registers that are more appropriate for genres of interactional speech.

## STRATEGIES FOR CLAUSE LINKAGE IN SPEECH AND WRITING

Recent analyses of speech and writing have illuminated the differences in register that are reflected in different genres (e.g. Chafe 1985, Halliday 1987, 1989, Martin 1989). Language users draw on different grammatical and lexical resources in creating texts of different types, and study of the different choices

that are appropriate for particular genres gives us a better understanding of the role of register differences in text production

One grammatical resource which contributes to register differences in different genres is the conjunctive system. Analysis of the similarities between the ways spoken English and ESL writing employ the conjunctive system helps to further specify the register differences that characterize particular uses of language, and helps us to understand the strategies that language learners use in attempting unfamiliar genres.

Conjunction is a grammatical resource for indicating links within texts. Linguists have described some of the different ways that linkages are indicated in speech and writing (e.g. Chafe 1985, Halliday 1987, 1989).<sup>1</sup> Spontaneous spoken language typically employs clause chaining strategies, using adverbial clauses and conjunctions to link segments of discourse. This manifests itself in a greater number of finite verbs and clauses linked with conjunctions in spoken language (Martin 1989), and in a greater number of adverbial clauses, especially reason adverbials, in speech than in writing (Poole and Field 1976, Crystal 1979, Beaman 1984, Thompson 1984).

Written language, on the other hand, tends to use nominalizations, adjectives, complex verbs, and prepositional phrases to condense information and ideas into single-clause structures (Chafe 1985, Martin 1989). In academic writing, links between propositions are more typically expressed through verbs that convey semantic relationships through prepositional phrases, or through other strategies of syntactic condensation, rather than through conjunction and clause chaining (Halliday 1987, Martin 1989, 1992).

This paper will show how ESL writers use strategies for conjunction that are typical of spoken English. The focal example here will be the conjunction *because*. Although *because* is typically described as representing a causal relationship between two clauses (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik 1972), in spoken discourse, *because* clauses have a range of functions related to interactional concerns such as negotiating meaning and information flow, or structuring discourse (Ford 1993, Schleppegrell 1991, 1992). In other words, the same grammatical structure fulfills different discourse functions when used in different modes or genres. This is also true of other conjunctions. For example, Ford and Thompson (1986) demonstrate that an *if* clause can be used to express a polite directive in speech, a function that does not typically occur in writing.

In their different functional roles, conjunctions also convey different meanings (Schiffrin 1987: 182–98). Conjunctions, by their semantic meanings, presuppose the presence of certain other elements in a text (Halliday and Hasan 1976). Use of *because*, for example, would seem to presuppose the existence of an assertion for which the *because* clause provides a reason or cause. But the extent to which the semantic force of conjunctions is foregrounded varies in different discourse contexts. When conjunctions function as cohesive discourse markers, they make pragmatic contributions to the ongoing interaction and structuring of discourse, and their semantic contributions are less in focus. For

example, in spoken explanations, *so* and *because* have been shown to introduce clauses with informationally equivalent propositions (Altenberg 1984, Schleppegrell 1992)

This is possible because discourse markers and conjunctions do not determine the meaning relationships between the clauses that are connected (Martin 1983a, Schiffrin 1987). The interpretation depends on the overall sequence of clauses and the meanings that they convey, rather than on the overt marking of the relationship between the parts of the text (van Dijk 1977, Hoey 1983, Mann, Matthiessen, and Thompson 1992). Conjunctions are signals of clause relations but clause relations also clarify the meaning of conjunctions. It is only by examining the ideational content of the clauses, the sequential distribution of the conjunctions, and the interactional contexts in which they occur, that we can identify the functions they perform and the meanings they contribute. Conjunctions can signal relationships and help the speaker to manage interaction, while contributing little propositional meaning.

This is especially true in spoken discourse. It is no coincidence that grammarians and researchers who discuss differences in the functions of conjunctions typically use spoken English examples to explicate occurrences with pragmatic meaning. For example, Quirk *et al.* (1972: 752) describe pragmatic uses of *because* as 'disjuncts of reason', said to occur 'in colloquial English'. Other studies of the same conjunction also use examples from spoken English, often relying on intonation for distinguishing between those instances of *because* with causal meaning and those that report the basis of the speaker's knowledge (e.g. Rutherford 1970, Kac 1972, Lakoff 1984). In academic writing, however, conjunctions are more readily interpreted as markers of meaning relationships in texts. Pragmatic functions which are common and typical in speech rarely occur in academic writing.

The more prominent role of conjunctions in discourse structuring in the spoken mode can be seen in the frequency of occurrence of conjunctions that serve as discourse markers in speech. *Because* clauses are more frequent in speech than writing when studies compare these two modes (Altenberg 1984, Beaman 1984). Biber's (1988) work on textual dimensions of speech and writing shows that causal subordination, defined as use of *because* clauses, co-occurs with involved and generalized-content features, typically more characteristic of speech, rather than with informational features, typically associated with writing. In a larger database from which the ESL examples in this paper come, university-level ESL writers use twice the number of *because* clauses as non-ESL writers responding to the same essay prompt. According to Crowhurst (1987), developing writers use *because* less frequently as their writing matures and they learn the conventions of academic written English.

In addition to using *because* more frequently, ESL writers also use *because* clauses in ways that violate expectations for academic registers, contributing to an 'oral' tone in their essays. The following section illustrates the ways that ESL writers draw on spoken registers. The analysis provides further evidence that register choices are reflected in conjunction and clause combining strategies.

## SPOKEN ENGLISH AND ESL WRITING

Currently institutions of higher education in the US are enrolling increasing numbers of immigrant ESL students. These students have spent most of their lives in the US and have learned English primarily through oral interaction, rather than through instruction. The writing of these students displays different characteristics from that of students who have learned English as a foreign language and who have high levels of literacy in their first languages. The immigrant students may be quite fluent in spoken English, but many have limited literacy in their L1, and many lack basic skills in writing academic English. Often they transfer features of spoken English into their writing (Shaughnessy 1977, Scarcella and Lee 1989)<sup>2</sup>

These features include use of discourse markers of interaction such as the *sure* in (1), which reflects an explicit dialogic interaction between writer and reader not typical of academic writing

- (1) There is a lot of hard work which goes into growing crops. *Sure* everyone can use machines to plant them but it takes a person with patience to really get the best (5705)<sup>3</sup>

ESL and other developing writers also often use lexical items or phrases that violate register conventions for academic writing, such as the *totally* in (2), a colloquial use of this adverb

- (2) I *totally* agree with Wendell Berry's view of satisfaction (2303)

Acoustic approximations, such as the *worth my wild* in (3) also indicate that the speaker is drawing on spoken rather than written models

- (3) Being a city-folk, I was brought up to do things with as little or no effort at all. And when I was to complete an obstacle of some sort I would judge my satisfaction not on what I did accomplish but on what I did after to make this accomplishment *worth my wild* (5713)

While we readily recognize these as oral features, there are other oral strategies, for example in clause combining, that are not so readily recognized as borrowings from speech, and may even be misinterpreted by readers. Analysis of how the grammatical resources for clause combining are employed in spoken genres can provide a basis for analysis of register features of ESL writing. By demonstrating that ESL writing draws on clause combining strategies that are appropriate in speaking but inappropriate for the essay genre, this paper elucidates the strategies second language learners are using in attempting unfamiliar genres, and identifies some unconscious features of register differences, e.g., clause combining strategies, that give their writing an inappropriately discursive oral quality.

Through analysis of the propositions expressed in the clauses linked by *because*, the sequential distribution of *because* and the discourse contexts in which it appears, we are able to identify contributions of this conjunction to broader discourse structuring (Schiffrin 1987). For example, Schleppegrell

(1991, 1992) found that there are specific functions of *because* in speech that have not been described well by grammars of English. These functions include internally conjunctive uses to indicate the speaker's knowledge base, uses which help to display the structure of discourse and manage interaction, and uses which contribute to cohesion in discourse through broad-scope thematic links. Such uses are not found in academic writing, where *because* clauses are constrained by notions of 'sentence' and are attached to a main clause for which the *because* clause provides a reason or cause. For developing writers, however, using *because* as a marker of discourse structure reflects a general clause-chaining strategy that is part of their oral competence, and we see those oral strategies reflected in their writing. Recognition of these uses as reflections of oral strategies provides us with a more appropriate basis for understanding how second language writing develops and what grammatical resources require more explication by teachers and practice by students.

The following three sections describe functions of *because* which are common in speech, but do not typically appear in writing. Examples are shown of how ESL writers employ *because* clauses inappropriately for those functions. The examples from speech are taken from various published papers reporting on aspects of clause structure in spoken English. The data from ESL students come primarily from essays written by entering university freshmen responding to a reading passage in a two-hour writing exam. The students are mainly from Asian L1 backgrounds, and are immigrants who have lived in the US for varying lengths of time. As graduates of American high schools who have met university entrance requirements, they are generally considered to be at an advanced level of English proficiency. The essays written by these students were analyzed to identify clauses introduced by *because* and the functions for which those clauses are used.<sup>4</sup> This paper draws parallels between uses of *because* clauses in spoken English and ESL writing, showing how ESL writers draw on spoken registers inappropriately in constructing their academic essays.

### *Knowledge-based linking*

In spoken genres, *because* clauses are often used to provide knowledge-based links. When analyzing the content of the two clauses connected by *because* in spoken English, we find that many *because* clauses support a speaker's assertion by presenting the knowledge on which the assertion is based. Such uses of conjunction are internal, reflecting the rhetorical organization of text, rather than relating events in the world (Martin 1983a, 1992). While internal conjunction is a property of both spoken and written text, these links are displayed in different ways in different modalities or genres. *Because* can function as an internal conjunction in speech, but typically not in writing. In its internal conjunctive role, *because* links a proposition and the speaker's attitude toward that proposition, or provides information about the knowledge base on which the speaker makes an assertion. An example of this is given in (4) below.

- (4) and he doesn't seem to be paying all that much attention *because* you know the pears fall (Beaman 1984: 75)

The speaker in (4) is retelling a story from a film, and the falling of the pears is evidence she has used to conclude that the pear picker she is describing doesn't seem to be paying attention. Her *because* clause provides the reason she has drawn that conclusion, rather than expressing the cause or reason for the pear picker's inattention. Such uses are possible in the negotiated interaction of spoken language, where other elements (such as her *you know*) also signal that the speaker is working primarily on the interpersonal level in making the conjunctive link. Internal conjunction using *because* is especially common in speech following evaluative statements, where it makes a link which is discourse-based, justifying or telling why the speaker has made a statement rather than providing a causal link between propositions (Schleppegrell 1991).

Another example of an internal conjunctive link is seen in (5), justifying a speaker's assertion and functioning as a discourse marker suggesting 'Here's why I say this':

- (5) there's a very good book about all this part of Germany when Germany smashed in the- at the end of the First World War called *When the Kings Depart* by an American which has come out fairly recently actually. I must lend it to you it might be interesting *because* it's certainly a period I knew nothing about whatever. From the moment when they were decisively defeated as they were in nineteen eighteen (Altenberg 1984: 49)

The speaker does not mean that the book might be interesting because it is a period he knew nothing about; instead he gives information about why he found the book informative. Using *because* for such internal conjunctive links is common in speech as speakers provide hearer-oriented elaboration and justifications, but such uses are not typically found in academic writing.

But just as speakers use internally conjunctive links to justify their assertions, so too do ESL writers, as we see in (6) and (7):<sup>5</sup>

- (6) Schedules [in American schools] are flexible *because* students who don't like history can take geography instead.
- (7) People who enjoy communication by letter are romantic *because* they tend to write in a very classy and formal way.

In (6), we expect the *because* clause to provide a justification for flexibility in student scheduling. Instead, the writer gives an example of how schedules are flexible. In (7), rather than a reason why it might be romantic to enjoy communicating by letter, we get a further elaboration of what romantic means. These writers are using *because* clauses to provide information about the knowledge base from which they draw their conclusions. We have seen that in spoken discourse, *because* clauses can connect utterances with internal speaker-oriented justifications such as 'the reason I know this is ...' or 'my evidence for saying this is ...'. The ESL writers in (6) and (7) are drawing on this strategy to make links similar to those made by the speakers in (4) and (5). Instead of an explanation that supports the assertion the writer makes, we get a justification of why the writer has made the assertion.

In (8), the ESL writer makes this articulation of point of view explicit

- (8) Freedom in education is very necessary *because* I believe that it has a positive influence over a student's future

The *I believe* in (8) is evidence that this is a point of view. As a conversational contribution, this statement would be unremarkable and its meaning clear, just as the speaker in (5) was using *because* to link an opinion with information about why the speaker holds that opinion. In writing, however, we expect the conjunction to display the meaning relationship between the two clauses it connects, in the case of *because*, a causal or reason relationship. The writer in (8) would probably not want to be interpreted as offering his belief as evidence for why freedom in education is necessary, but the choice of clause combining strategies and the *I believe*, when written, can be interpreted just this way. Academic writers typically use alternative strategies to introduce evidence or justifications, or to provide further elaboration of an assertion. In (8), using no conjunction at all and presenting two independent sentences would have been a more felicitous choice for this writer. But as we saw in examples (4) and (5) from speech, it is common for speakers to use *because* in this way to link utterances that are not logically causes and effects, or even assertions and reasons.

#### *Adding information in independent segments*

Another important function of *because* clauses in conversation is to help the speaker/writer manage information flow. Developing a spoken text requires that speakers continually monitor information, often adding background or motivating circumstances as they proceed. *Because* clauses are a common resource for this, as we see in (9). But as (9) also shows, such *because* clauses are often intonationally separate, following final intonation in the prior clause.

- (9) I just this year have    dropped down to teaching half time  
       which is what I've always wanted  
       You know I'm happy about it  
       It's a    terribly long commute,  
       a--nd now I'm just going two days a week  
       And just teaching one course a quarter  
       'Cause the regular    teaching load for us is six courses a year  
 (Chafe and Danielewicz 1987: 95)<sup>6</sup>

The *'cause* is a cohesive conjunctive link which introduces information important to understanding what the speaker means by the 'half time' mentioned at the start of the excerpt. Sometimes called 'afterthought' *because* (Altenberg 1984, Chafe 1984),<sup>7</sup> the clause introduces new information that is relevant to the interpretation of what has already been said. However, the *because* clause is not linked intonationally to the prior statement. Instead, it has its own independent intonational contour.

Such use of 'independent' *because* clauses is also a feature of ESL writing. In writing, of course, we do not have the intonation and pausing cues that speech

contains. However, punctuation does provide evidence of writers' perceptions of sentence boundaries, especially in a time-pressured essay writing task, where little revision is possible (see, for example, Chafe 1986, Ford 1992). Analyzing ESL writers' punctuation as a reflection of the intonation of speech provides evidence of the same kinds of 'afterthought' *because* clauses that are reported in studies of spoken English. Examples are given in (10) and (11).

- (10) An example of technology taking the place of man exists in the computers. Kids today get recognition for papers or essays they write but they don't get the satisfaction. *Because* the computer does most of the work in establishing the essay together. (2212)
- (11) When I first came to the United States, my family lived in small apartment, where we don't have to do any exterior labor. I enjoyed living there, but my father was very eager to find a house. *Because* he wanted to have a backyard where he could mow his own grass and clean the backyard. (2216)

While these instances of *because* provide an appropriate meaning-based link between the prior and following clauses, the punctuation suggests that the writer is drawing on a spoken model. Although such uses of *because* have been attributed to a lack of knowledge of conventions that are characteristic of writing but not of speaking (Shaughnessy 1977, Danielewicz and Chafe 1985), this may not be merely a punctuation error. That this use of *because* is functional in spoken English adds support to the suggestion here that ESL writers are inappropriately transferring conjunction strategies from speech to academic writing rather than simply making punctuation errors. The source of the error is not at the surface level of punctuation but rather at the discourse level of register choice.

Conventions of academic writing do not allow independent *because* clauses. Instead, *because* clauses are supposed to be linked with another clause in a relationship of dependency. Writers tend to use completely different strategies for integrating such information into their essays, leading to the less frequent use of *because* clauses in written language, as reported above. Writers more typically condense and integrate information in embedded clauses or nominal structures. Example (11') shows how the ESL writer in (11) might have presented the same information in a structure more typical of academic writing.

- (11') My father was very eager to find a house with a backyard of his own to mow and clean.

Developing academic writers learn these nominalization and embedding strategies as they master the use of appropriate registers in academic writing. Without these strategies, writers are likely to fall back on the clause-linking strategies they are familiar with from the spoken language, including independent use of structures that are expected to function in writing as a dependent part of a sentence.



*Linking larger segments of discourse*

Another discourse function of adverbial clauses in spoken English is to help articulate sections of discourse (Thompson and Longacre 1985). *Because* is a resource for this, often introducing multiple-clause structures that link with prior multiple-clause structures. An example is given in (12). The speaker is a sixth-grade student who is explaining how his teacher judges students' math answers.

- (12) it has to be descriptive he has to have every detail and if he doesn't do something right in that then it should be considered wrong  
*Because* if you do something wrong y know like, just in math like in two-place division or something like that? one thing that's a little bit wrong? she marks it off (Schleppegrell 1992: 122)<sup>8</sup>

Note how this *because* has broad scope in linking the two segments of this explanation: a generalization and an example which illustrates the generalization. In speech, *because* often introduces sequences which are not associated with one particular prior clause but instead provide broader links in discourse, occurring at pivotal points in an explanation or narrative to make a broad link which helps to structure the text (Schiffrin 1987, Schleppegrell 1992, Ford 1993).

This is another internally conjunctive use of *because*, where it displays the rhetorical structure of the text rather than providing a link between two propositions. Such discourse marking with *because* is typical of speech, but not writing. However, ESL writers also use conjunctions in this way to structure explanations. In (13), an ESL writer uses *because* along with *let say*, another oral feature, to introduce an example to support a position.<sup>9</sup>

- (13) Finally I don't think we are robbed out of our 'satisfaction' because of the technology *because* let say you are a doctor and because of the technology you are able to help more patients. (5720)

Just as did the speaker in (12) above, the writer here is using the conjunction *because* to introduce an example. Such uses violate the conventions of academic writing, and students are urged to avoid such 'run-on sentences'. Analyzing such writing as inappropriate uses of an oral style of explanation situates the source of the problem at the level of register differences rather than punctuation or sentence structure errors. These are infelicitous choices of lexical or grammatical elements in a genre in which such structures are inappropriate or unexpected. Students who produce such sentences need assistance in acquiring new strategies for segmenting their texts and introducing examples and illustrations, and may benefit from recognizing that they are using forms which, while appropriate in speech, are not appropriate for academic writing.

Language learners who want to succeed in academic contexts need to acquire competence in registers typical of written language genres. This means acquiring a different understanding of how language is structured when it is written rather than spoken. 'Sentence' is a construct of writing, and is not a part

of the competence developed in learning to speak English (Kress 1994). Knowing how to segment and structure written texts, and how to introduce examples and illustrations in ways expected in writing, is part of the difference in register that needs to be acquired by developing academic writers.

### *Summary*

The three uses of *because* clauses that have been illustrated above, to provide knowledge-based linking, to add information in independent segments, and to link larger segments of discourse, are common functions for this conjunction in spoken discourse. These uses result in the clause chaining character of ongoing speech, where segmentation is expressed through prosody, and conjunctions may carry less semantic force than in essay writing. In academic writing, on the other hand, strategies of clause integration, rather than clause chaining, are more common, and the meaning of conjunctions usually contributes more explicitly to the interpretation of the text. When ESL writing draws on spoken registers, the pragmatic functions that are common for this conjunction in speech may appear inappropriate or illogical to the reader. This analysis shows that even at the level of clause combining, register choices can be identified that contribute to more or less effective realizations of particular genres such as essay writing.

### REGISTER DIFFERENCES

Conversational speech and expository writing differ in the circumstances of their creation and the communicative needs to which they respond. Registers used in conversational genres reflect the interaction of interlocutors and the joint construction of discourse. Writing, on the other hand, typically reflects the fact that the writer and reader do not interact directly, and that the writer has time for revision of written text. Sentences are more tightly constructed to exploit the ideational role of conjunctions in establishing meaning relationships between clauses, and conventions of punctuation and sentence structure require the writer to integrate adverbial clauses into sentences as adjuncts. These are examples of differences in register that contribute to the construction of particular genres.

Conjunctions contribute to discourse structure by indicating the semantic relationship between what has been said and what is to come, by creating cohesion in texts, spoken or written, by indicating linkages across varying spans of discourse, and by signaling transitions and displaying the purpose or direction of development of the discourse. But different conjunctions are used in different ways in spoken and written registers. In speech, the interactional and discourse-structuring role of a conjunction is often emphasized and the pragmatic rather than the semantic meaning of the conjunction is foregrounded.

In academic writing, conjunctions are important signals of the semantic relationships between clauses and segments of text, and we expect conjunctions to foreground propositional meaning. In that context, using *because* to reflect a knowledge base, introduce new information as an independent sentence, or link

broad segments of text cohesively, as have been illustrated here in ESL writing can be misinterpreted. By using strategies of linking and clause-combination that reflect registers of conversational speech, ESL writers fail to conform to expectations for academic writing, and may find that their writing is judged to be illogical, fragmented, or inappropriately discursive.

Martin (1983b) suggests that development of register involves making subtle adjustments in grammatical and lexical choices. ESL writers may lack knowledge of and experience with the lexical and grammatical resources of academic registers, and this lack of knowledge and experience manifests itself not only in infelicitous lexical choices or authorial stance, but also in such pervasive but unconsciously selected language structures as conjunctions and strategies for clause combining. For ESL writers, developing their skills in new genres requires an awareness of the alternatives available in the grammar of English, and knowledge about how those grammatical resources are typically used in academic writing tasks.

#### CONCLUSION

McCarthy and Carter (1995) have pointed out that most formal grammars of English focus on the description of English as it occurs in writing. When features of spoken English are taken into account, we can develop a richer description of English grammar that incorporates information about the various functions for which the same structure might be used in different modes and genres. This paper has shown that the conjunction *because* plays different roles in spoken English and academic writing, and that ESL students' writing often reflects *more spoken genres in its use of conjunction and clause combining strategies*.

There are several reasons why ESL writers may be drawing on features of spoken English. As noted above, many immigrant ESL writers have not developed literacy skills in their first languages, so they may not have experience with a range of written genres. Many of these writers spent several years in US schools as their English skills were developing, and may not have had the academic language competence needed for full understanding of the language arts and conventions taught in their English classes (Collier 1987). In addition, they may not have been exposed to a variety of written genres of English in their homes and out of school experiences, preventing them from internalizing differences in register which are typical of written genres.

Writing essays under time pressure may also contribute to the students' oral style. The more typical process of writing where reflection and multiple revisions are usually possible, might enable ESL writers to draw more on clause-integrating and nominalization strategies for composing text.

And finally, ESL writers may also not be getting feedback on the grammatical accuracy and appropriateness of their writing. Teachers who are overburdened with large classes and students with many problems may focus more on the content of what students write than the form.

In addition, the formal characterization of registers of particular genres is not yet well developed. As demonstrated above, register differences manifest

themselves not only in choices of words or phrases but also at the grammatical level, in the way that clauses are constructed and combined in ongoing discourse. The larger discourse purposes and structures of particular genres and how those are realized through clause-level choices are not well articulated and accessible to those needing to acquire strategies for producing such genres. More work is needed to improve our understanding of the characteristics of different genres at the clause combining level.

This analysis of conjunction in spoken and written registers illustrates how the grammatical resources of English are used for different purposes in different genres. These different functional uses respond to the different features of the communicative situation. Strategies of clause-linking are a central component of register differences, related to organizational strategies in using linguistic structures and the interactional constraints of different modes of discourse. Learning to use an academic register involves acquiring a restricted set of meanings and functions for grammatical resources which are used more variably in interactional speech. Analysis of these differences in register and the processes through which they are developed contributes to a better understanding of how the systems of conjunction and clause combining work and may help us develop more productive strategies for working with developing ESL writers.

*(Revised version received October 1995)*

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the anonymous *Applied Linguistics* reviewers for very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Many researchers have pointed out that these differences are not strictly due to the mode (whether written or spoken) but instead are related to genre and register differences. Biber (1988) for example demonstrates that different genres ('registers' in his usage) differ along the dimensions of more integrated vs. more involved styles. For spoken/written differences see also McCarthy and Carter (1994). For an argument that the formal/nonformal distinction is more important than the spoken/written see Akinlaso (1982). For papers on how interactional goals and structure interact with the spoken/written dimension, see Tannen (1982). Carter and McCarthy (1995) demonstrates the grammatical differences in spoken texts that occur in different contexts and genres.

<sup>2</sup> Such features are also found in the writing of students who speak non-standard dialects or who have not learned the conventions of written English (Shaughnessy 1977).

<sup>3</sup> Numbers identify the essay from which the excerpt is taken.

<sup>4</sup> The excerpts from ESL essays in this paper are from a database of 142 essays from ESL and non-ESL writers. All examples of *because* in the database have been identified (215 tokens) and each has been analyzed to identify whether it fits the descriptions of *because* clauses in spoken English analyzed in Schleppegrell (1991, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> Thanks to Mary Lowry for examples (6), (7) and (8).

<sup>6</sup> Transcription as in original. Sequences of three dots indicate pauses.

<sup>7</sup> See Ford (1994) for a criticism of the term 'afterthought' in this context. She argues that such uses arise from and reflect the dialogic interaction of speaker and hearer.

<sup>8</sup> Period indicates sentence-final intonation.

<sup>9</sup> Note that the two tokens of *because of* in this example are not conjunctive examples of *because* but are prepositional uses that reflect a typical nominalizing strategy of written English.

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