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Academic writing as discourse of practice: Genre analysis of students writing in Higher Education in Tanzania

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Abstract

This paper uses genre analysis theory to examine students' academic writing discourse of practice at the university. Second language writing of academic genre is fundamental to students' academic survival, not only as a prime means for assessing students' academic progress but also for students' literacy growth in their given disciplines at the university. As students' writing abilities in academic genre (or lack of them) have often been central to the discussions on this subject, it is considered vital to focus attention on the kind of discourse practices students engage in their English language writing process and the possible explanations for these. First and second students' texts at a university are investigated to see the extent to which students' use of conjunctions in their writing reflect writing practices as demanded by university discourse of practice. Also, university writing instructional materials are analysed to see their role in students mentoring process into proficient academic writers. The study findings reveal that students' use of conjunctions is widely at odds with writing practices of academic genre, ostensibly because not only instructors seem inconsistent and doing little, but also instructional materials on writing demands are inadequate, in mentoring students through disciplinary apprenticeship into literate writers of university discourse of practice. Such mentoring is recommended by considering not only the outcome but also the acculturation process. This approach is envisaged to provide insights on addressing the widely reported students writing problems in Tanzania.

Keywords: Genre Analysis, Students' writing, Discourse Practices, Higher Education

Background and problem statement

Academic second language writing is an area in which students get engaged in a wide range of writing tasks demanding not only disciplinary knowledge (cognitive competence), but also disciplinary language (linguistic competence). In other words, the student has to express what s/he is supposed to know "the social culture of knowledge ... in the language which that knowledge is maintained and expressed" (see Ballard & Clanchy in Taylor, et al, 1988, p. 17) [emphasis added]. Second language writing of academic genre is also fundamental to students' academic survival, as it is the prime means for assessing students' academic progress and for that matter students' literacy growth in their given disciplinary spheres. As students' writing abilities in academic genre (or lack of them) have often been central to the discussions on this subject, it is considered vital to focus attention on the kind of generic discourse practices students engage in their ESL writing process and the possible explanations for these. However, since genre based analysis even in academic writing is a broad area, this paper focuses on discourse markers with the aim of having a holistic look at the kinds of discourse markers students use the most in their writing and the type of functions students perform by using these markers vis-à-vis the prototypical functions of these markers as demanded in the university discourse of

practice. This is expected to provide insights on the model that could be effective in the second language academic writing pedagogy of higher education (HE) in Tanzania.

The study focuses on HE, specifically because, first, save for a study by Ndoloi (1994), a bulk of previous research in this area (e.g. Mlama & Matteru, 1977; Lwaitama & Rubagumya, 1990; Roy-Campbell & Qorro, 1997; Rubagumya, 1997; Mekacha, 1997; Qorro, 1999; Brock-Utne, et al, 2003, Brock-Utne, et al, 2005) dwelt on secondary school education. Since tertiary institutions draw their students from these same secondary schools, where problems with academic communication in the medium of English are frequent, it is instructive to see how this disadvantaged linguistic background impacts on students' writing literacy at the university.

Secondly, when students first join the university face many challenges; one challenge is the struggle to master the English language and communication skills. The second challenge is the adjustment to the new university culture, to which students have to be formally inducted through lectures, tutorials, laboratory work and reading, so that they can learn how to follow lectures, to understand their study materials and to take notes (see Ballard, 1984). Literacy in ESL academic writing features prominently in the students' adjustment process, and thereby inevitably impacts their acquisition of academic cultural literacy.

Academic literacy acquisition process is a complex phenomenon, first, because students from different cultural backgrounds have to conform to one university cultural literacy as well as to several other literacy cultures of individual disciplines. And second, what is construed as a university cultural literacy may, sometimes not be as clear-cut. In other words, disciplinary languages and pedagogical practices in which university cultural practices are embedded are usually not explicit and may even be understood differently among the university academics.

The findings of the current study are anticipated to have strong implications towards the improvement of the teaching and learning of the ESL academic writing in HE in Tanzania. Pedagogically, the study is envisioned to: first, to be a diagnostic tool in understanding the classroom practices and problems inherent therein in an ESL writing of academic discourse at university level. Secondly, to show how social cultural, that is, institutional practices ought to be modelled to be able to shape students into literate writers or rather to take students through the process of, to borrow Candlin and Plum's metaphor, 'disciplinary apprenticeship' (see Candlin and Plum, 1999). Lastly, to illuminate the implications of enhanced students' ESL writing practices to the development of the nation's workforce. This is especially because English, as a linguistic resource, is a key to HE, which, in turn, becomes a tool of individuals' social upward mobility, and empowerment for functioning at local and global levels.

Key concepts and theory

This paper uses Genre analysis (e.g. Swales, 1990) as the analytical approach. Research in academic and ESL written discourse, or text as social practice, is a paradigm widely contributed by the work cited above. The work in Swales' Genre Analysis model was termed, academic discourse community (1990). Swales defines discourse community as "sociorhetorical networks that form in order to work towards sets of common goals" (Swales, 1990, p.471). According to Swales, one important characteristic of a discourse community is that "their established members possess familiarity with the particular genres that are used in the communicative furtherance of those set goals" (Swales, 1990, p.472). This is because academic discourse community is a "peculiar, socially constructed convention in itself" (Myles, 2002, p. 3).

Genre, according to Eggins (2004), is recognisable through its generic identity, that is, the way it is similar to other texts of its genre "or reminiscent of other texts circulating in the culture" (p.55). In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (see Halliday, 1985) genre, and in particular generic identity lies in three dimensions, first, the co-occurrence of a particular contextual cluster, or its register configuration. This means that "a genre comes about as particular values for field, tenor and mode regularly co-occur and eventually become stabilised in the culture as "typical" situations" (Eggins, 2004, p. 58).

The second dimension is the "text's staged or schematic structure". The schematic structure refers to "the staged, step-by-step organisation of the genre" and that "each stage in the genre contributes a part of the overall meanings that must be made for the genre to be accomplished successfully" (Eggins, 2004, p. 59). And lastly, is the realisation pattern of the text. This refers to "the way a meaning becomes encoded or expressed in a semiotic system" (Eggins, 2004, p.65).

Genre analysis of the academic discourse underscored the need for detailed examinations of “textual features that essentially played the role of road signs in the infrastructure of language in text” (Hinkel, 2002, p.18). This was because managing discourse analysis as a whole was found to be difficult due to vastness of discourse organisation and lexicogrammatical features. Thus, later models delved on examining selected features under discourse analysis in the academic genre, for example discourse markers, (Schiffrin, 1994), modal verbs (Coates, 1983; Hermeren, 1978), hedges (Holmes, 1984), and vagueness (Channell, 1994) (see also Hinkel, 2002, p. 18-19). On the basis of these observations, the current research focused on one selected feature in the analysis of students’ texts using Genre Analysis namely, discourse markers.

The construct ‘discourse markers’ is approached from several perspectives in accordance to the various meanings attached to the word discourse. For example, from a conversational analysis point of view (see Schiffrin, 1994) discourse markers are considered as “sequentially depended elements, which brackets units of talk” (1994, p. 31). This definition has bypassed the sentence. According to Schiffrin, markers are independent of sentence structure. The author gives an example of markers such as ‘y’ know’, ‘I mean’, ‘oh’, ‘like’, which she says “can occur quite freely within a sentence at locations which are very difficult to define syntactically” (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 32). This means that while all the markers have a role as discourse markers, they may not necessarily have a role in sentence grammar. In other words, markers such as ‘oh’, and ‘well,’ which are a marker of information management and a marker of response respectively (see Schiffrin, 1994) have a role as discourse markers (e.g. they have idea structure, textual meaning, and interactional effect), but do not have a parallel role in sentence grammar (as in syntax, semantics, pragmatics) as is the case for conjunctive markers such as, ‘and’, ‘but’ (see Schiffrin, 1994).

Discourse markers which are considered in this paper are those, which have a role in sentence grammar because these markers are explored within the context of student academic writing. In this context, discourse markers are looked as lexicon prototypical in organising written texts (see Santiago, 2004). This organisation is achieved by showing how the student writer intends the “basic message that follows to relate to the prior discourse” (see Santiago, 2004, p.1). One major purpose of these discourses is obviously to “create cohesion and coherence in a given text by establishing a relationship between the various ideas that are expressed within the text” (Santiago, 2004, p.1). This relationship of ideas is what Martin and Rose (2003) term as logical relations. According to the authors, there are four general kinds of logical relations in English discourse, each of which relating to conjunction type shown in brackets as follows. Adding figures together (addition); comparing them (comparison); sequencing them in time (time); and explaining their causes, purpose or conditions (consequence). Each of these logical relations are realised by the basic options or conjunctions falling under each respective conjunction type indicated in brackets.

For each logical relation, more than one meaning can be realised by its repertoire of conjunctions. For example, the logical relation of addition can either be realised by conjunctions of addition (e.g. and, besides, in addition) or alternation (e.g. or, if not-then, alternatively). And that of comparison can either be realised by conjunctions of similarity (e.g. like, as if, similarly) or contrast (e.g. but, whereas, on the other hand). The logical relation of time can be realised by conjunctions of succession, which are in two categories that is those conjunctions which allow to run the succession in time forward ‘from the first events to the last’ (e.g. then, after, subsequently) and those conjunctions which allow ‘to run the succession in time backwards’ (e.g. before, previously) (see Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 116). Also, time can be realised by conjunctions of simultaneity (e.g. while, meanwhile, at the same time).

The logical relation of consequence can be realised by conjunctions of cause (e.g. so, because, since, therefore); means (e.g. by, thus, by this means); purpose, which has conjunctions of desirable outcomes (e.g. so as, in order to) and those with undesirable outcomes (e.g. lest, for fear of). Also, consequence can be realised by conjunctions of condition, which are divided into conjunctions that set ‘condition under which an event may happen (e.g. if, provided that) or ‘closing off the possibility of an event happening (e.g. unless) (see Martin & Rose, 2003, p.113-119). Logical relations and basic options for conjunctions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: *Basic options for conjunctions*

Logical relation	Meaning	Examples (not exhaustive)
Addition	Addition	And, besides, in addition
	Alternation	Or, if not-then, alternation
Comparison	Similarity	Like, as if, similarly
	Contrast	But, whereas, <i>while</i> , on the other hand
Time	Successive	Then, after, subsequently; before, previously
	Simultaneous	<i>While</i> , meanwhile, at the same time
Consequence	Cause	So, because, since, therefore
	Means	By, thus, by this means
	Purpose	So as, in order to; lest, for fear of
	Condition	If, provided that; unless

Source: Martin & Rose (2003, p. 119) (ours italics)

At this point, it is instructive to note that first, discourse markers can “connect utterances on either a single plane or across different planes” (Schiffrin 1994, p.57). This means that the role of conjunctions is not just to connect activities, in other words, organising experience as sequence of events, but also to organise discourse whose units are referred to as arguments in Martin and Rose, (2003, p.120). Secondly, a single marker or conjunction can be used to organise sequence of events in more than one logical relation. In the above list for example, conjunction ‘while’ can be used to realise contrast in the logical relation of comparison or it can be used to realise simultaneity in the logical relation of time as shown above.

Martin and Rose classify conjunction further into two types, internal conjunctions, in other words, those “items used to link logical steps internal to the text itself” (2003, p.120) and external conjunctions, in other words, those items “linking events in the world beyond the text itself” (2003, p.120). Both types of conjunctions fall under the same logical relations presented above. The first type of conjunctions is regarded as ‘punctuation’ discourse markers because they involve showing what the speaker or the writer is doing with the text itself. This involves things such as developing a list (e.g. further, furthermore, etc); ordering items (e.g. first, secondly, third, etc); concluding (e.g. thus, hence, accordingly, etc.) just to mention a few examples.

In this paper, it suffices to present a summary of conjunction resources in terms of the type of logical relations, and the type of expectancy they realise for both external and internal conjunctions in Table 2. Thus, Table 2 helps to illuminate the prototypical functions of various markers in a text. In this paper, the conjunctions in students’ texts have been considered in terms of the emerging patterns of students’ use of these conjunctions vis-à-vis the prototypical functions of these markers as established here.

¹ Discourse markers and conjunctions are used interchangeably in this paper.

Table 2: *Conjunction resources*

External conjunctions				Internal conjunctions			
Addition	Additive	Add	And, besides, both ... and	Add	De-velop	Additive	Further, furthermore, moreover, in addition, as well as, besides additionally.
		Sub-tract	nor, neither... nor			Alterna-tive	Alternatively
	Alter-native		or, either or, if not-then		Stag-ing	Framing	Now, well, alright, okay
Com-parison	Similar		Like, as if	Side-tracking		Anyway, anyhow, inci-dentially, by the way	
	Differ-ent	Oppo-site	Whereas, while		Simi-lar	Compare	Similarly, again
		Re-placing	Instead of, in place of, rather than			Rework	That is, i.e., for example, for instance, e.g., in general, in particular, in short
Except-ing		Except that, other than, apart from	Adjust	In fact, indeed, at least			
Time	Suc-cessive	Some-time	After, since, now that; before	Differ-ent	Contrast	Rather, by contrast	
		Imme-diate	Once, as soon as, until		Retract	On the other hand, con-versely	
	Simul-tane-ous		As, while, when	Time	Suc-cessive	Ordering	First, secondly, third, next, previously
Cause		Ex-pectant	Because, so, therefore			Terminat-ing	Finally, lastly
		Con-cessive	Although, even though, but, how-ever		Simul-tane-ous.	Adjacent	At the same time
Means		Ex-pectant	By, thus	Interrupt-ed		Still	
		Con-cessive	Even by, but	Con-clud-ing	Conclude	Thus, hence, accordingly, in conclusion, conse-quentially	
Condi-tion	Open	Ex-pectant	If, then, provided that, as long as,		Justify	After all	
		Con-cessive	Even if, even then	Coun-tering		Dismiss	Anyway, anyhow, in any case, at any rate
	Closed		Unless		Concede	Admittedly, of course, needless to say	
Pur-pose	Desire	Ex-pectant	So that, in order to, in case	Unex-pected	Nevertheless, nonethe-less, still		
		Con-cessive	Even so, without				
	Fear		Lest, for fear of				

Source: Adopted from Martin & Rose (2003, p. 133-134)

Methods

This study followed a qualitative research design, whose data came from textual analysis of students' essay and literature review. It is envisioned that these materials would inform the study on not only the kind of discourse practices students engage in, but also the literacy practices as demanded by the university academic discourse of practice. The linguistics analysis of texts involved texts of 40 second year students selected randomly. It is envisioned that it is in the second year where the apprenticeship process of students into literate writers in the academic disciplinary genres would be more projected than would have been the case in the first year.

Essays from 40 second year students were adequate sample for linguistics analysis of texts to be able to indicate the pattern of language use in terms of written discourse practice. Such kind of an analysis makes large samples both difficult and undesirable, especially in cases, as this one, where the object was to dig deep into the problem and establish gravity.

Essays came from examinations and assignments collected from three degree programmes; Development Studies, Agriculture Marketing, and Sociology offered across disciplines. The sampled essays came from students in the BSc Agronomy, BSc Animal Science, BSc Horticulture, and BSc Agriculture Education and Extension. The above programmes were chosen because students' evaluation on these programmes is usually done through essay questions. In other words, literacy practices in these programmes are embodied in what Lillis refers to as 'essayist literacy', which "constitutes a very particular kind of literacy practice bound with the workings of a particular social institution" (2001, p. 39). Students' texts were analysed in terms of investigating patterns in students' discourse practice. Specifically, how students organise topics, and use discourse makers and whether that is done in the manner that is acceptable in the academic genres within which students were writing.

Another type of data collected for analysis is institutional guides on academic writing practices. It is envisioned that the analysis of these material would inform the study on not only the kind of discourse practices students engage in, but also on the literacy practices as provided in the academic writing pedagogy of the university.

This study followed standard procedures for social research, whereby permission was sought and granted from Sokoine University of Agriculture. All students whose essays were sampled willingly agreed to have their essays used in the study and confidentiality of such students was strictly observed.

Findings and discussion

This section presents the emerging patterns regarding students' use of discourse markers referred here as conjunctions. These patterns have been classified into themes where a brief description is given together with examples from students' text.

The general observations on students' use of conjunctions are as follows. From the texts surveyed, the overwhelming tendency is that students use external conjunctions and make very little use of internal conjunctions. Evidence of students' use of internal conjunctions is found with conjunctions for reworking, (e.g., for example, that is), conjunctions for concluding (e.g. thus, hence, therefore), and in few cases conjunctions for ordering (e.g. first, secondly, third). These findings imply that students (in using external conjunctions) become more preoccupied with overall discourse organisation and pay little attention in orientating their readers by telling or showing them what they (students) are doing with their texts. In other words students fail to take their readers through the logical steps in which they (students) sequence or chain their events (i.e. this is what internal conjunctions help writers to do) (cf. Martin & Rose, 2003).

Secondly, the overall students' repertoire of discourse markers of both external and internal conjunctions is far limited than the available conjunctions resources. Table 3 provides the conjunctions resources (in italics), which were accessed by students in their essays. The repertoire of students' conjunctions in Table 3 is shown alongside a range of other available conjunctions (in plain), which were virtually inaccessible by students.

From Table 3, the following logical relations that are realisable by internal conjunctions did not feature in the students' repertoire of conjunctions, namely conjunctions for developing and staging under *addition*; conjunctions for compare, adjust, contrast, and retract under *comparison*; conjunctions for termi-

nating, and those for simultaneous under *time*; and some conjunctions for concluding, justifying and countering under *consequence*.

Table 3: *Conjunctions resources accessed by students vis-à-vis other available options*

External conjunctions				Internal conjunctions			
Addition	Additive	Add	And, besides, both ... and	Add	Develop	Additive	Further, furthermore, moreover, in addition, as well as, besides additionally.
		Subtract	nor, neither... nor			Alternative	Alternatively
	Alternative		or, either or, if not-then		Staging	Framing	Now, well, alright, okay
Comparison	Similar		Like, as if	Comparison		Similar	Sidetracking
	Different	Opposite	Whereas, while		Compare		Similarly, again
		Replacing	Instead of, in place of, rather than		Rework		That is, i.e., for example, for instance, e.g., in general, in particular, in short
		Excepting	Except that, other than, apart from		Adjust		In fact, indeed, at least
Time	Successive	Sometime	After, since, now that; before	Time	Different	Contrast	Rather, by contrast
		Immediate	Once, as soon as, until			Retract	On the other hand, conversely
	Simultaneous		As, *while, when		Successive	Ordering	First, secondly, third, next, previously
Cause		Expectant	Because, so, therefore	Simultaneous.		Terminating	Finally, lastly
		Concessive	Although, even though, but, however			Adjacent	At the same time
Means		Expectant	By, thus	Consequence	Interrupted	Still	
		Concessive	Even by, but			Concluding	Conclude
Condition	Open	Expectant	If, then, provided that, as long as,		Consequence		Justify
		Concessive	Even if, even then	Countering		Dismiss	
	Closed		Unless			Concede	Admittedly, of course, needless to say

External conjunctions				Internal conjunctions			
Purpose	Desire	Expectant	<i>So that, in order to, in case</i>			Unexpected	Nevertheless, nonetheless, still
		Concessive	Even so, without				
	Fear		Lest, for fear of				

Source: Students' essays (*italicized*), 2016; cf. also Martin & Rose, 2003 (plain Texts)

Turning now to the students' use of conjunctions, the emerged patterns noted include, omission of conjunctions, mismatch between conjunctions and realisation functions, repetitive use of conjunctions, and redundant conjunctions. These patterns are explained below.

Omission of conjunctions

Omission of conjunctions involves a situation where students did not provide conjunctions to certain logical relations, which required explicit realisation items. In cases where realisation items were not provided, sequencing of ideas in the texts did not seem logically performed. From the survey of students' texts, this type of omissions of conjunctions seem to result from students' tendency of writing their texts in note form instead of essay form as is required by literacy practice of essay writing. Students' unsuccessful attempt to write texts in essay form is indicative of the reality that students merely reproduce lecture notes as they write to respond to essay questions. Since lecture notes are usually in note form, so are the students' 'essays', hence the absence of conjunctions at the clause structure and discourse organisation level. The extract of the student's text below is an example of the phenomenon explained here (i.e. the manner in which some students write their 'essays').

Extract 1: The agricultural marketing deserves a separate treatment from marketing of manufactured goods in the following ways.

1. Due to the nature of commodities used in the marketing.
 - (i) Agriculture marketing deals with commodities, which are in high risk of spoilage.
 - (ii) The functions of agriculture marketing depend on the performance at other sectors example transporters, bankers and advertisers.
 - (iii) Agriculture commodities takes long time to be produced hence to capture the market it can need more time ...(Source: Student's text, 2016)

Extract 2: The study of agriculture marketing deserves a separate treatment from marketing of manufactured goods due to the following reasons:

- In developing countries agricultural activities comprise many famer which are scattered and exceeding independent production and consumption decision.
- Due to central role of agriculture in developing countries, agriculture production is subjected to numerous policy distortion (Source: Student's text, 2016)

The two extracts above come from two different student writers, responding to the same easy question. Interestingly, both texts begin with opening statements, which look similar. This is indicative of students' reproduction of lecture notes. In the first extract the only conjunctions used are 'and' and 'hence', and in the second extract 'and' is the only conjunction used (i.e. for what is reproduced here in both cases). Furthermore, in the first extract, the points are introduced with two opening statements, but it is the first statement which actually, alerts the reader of the fact that what follows comprise a list of items, however this opening statement is at odds with the manner the items are constructed in the list; that is, instead of being in nominal phrases, the items are actually independent statements themselves. The second opening statement which is a dependent clause seems to be structurally compatible to the items in the list, making the first introductory stem in this essay redundant. Lack of structural

compatibility between opening statements and the items in the list which are being introduced by the opening statement is also noted in the second student's extract. In other words, the items seem to be independent sentences which have no logical structural link to the opening statements.

Furthermore, one could argue that students chose numbering and bulleting to list the points they seem to indicate in the opening statements. But, the students here could do more than just numbering statements whose logical relationships and sequencing are not made explicit. This tendency reflects the seemingly questioning practice of some lecturers which seem to encourage students to write essays around lecture notes. Students find that they have no allowance of bringing in some additional material from their own critical reading and thinking. In this case, students miss an opportunity of using language with confidence, and to articulate their voices and express their identities (cf. Fairclough, 1995;; Leibowitz, 2000; Lillis, 2001).

Another aspect worth mentioning here is that other student writers produced essays on the same question topic. But, it is interesting that both essay texts and note form texts by students seem to have received equal treatment from the markers. There is no written feedback from the markers to indicate which format was appropriate and which one was not. This aspect goes back to the 'ethics' of feedback in the process of mentoring students into literate writers. In this particular case, students of the above texts will have no compelling reason to write essays in a different (appropriate) format next time as their first (failed) attempt to do so did not elicit any correctional response. Therefore, students seem not to be properly mentored in the requisite practice of essay writing as required by university discourse of practice.

Mismatching conjunctions with realisation functions

Mismatch occurs when a particular conjunction is used to realise inappropriate logical relations. This phenomenon was observed in the students' texts with the use of conjunctions 'until', 'when', and even 'and' as shown in the extracts from students' texts below.

Extract 3: Agriculture marketing is the performance of all business activities (marketing function), which involves the transfer of agriculture production (product production) **until** the same good is in the hands of ultimate consumer. (Source: Student's text, 2016)

The word 'until' is among the least used conjunction in the students' repertoire of conjunctions shown above. In the table of conjunction resources 'until' is usually used to realise logical relation of time in succession. Interestingly, except in a very few cases, in all other cases in the students' texts, the conjunction 'until' is used to mean 'up to the point in place', the function which is suitable for other category of words called place adverbials (details of this category of words is outside the scope of this paper).

Extract 4: In Agriculture marketing there is a problem of free rider. This is so *when* it requires each member of a certain cooperative group to sacrifice for the entire benefit of the whole group *when* the benefits are to be equally shared by all members of the group regardless of their participants. (Source: Student's text, 2016)

The word 'when' in the table of conjunction resources realises logical relation of time particularly in simultaneous sequencing of events. In the student's text above, 'when' in each case is used to realise logical relation of cause, the function, which can suitably be realised by conjunction 'because'. *This is so **when** (because) it requires each member of a certain cooperative group to sacrifice.*

Extract 5: Family is the first agent of socialization **and** it differs from the school and mass media as family deals with individual from birth (Source: Student's text, 2016)

Extract 6: Children find friends of their age group to whom they can share example childish ideas, play together **and** get more time to understand about outside world (out of the family) (Source: Student's text, 2016).

The conjunction 'and' in the students' texts above realises the relation of cause/result instead of addition, which is the prototypical use of 'and'. Students' use of some of the conjunctions as we have seen

above is therefore incompatible with the realisation functions of these conjunctions in English discourse.

Repetitive use of conjunctions

Overuse of the same type of conjunctions either in realising/organising the same type of logical relation or across several logical relations. In this case individual students tend to prefer particular types of conjunctions to others available in the same slot of logical relation. Repetitive use of conjunctions in this way is evident with words such as, 'and', 'by', 'because', 'so that' and 'also' (the last conjunction is not appearing in Table 2). And for the internal conjunctions words like 'e.g.', 'for example', 'hence', and 'thus' have been extensively used

Redundant use of conjunctions

As the term implies redundant conjunctions are those, which have been used in places that either did not require any realisation item or more than one realisation items have been employed.

Extract 7: *But* in Africa especially Tanzania is growing slowly due to That children are an asset, so ...young one are used up to nursing the young one many women are not employed so that take of their children. *Therefore* children sending to school at age of 5 years majority – rural people (Source: Student's text, 2016)

Extract 8 *Thus by* these military governments democracy become much hindered.
 (Source: Student's text, 2016)

Here students would still have started their text with the clause without a conjunction. Implications of these results are discussed in the next section. These texts have other structural problems than just the use of logical relations, but these are outside the scope of this paper.

University guides for academic writing

The available university wide guide for apprenticing students in academic writing was on the form of a manual for preparing dissertation / thesis and other publications is and comprises what can be termed as formal presentation features. These features appear as headings in the Table of Contents of the manual, and are explained in fairly detail in the manual. Another guide document was guide a faculty guide for field practical training, which was also in the form of a manual, but focusing on logistical aspects such as accommodation, transport and supervision. In essence, the two manuals are meant to enable students produce a written text, either for assessment as in the case of the Field Practical Training Guide (FPT) or for assessment and a possibility of publication as for the Guideline for Preparing Dissertations / Thesis and other Publications.

One aspect noted here is that in both manuals students' guidance to writing is not critically addressed. For example, as stated above, the manual on preparing dissertation / thesis presents formal presentation features such as the mechanics of academic reports such as, presentation of footnotes, tables, illustrations, citations, list of references, and the like. These mechanics do not and cannot apprentice students into literate-writers.

The FPT guide (2016), on the other hand, mainly dwells on the practicalities of the students' work in the field. Some references made to writing in the manual, but where such references are made they are inconsistent and inadequate in coverage. In this manual, for example, guidelines for writing reports are introduced in page 7, and briefly discussed in page 8 under the headings, the General Report and the Technical Report. Here an attempt is made to show how the two types of reports should be written by students: Whilst under the General Report, a list is drawn to show students what comprise a general report, nothing is said to show what constitute a technical report. Further, this manual contains the evaluation forms for the Training Field Officer and for the university academic staff. Implications of using these manuals for the academic writing pedagogy are discussed below.

Implication of discourse practices in students' texts with discourse markers

From the survey of students' text, we have seen that students have limited access to conjunction resources to realise various logical relations in their essays. This constraint is even worse with internal conjunctions (i.e. discourse markers "used to link logical steps internal to the text itself") than it is with the external conjunctions (i.e. those markers 'linking events in the world beyond the text itself') (See Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 120).

Students' inaccessibility of certain conjunction resources

From the findings we have seen for example, that students could not use certain conjunctions to realise certain logical relations. This is the case with conjunctions for developing and staging under addition; conjunctions for compare, adjust, contrast, and retract under *comparison*; conjunctions for terminating, and those for simultaneous under *time*; and some conjunctions for concluding, justifying and countering under *consequence*. As said earlier, students' constraint in accessing internal conjunctions make them (students) fail to orient their readers through staged logical steps in sequencing their events in the text (cf. also Martin & Rose, 2003).

Further, the emerging patterns of students' use of conjunctions identified above, show that students' literacy performance on discourse markers is not compatible with literacy practice required in academic text. It also needs to be reiterated that students' understanding of academic essay writing seem wanting. This is evident where students write their texts in note form as we have seen earlier.

It might seem that student writers intended to present points only in their texts. But, two things: First, students here could do more than just numbering statements whose logical relationships and sequencing, in this case, are not even made explicit. Secondly, the opening statements of both writers not only look similar, but are also structurally at odds with the items they introduce. This indicates that student writers, in their texts, are doing nothing more than simply reproducing lecture notes. As noted earlier, students' writing 'style' is a consequence of questioning practice (of some lecturers), which seems to encourage students to respond to essay questions around lecture notes. Thus, students have no allowance of bringing in some additional material from their own critical reading and thinking, including failure to organise texts as logical arguments. As a result, they (students) fail to use language with confidence to articulate their voices and express their identities (cf. Fairclough, 1995; Lillis, 2001; Leibowitz, 2000).

There is also the issue of lecturers' mentoring role in making students acquire requisite practice of essay writing as required by university discourse of practice. As noted earlier, on the same question topic, markers gave equal treatment to both note form texts and essay type texts of student writers. Thus, standards for essay writing are not made explicit. Students who produced note form texts have no compelling reason to write essays in a different (appropriate) format second time as their first (failed) attempt to do so did not elicit any correctional response.

What we see here is a mismatch between students' literacy practice and the literacy practice of the academic writing around discourse markers. Further, this mismatch jeopardises students' essayist literacy acquisition and performance in general. According to Kucer, (2005, p. 209), essay is a privileged form of literacy at the university, and, "Like all texts, there are specific characteristics that this type of discourse must fulfil and display". In university essayist based literacy, meanings are constructed in a direct, explicit and unambiguous manner "as if there is no shared knowledge between reader and writer" (Kucer, 2005, p.209). But this is not what is happening with the students' texts surveyed.

University guides as resource in mentoring process

These particular guides refer to such writing practices as theses, dissertations, and technical reports. Though these writing practices are often reserved for students in advanced levels at the university, it was thought important to comment on them as they have pedagogical implications even for students in the lower levels, as is the case for 1st and 2nd year students.

There were two writing guides under this category: one was on preparing dissertations and theses, and the other was on writing field practical technical report. One noted aspect here is that in both manuals, approach students' guidance to writing is not consistent with how guidance to academic writing process is configured in the academic writing pedagogy.

To begin with, the university-wide guide is titled 'Guidelines for Preparing Dissertations Thesis and other Publications'. From this title, one gathers that the manual seeks to offer guidance to students or in-

structors who engage in writing for publication. The word 'writing' is excluded from the title, this has not been done by mistake, but because no guidance on writing of these academic genres is offered in the manual. Hence, the title 'Guidance for Preparing' and not 'Guidance for Writing' was chosen. The manual contents in this case can conveniently be called a list of formal presentational features of a text supposedly belonging to the three academic genres mentioned. This list is what makes the main headings accompanied with four appendices in the Table of Contents (2002, p. iii).

As noted earlier FPT guide, on the other hand, mainly dwells on the logistics of the students' work in the field. Some references are made to writing in the manual, but these are cryptic and inadequate in coverage. One emerging issue here is that these manuals do not guide a student writer in the writing process itself in either writing a field technical report or dissertation and a thesis for reasons which have already been explicated.

In their present format there are two dangers embodied in such manuals: one danger is that much as these formal features and guidelines are required, those who happen to master them may believe that they know how to write. Another danger is that these formal features and guidelines are presented as if all of them can be applied in exactly the same way in all disciplines regardless. For example, we have seen that (see Candlin, & Plum in Candlin & Hyland, 1999) academic genres tend to differ in different academic disciplines. And this difference is recognisable or reflected through the generic integrity of the genres of its kind. Thus, students engaged in academic writing, have to encounter and produce extremely varied nature of text types in any one programme of study giving rise to 'a plethora of different text types'. And that such a colony of texts is regularly purposively differentiated, made more or less textually distinctive, and frequently draw intertextuality on a range of text-types. Therefore, models of processing such texts are bound to vary as a result of distinct textual structures and design characteristics typical of such texts in different disciplines. A guide for academic writing pedagogy should therefore be keen to these distinctive design characteristics embodied in individual disciplines.

Conclusion

The findings on students' use of discourse markers show students lacking requisite discourse of practice around academic genres. Students do not seem to perform particular forms and functions of academic essay literacy, as these are a result of instructors questioning practice, which do not mentor students into becoming proficient writers in academic discourse of practice. Lecturers' aid to students in the form of feedback to student writing is characterised as inconsistent and often mystifying.

Clearly, students have to encounter and produce extremely varied text types in any one programme of study at the university, and this gives rise to a colony of text types. Models of processing such texts should also vary due to the distinctive nature of textual structures and design characteristics typical of such texts in different disciplines (cf. Candlin, & Plum in Candlin & Hyland, 1999). But such designs are usually not provided. Furthermore, the writing objectives and the meaning of academic writing criteria do not seem to be provided to students. In other words, students are expected to know such criteria and apply them in their disciplines during academic writing events.

University support has been situated in the institutional guides for student academic writing. It has been indicated in this paper that, academic writing pedagogy is an area where students have the least support from other university structural frameworks. There are hardly any manuals at the department or faculty levels to aid the mentoring process of students in their pathways to academic writing. At the university level, on the other hand, the available guides on academic writing project an elusive picture of what student writing as literacy practice should entail. The existing academic writing manuals focus on issues far removed from the students' writing demands in their different departments. Lastly, adequacies of students' ESL writing practices have implications in the development of the nation's workforce. This is especially because as said earlier English, as a linguistic resource, is a key to higher education in Tanzania; accessing such a resource not only guarantees one's social upward mobility, but also empowers an individual to be able to function at local and global levels.

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