

# ELIS talk

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## Scaffolding spoken discourse: connectives

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# Sample of key words from top 50 in conversation (CEC Sp 2m)

1	YOU	11	REALLY
2	I	12	GONNA/GOING TO
3	YEAH	13	RIGHT
4	KNOW	14	WE
5	OH	15	THINK
6	OKAY	16	WELL
7	SO	17	MEAN
8	IT'S	18	GOOD
9	THAT'S	19	MM
10	JUST	20	STUFF

# Top 20 2-word clusters (CEC spoken 2m)

1	<b>YOU KNOW</b>	<b>28,013</b>	11	<b>I WAS</b>	<b>8,174</b>
2	<b>I MEAN</b>	<b>17,158</b>	12	<b>YOU DO</b>	<b>8,136</b>
3	<b>I THINK</b>	<b>14,086</b>	13	<b>AND THEN</b>	<b>7,733</b>
4	<b>IN THE</b>	<b>13,887</b>	14	<b>TO BE</b>	<b>7,165</b>
5	<b>IT WAS</b>	<b>12,608</b>	15	<b>IF YOU</b>	<b>6,709</b>
6	<b>I DON'T</b>	<b>11,975</b>	16	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>6,614</b>
7	<b>OF THE</b>	<b>11,048</b>	17	<b>TO THE</b>	<b>6,157</b>
8	<b>AND I</b>	<b>9,722</b>	18	<b>AT THE</b>	<b>6,029</b>
9	<b>SORT OF</b>	<b>9,586</b>	19	<b>HAVE TO</b>	<b>5,914</b>
10	<b>YOU SEE</b>	<b>9,164</b>	20	<b>YOU CAN</b>	<b>5,828</b>

# Top 20 5-word phrases in conversation (CEC Sp 2m)

SCoRE ????

1	YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN	11	EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE
2	AS A MATTER OF FACT	12	I DON'T KNOW IF I
3	WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT	13	I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE
4	I DON'T KNOW IF YOU	14	AND THAT KIND OF THING
5	ONE OF THE THINGS THAT	15	I WAS GOING TO SAY
6	I THINK A LOT OF	16	I KNOW A LOT OF
7	AT THE END OF THE	17	AND THAT SORT OF THING
8	THERE ARE A LOT OF	18	I THINK IT WOULD BE
9	HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT	19	A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT
10	IN THE MIDDLE OF THE	20	WE HAVE A LOT OF

## A Discussion:

A: But you don't notice so much in yourself. I don't think so, on the whole.

B: I don't know. I definitely feel different from the first year. I don't think I look different or anything.

A: You're bound to keep changing really, all your whole life, actually, well, hopefully.

B: I don't know. I think it's basically a change coming away, I suppose.

A: Anyway, as we were saying, how many words is the assignment?

## A Discussion: 'invisible connectives'

A: But you don't notice so much in yourself. I don't think so, on the whole.

B: **I don't know**. I definitely feel different from the first year. I don't think I look different **or anything**.

A: You're bound to keep changing really, all your whole life, **actually, well, I mean** hopefully.

B: **I don't know**. I think it's **basically** a change coming away, I suppose.

A: **Anyway, as we were saying**, how many words is the assignment?

Biber, D. (et al) (1999) *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. (Longman, Harlow)

Carter, R & McCarthy M (2006) *Cambridge Grammar of English* (Cambridge: CUP)

Carter, R et al (2011) *English Grammar Today: An A-Z of Spoken and Written Grammar* (Cambridge: CUP)

# Connectives: types

**Interpersonal:** (indicating shared knowledge) *you see, you know, as we have already established ; if you see what I mean, or something like that.*

**Referential:** (marking causality and connectivity) *But, and, yet, however, and then; nevertheless, consequently, on the other hand; as a matter of fact.*

**Structural:** (giving signposts) *Now, okay, right/alright, well, let's start, let's discuss, let me conclude the discussion by saying .....; may I come in here and say....*

**Cognitive:** (marking thinking processes; prefacing and politeness): *Well, I think, I see, I suppose, I don't know if, I was wondering)*

# Connectives and genre (1) (CEC pedagogic corpus 0.5 m)

- **Recount/report**
- ***Time connectives***
- initially
- next
- finally
- subsequently
- firstly
- afterwards
- at last
- once
- secondly
- in the end
- eventually
- at length
- **Persuasion**
- obviously
- what's more
- however
- of course
- naturally
- certainly
- moreover
- more importantly
- in particular
- indeed
- in fact
- above all
- yet despite this



# Connectives and genre (2): (CEC pedagogic corpus 0.5 m)

- **Report** (*illustrating point*)
  - for example
  - for instance
  - such as
  - thus
  - to show that
  - to take the case of
  - an example of this is
- **Explanation** : (*causal connectives*)
  - because
  - consequently
  - as a result
  - therefore
  - thus
  - accordingly

# Why scaffold connectives?

frequency

invisibility

beyond the clause and beyond grammar

lexico-grammatical in form

pragmatic functions

signposting and signalling are not conventionally taught in a curriculum concerned with content and referential meanings.

# Scaffolding: implicit

Various terms: **zone of proximal development** (ZPD) Vygotsky (1986); **collaborative dialogue** (Swain, 2001); **assisted performance** (Ohta, 2001) ; **instructional conversation** (Donato, 2000)

An interactional process where one speaker (an expert or a novice) assists another speaker (a novice) to perform a skill that the novice is unable to perform independently. It is a term used in *sociocultural SLA*. Lantolf (2000)

Bruner (1978) notes a similar scaffolding effect in the talk of mothers and children and he called it the '**communicative ratchet**'.

# Example 1: implicit scaffolding

[The group have been discussing how they are adjusting to life on the university campus]. Tom is the tutor).

**Lee:** I think it is very systematic and have lack of tolerance

**Chuck:** I don't know much about here, **because** I am just here about 4 weeks.

**Lee:** I don't find the proper adjective for TOLERANCE

**Tom:** Only 4 weeks?

**Lee:** Do you know what I mean?

**Chuck:** Yes. I arrived in here four weeks ago

**Tom:** **Of course**, it's a shame when Americans in a UNIVERSITY setting aren't **tolerant** (there's the adjective).

**Lee:** YES, thanks. I'm an idiot. I am afraid to say the right things in English.

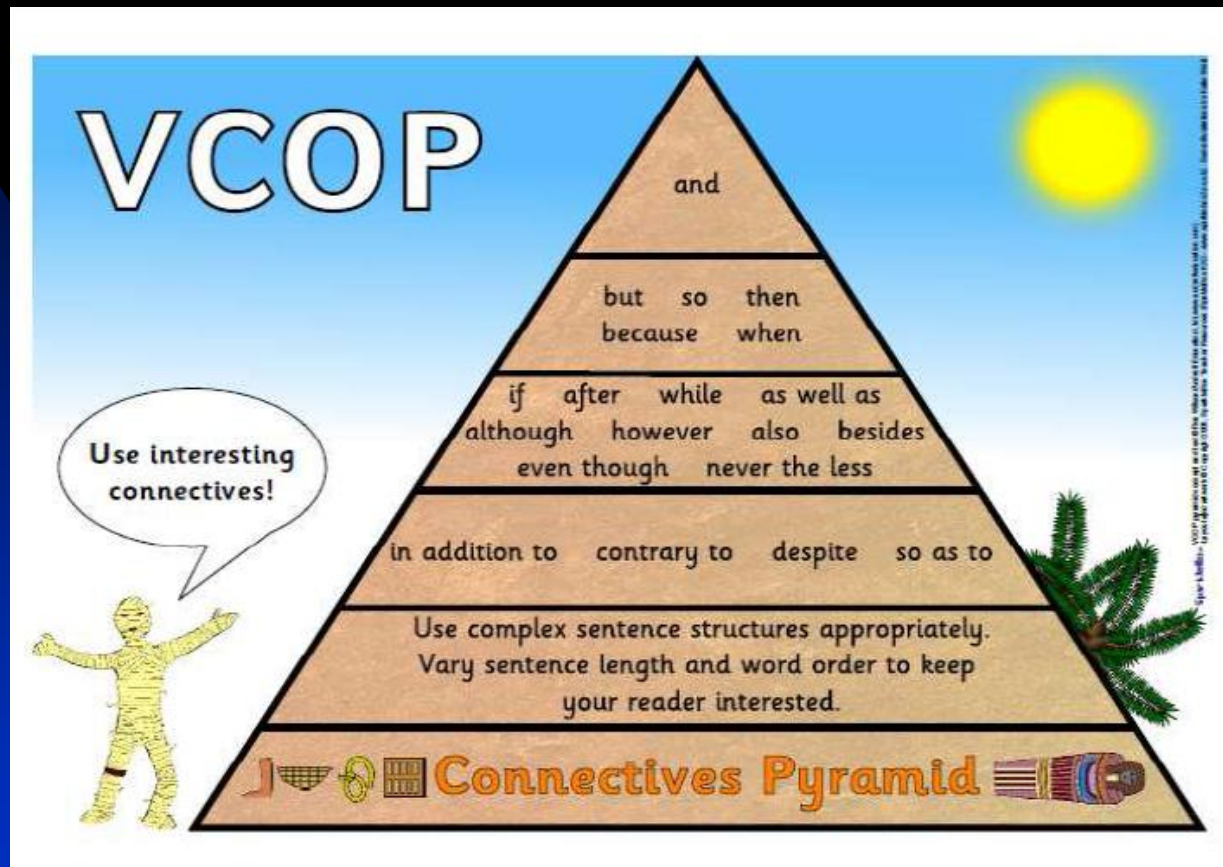
**Tom** No, don't say that. My wife scolds me all the time when I say I'm an idiot about learning Chinese. It's not good for learning and **consequently** I lose a bit of confidence.

# Scaffolding: more explicit

Swain (2006) explores how the 'languaging' (i.e. talk about language) that arises in tasks that invite learners to collaborate in selecting linguistic forms to achieve a communicative outcome helps to construct ZPDs that give rise of learning and to subsequent internalisation of new linguistic forms.

Modelling; language awareness; consciousness raising.

# Explicit scaffolding: Corbett and Strong: Talk for Writing (Open University Press, 2011)



## Transformative speaking and explicit scaffolding

- *Active Reading: transformative writing in literary studies* (Knights B. and Thurgar-Dawson, C. London, 2007)

# Classroom connectives: transformative discourse

T: What is a conurbation?

S1: It's a city.

T: Good. It's also....

S2: It's where there are suburbs.

T: So, now, what do we find in cities? Where do people live... or rather, do they all live in the centre?

S1: It's more than one city, several small cities making a big one such as Los Angeles or Tokyo.

T: That's good example.

S3: People work in a conurbation.

T: Speaking of Tokyo, that's a whole region, isn't it? Therefore, can we say people travel to work.....from the ...

....

T: From the suburbs?



# Classroom connectives: transformative discourse

T: What is a conurbation?

S1: It's a city.

T: **Good.** It's also....

S2: It's where there are suburbs.

T: **So, now,** what do we find in cities? Where do people live... **or rather,** do they all live in the centre?

S1: It's more than one city, several small cities making a big one such as Los Angeles or Tokyo.

T: **That's good example.**

S3: People work in a conurbation.

T: **Getting back to** Tokyo, that's a whole region, isn't it? **Therefore,** can we say people travel to work.....from the ...

....

T: From the suburbs?

## Classroom connectives: transformative discourse

A conurbation is a place where many people live together. **In some cases** a conurbation can include a number of smaller cities. People live in conurbations and some people live in the centre of big conurbations. Good examples would be Tokyo or Los Angeles. **However**, it is more likely that they will live in the suburbs surrounding the city or cities. **Accordingly**, they will need to travel to their place of work. **In addition to** travelling to work, people who live in conurbations.....

# Connectives and effective oral communication

- Can the student use **invisible** connectives accurately and automatically in speech and writing?
- Can the student link his/her turn smoothly to the previous speaker's, using linking words and phrases, to create 'confluence'?
- Can the student use a repertoire of small interactive connectives (e.g. *Just, absolutely, you know, I mean, actually, well, what's more* etc.) as well as longer formulaic language connectives (*as I was saying, speaking of*)?
- Can all this be handled relative to clarity, relevance and persuasiveness?
- Can it be successfully done in relation to different text types and genres, inside and outside school?
- Scaffolding is a continuum. Connectives can be scaffolded implicitly, scaffolded explicitly and even directly modelled?
- But they mustn't be allowed to remain invisible.
  
- [Further issues: **Explicitness** and language learning; fluency v accuracy; nativeness, world Englishes and cultural relativity]. Schmitt, N. (2010) *Vocabulary Research Handbook* (Macmillan, London)