

## **The teaching of additive connectives: An evaluation of current English grammar textbooks in Hong Kong**

Yu Hang Kwan  
*Hong Kong Baptist University*

Learners' faulty use of additive connectives may be attributed to the quality of English textbooks, yet there has been scant systematic and thorough scrutiny of the teaching of additive connectives in English textbooks. In view of this, this paper aims to critically evaluate the explanations, examples and practices of the use of additive connectives in four commercially-produced English grammar textbooks targeted at Grades 10 to 12 EFL students in Hong Kong. Findings from the present study show that the textbook explanations are simplistic as they overlook the pragmatic and stylistic functions of individual additive connectives and oversimplify their use in authentic texts. These textbooks give artificial sentence- or text-level examples to illustrate the semantic meanings of additive connectives, and the use of additive connectives in such examples tend to be either inappropriate or redundant. The language practices, which are mainly fill-in-the-blank or multiple choice items, merely involve learners' low-level thinking, lack variety and lead to learners' misconceptions about the use and pragmatic implications of individual additive connectives. Based on these findings, pedagogical implications are drawn suggesting how better instructional materials can be designed to enable learners to use additive connectives appropriately.

**Keywords:** additive connectives; Chinese learners of English; linking adverbials; register; teaching material design; textbook evaluation; Hong Kong

### **Introduction**

As a core component of communicative competence, discourse competence refers to the ability to engage in communication by, for example, deploying appropriate linguistic resources to connect and organise ideas in longer spoken and written genres (Saville-Troike, 2012). One strategy to achieve textual coherence and cohesion is the skilful use of connectives, also called cohesive conjunctions (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), discourse markers (Fraser, 1999), discourse connectors (Cowan, 2008) or logical connectors (Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016). Yet many previous studies have revealed that connectives, particularly the additive ones including *besides*, *furthermore* and *moreover*, are often frequently overused and misused by learners of English in different places with little attention paid to their pragmatic and stylistic restrictions (Bolton, Nelson, & Hung, 2002; Field & Yip, 1992; Granger & Tyson, 1996; Green, Yang, & Li, 2009; Ha, 2015; Lei, 2012; Milton & Tsang, 1993; Tankó, 2004).<sup>1</sup> The inappropriate use of additive connectives warrants further attention.

This study is situated in Hong Kong, where many learners of English were found to "rely heavily on a small set of conjunctions to join ideas and that they usually neglect other organisational techniques" (Milton & Tsang, 1993, p. 218). English is a compulsory subject in Hong Kong and many local students have studied English for at least twelve years by the time they take the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary

Education (HKDSE) examination, which is a local university entrance assessment. Nevertheless, annual examination reports on candidates' writing performances consistently criticise their excessive use of additive connectives as a common way of organising their compositions. For instance:

Many candidates' responses could have been enhanced with better organized text. Typically candidates relied on a few simple discourse markers to organize text such as 'besides, furthermore, moreover'. These were often overused, however, with some paragraphs containing as many as four or five discourse markers (Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2015, p. 172).

Similar to the Authority's observation, Yeung's (2009) corpus analysis showed that the Hong Kong learners of English appeared to be insensitive to the pragmatic implications and stylistic appropriateness of *besides*. These findings are congruent with many international studies reporting on the faulty use of additive connectives by users of English around the globe.

While learners' inappropriate use of additive connectives may be attributable to several factors, one that deserves investigation is the quality of English textbooks. Such textbooks play a pivotal role in many English language teaching contexts by supplementing teachers' instructions, providing learners with linguistic input and language practice, and constituting not only the syllabus but also the contents of end-of-term assessments (Harwood, 2014; Philip, Mukundan, & Nimehchisalem, 2012). In Hong Kong, many primary and secondary English classrooms are characterised as textbook-centred because teachers, who need to adhere to a textbook-bound scheme of work, are over-reliant on commercially available course books to plan their lessons (Adamson, Kwan, & Chan, 2000; Chow & Mok-Cheung, 2004; Lee, 2005). On the learners' side, the textbooks they use in English classes appear to be the main linguistic input they receive and the language practice they experience (Yang, Huang, & Lee, 2000). Yet some academics sound a cautionary note about the pedagogical values of these materials, and James (1998) even questions the accuracy of textbook language as do others, for example:

textbooks and websites for English learners often present lists of linking adverb categories and examples without distinguishing the differences in the meanings and uses they have in real discourse. Such materials produced for classroom teaching or self-study can have the unfortunate result of leading learners to think that lexical items in a subcategory are interchangeable (Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016, p. 555).

Similarly, Philip et al. (2012), examining the teaching of conjunctions in Malaysian secondary school English textbooks, found that they simply presented short and shallow explanations of the semantic meanings of the conjunctions accompanied by mostly controlled and decontextualized practices including fill-in-the-blank activities. Yeung (2009) and Lei (2012) also mention that most dictionaries and English textbooks merely put all additive connectives in the same category without explaining the registers and usages of individual connectives.

While the credibility of textbooks deserves attention, there has been scant systematic and thorough scrutiny of the teaching of additive connectives in English textbooks in the literature. The teaching of connectives also seems to receive relatively little attention compared with other well-researched areas in English language teaching such as learners' acquisition of tenses. The aim of this paper is to fill this niche by critically evaluating the presentation of additive connectives in commercially-produced English grammar textbooks published by well-established publishers in Hong Kong

after 2009, i.e., the first year of the implementation of a new three-year senior secondary curriculum (NSSC) for students of grades 10 to 12. As a result of the curriculum change at the senior secondary level, there have been new textbooks either published recently or revised from previous editions. The present study thus seeks to examine these resources in relation to the explanations, examples and practices of the use of additive connectives.

### Textbook selection and analysis

Four English grammar books (Table 1) which were on sale in bookstores at the time of writing this paper and widely used in many Hong Kong secondary schools were chosen for the present study. Senior secondary grammar textbooks were selected for two reasons. First, senior secondary students have more opportunities to write expository or argumentative texts, which often require them to present and link ideas properly. Second, is the goal of generating initial findings concerning the teaching of additive connectives in textbooks which can serve as a basis for future investigations.<sup>2</sup>

Table 1. Textbooks used in the evaluation

Textbook	Authors	Publisher	Publication year
Classroom Grammar and Usage for Senior Secondary Students	Debes, D., & Werth, M.	Classroom	2013
Developing Skills for HKDSE – Grammar & Usage (Set B)	Harris, C.	Aristo	2015
Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Grammar Book	Booker, R.	Pearson	2010
Mastering Grammar for the HKDSE	Lam, M. M.	Pilot	2009

These four textbooks can be used in class or for self-study and specifically target students of the senior secondary curriculum (grades 10 to 12). The end point of that curriculum is the HKDSE examination. The *Developing Skills for HKDSE – Grammar & Usage* textbook is available in two versions, Sets A and B, which cater for less-able and more-able students respectively. However, since the contents of both sets are highly similar, only Set B was selected. The author of *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Grammar Book* has also written three other senior secondary grammar textbooks published by the same publisher. In this study, only this book was selected as it appeared to be a popular course book.

Each of the textbooks listed in Table 1 is divided into units, each relating to one grammar item. For this study the units relevant to the teaching of connectives were examined in relation to the explanations, examples and practices of the use of additive connectives. *Classroom Grammar and Usage for Senior Secondary Students* does not have a specific unit teaching the use of connectives, but at the end of the book there is a chapter entitled *Grammar Tips for HKDSE* showing learners how to apply their grammar knowledge in the HKDSE writing and speaking papers. This chapter includes information about additive connectives so was included in the present study.

## Findings and discussion

### *Explanations of the use of additive connectives*

Problems with the explanations of the use of additive connectives similar to those discussed by Philip et al. (2012) were found in the textbooks surveyed here. With the exception of *Classroom Grammar and Usage for Senior Secondary Students*, the books use tables to categorise different types of connectives and give corresponding examples to exemplify each connective as shown in the extracts below:

Extract 1. From *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Grammar Book* (Booker, 2010, p. 174)

We use ...	to ...	Examples
Also	make an additional	Jenny behaves badly. She's <i>also</i> very rude.
Besides	point	I can't afford this dress. <i>Besides</i> , I don't like it.
Furthermore		Hiking keeps me fit. <i>Furthermore</i> , I enjoy it.
In addition		The journey is long. <i>In addition</i> , it's very tough.
Moreover		This film is badly made. <i>Moreover</i> , it's boring.

Extract 2. From *Mastering Grammar for the HKDSE* (Lam, 2009, p. 209)

Function	Connective	Example
To add ideas	also	This shopping mall has several large waiting areas. It
	furthermore	<i>also</i> provides lockers to shoppers. <i>In addition / Besides</i>
	besides	<i>/ Furthermore</i> , it is equipped with a big plasma TV.
	in addition	

While these tables provide a broad classification of connectives, there are two reasons why they can be cursory and misleading (Field & Yip, 1992; Granger & Tyson, 1996; Milton & Tsang, 1993). First, the explanations are simplistic and overlook the pragmatic and stylistic functions of individual additive connectives. According to Extracts 1 and 2, the listed additive connectives can all be used to add a new point. In a similar vein, *Classroom Grammar and Usage for Senior Secondary Students* even names them “signpost words” and advises learners to use them to add information (Debes & Werth, 2013, p. 290):

Extract 3.

To list the pros and cons in a clear way, you can use signpost words to introduce your ideas (e.g. *First of all*, *In addition*, *Besides*, *Finally*).

Yet, each additive connective has its distinctive, albeit subtle, characteristics. Frodesen and Eyring (2000) suggest two categories of additive connectives, namely simple addition, which refers to connectives introducing a new idea, and emphatic addition, which refers to those signalling a point reinforcing something mentioned before. *Besides*, for instance, is emphatic as it is not only used to mention an additional or the last reason that supports the preceding one (Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016), but also stylistically colloquial and more common in conversations and narratives to persuade, advise or argue something (Parrott, 2010; Yeung, 2009). *Moreover*, which expresses simple addition, is formal and “works best when the sentences it links are supporting some conclusion, rather than just adding parallel information” (Cowan, 2008, p. 630). Among the four textbooks, only *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Grammar Book* states the formality of different additive connectives (Booker, 2010, p. 174):

Extract 4.

*Also* and *besides* are much less formal than *furthermore*, *in addition* and *moreover*.

Although, to some extent, this reminder will be useful in that learners need to take formality into consideration when using additive connectives, the pragmatic implications of these items could have been pointed out. According to Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia (2016), while used to support a claim, *moreover* tends to introduce a second point whereas *furthermore* is used for a third or fourth point. These authors also note that *in addition* is “often used to connect ideas that are describing *situations* or *concepts* rather than arguments” (emphasis added) (2016, p. 558). The pragmatic functions of different additive connectives should thus be considered. Given such rough explanations of the use of additive connectives, learners may believe that those additive connectives can be interchangeable and fail to recognise their subtle differences (Granger & Tyson, 1996; Milton & Tsang, 1993).

The second reason why the explanations given by these textbooks are problematic is that they tend to oversimplify the use of additive connectives in authentic texts. While introducing the additive connectives, the textbooks mention that most of them usually come at the beginning of a sentence, i.e., the paragraph- or sentence-initial position, except *also* which can be put in non-initial positions, i.e., before or within a verb phrase. Although this appears to be a tendency, Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan’s (1999) 40-million-word corpus of authentic English showed that sentence-middle and sentence-final were the second most common positions of connectives in academic texts and conversations respectively. The possible variation of the position of additive connectives within a sentence can be further supported by examples taken from the NOW (News on the Web) corpus, a 3.4-billion-word database consisting of online media texts published in recent years, as in the concordance line below:

The Southland Times, reviewing Vogel’s book, said: “In Anno Domini 2000, it is easy to detect the hand of a beginner ... The whole story is *moreover* ridiculously improbable.” (<NZ 2016 (16-07-03)> Steven Sedley, *Otago Daily Times*, 3 July 2016)

While grammatically it seems accurate to locate *moreover* either before the subject “the whole story” or within the verb phrase “is ridiculously improbable”, it is perhaps worth considering the effects such textual arrangements may create (Parrott, 2010). Field and Yip (1992) argue that non-initial connectives are preferable to the sentence-initial ones in some cases as the former can minimise readers’ attention to the organisational devices, thereby making the flow of ideas more fluent and natural. It would thus be helpful to remind students that deciding whether to put a connective in the sentence-initial or non-initial position is not a random choice. In addition to positions, the textbooks seem to convey an illusion that students may simply treat additive connectives as handy linguistic resources when binding ideas and filling a break in discourse, as shown in the above extracts and the following excerpt:

Extract 5. *From Developing Skills for HKDSE – Grammar & Usage* (Set B) (Harris, 2015, p. 286)

Connectives are often used in argumentative and expository essays to explain ideas clearly and make the ideas coherent.

Learners should be clear that an indiscriminate use of connectives to link two unrelated points may leave readers with an impression that the arguments are semantically disconnected (Field & Yip, 1992). It is through lexical or syntactic

cohesive ties, such as the use of demonstrative pronouns (e.g., *this* way) to refer to a previously-mentioned proposition (see Paltridge, 2012, pp. 115-126), that natural transitions from one idea or sentence to the next can be created.

### *Examples of the use of additive connectives*

Another problem associated with the explanations of the use of additive connectives found in the four textbooks is the presentation of examples. With the exception of *Classroom Grammar and Usage for Senior Secondary Students*, the books give isolated, sentence-level examples in an attempt to illustrate the use of each additive connective, as in Extract 1. This kind of exemplification, however, will lead to two problems. Firstly, it would be difficult to judge whether the connective in each example is appropriately used, since each connective has its own pragmatic and stylistic restrictions and there are no specifications of the contexts of use. Taking Extract 6 as an example of this point, learners may realise that any of these additive connectives can be inserted to glue the two descriptions of Hong Kong (i.e., “a popular tourist destination” and “one of the busiest ports in the world”), and that each of them can be easily substituted by one another (Field & Yip, 1992). To remedy the problem, textbook authors should use real language examples to draw learners’ attention to the register (e.g., whether the communicative setting is formal or casual), discourse environment (e.g., whether the speaker or writer is expressing simple or emphatic addition) and logical development of the text (i.e., whether the use of additive connectives will make a text more cohesive).

Extract 6. From *Developing Skills for HKDSE – Grammar & Usage* (Set B) (Harris, 2015, p. 279)

Hong Kong is a popular tourist destination. *In addition*, / *Besides this*, / *Furthermore*, / *Moreover*, it is one of the busiest ports in the world.

A second problem is that the discrete textbook examples, in many cases, sound stilted and may read better if a more appropriate or even no additive connective is used. Consider these instances from the textbooks and the suggested revised versions which are more natural:

Extract 7. From *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Grammar Book* (Booker, 2010, p. 174)  
Hiking keeps me fit. *Furthermore*, I enjoy it.

Suggested revised versions:

- (a) Hiking keeps me fit, *so* I enjoy it.
- (b) I enjoy hiking, *which* keeps me fit.

Extract 8. From *Developing Skills for HKDSE – Grammar & Usage* (Set B) (Harris, 2015, p. 279)

Hong Kong is a popular tourist destination. *In addition*, it is one of the busiest ports in the world.

Suggested revised versions:

- (a) Hong Kong is a popular tourist destination *and* one of the busiest ports in the world.
- (b) Hong Kong is *not only* a popular tourist destination, *but also* one of the busiest ports in the world.

In Extract 7, the use of *furthermore* is inappropriate as it does not simply link two pieces of parallel information. Rather, it is used to introduce the third or even the last two points in support of an argument, according to Cowan (2008) and Larsen-Freeman

and Celce-Murcia (2016). The propositional contents of the two clauses, i.e., “hiking keeps me fit” and “I enjoy it”, also suggest that they appear to express a reason-and-result relationship, instead of being two ideas supporting an argument. It would thus be better if a simple discourse marker *so* is used (as in the first suggested revision) to connect both clauses to convey the meaning that being able to keep fit is the reason why the speaker or writer enjoys hiking. An alternative version is to use a non-restrictive relative clause, i.e., “which keeps me fit”, to give more information on why “I enjoy hiking” (as in the second suggested revision). In Extract 8, *in addition* may not be a good choice as it is normally used to connect large chunks of discourse such as sentences (Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016). Another consideration is that here it is used as a sentence-initial connective, which may distract readers’ attention especially because it is used to link two noun phrases “a popular tourist destination” and “one of the busiest ports in the world” (Field & Yip, 1992). A non-initial additive connective *and* or *not only ... but also* (for the purpose of emphasis) can be used to link the two descriptions and convey the intended meaning.

While both *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Grammar Book* and *Classroom Grammar and Usage for Senior Secondary Students* use texts to show learners the use of additive connectives, the input is somewhat contrived since in authentic texts, it is unlikely that a paragraph will contain many connectives. In Extract 9, although the author does not provide a context for the text, the content suggests that the speaker is sharing information about a holiday experience in New Zealand:

Extract 9. From *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Grammar Book* (Booker, 2010, p. 172)

(a) *Moreover*, we were determined to enjoy ourselves as none of us had ever been to New Zealand before.

(b) The inns we stayed in were very comfortable. *In addition*, they weren’t expensive.

There are 25 sentences in this text, yet 14 of them contain a connective and 13 sentence-initial connectives are used. Perhaps the two sentences (a) and (b) taken from the text may exemplify better why it does not serve as a good linguistic model to illustrate the use of additive connectives. In sentence (a), the formal connective *moreover* may not be appropriate if it is an informal sharing of a holiday experience. The connective *in addition* in sentence (b) clumsily connects two clauses referring to the inns. The entire part can be concisely rewritten as “The inns we stayed in were very comfortable and inexpensive”, using *and* to join two descriptions of the inns.

The textbooks’ presentation of additive connectives discussed here (Extracts 6 to 9) suggests that the use of additive connectives in these textbooks tends to be either inappropriate or redundant, and the textbook writers seem to be using such connectives for the sake of illustrating their semantic meanings. This shows, in Milton and Tsang’s (1993, p. 234) words, “the deliberate and artificial emphasis on discourse-marker overkill”. It is possible, as Philip et al. (2012) suggest, that learners may be misled by the ways textbook authors use connectives, thereby resulting in the wrong use of connectives.

### ***Practices of the use of additive connectives***

In most of the textbooks (except *Classroom Grammar and Usage for Senior Secondary Students*), the activities following the explanations and examples of the use of additive connectives are often controlled language practices, requiring learners to complete the blanks in isolated sentences or in a passage using connectives from a list given (see

Extract 10); or choose a connective from the two to four choices given (see Extracts 11 and 12). There are two problems related to the design of these practices.

First, these practices merely involve learners' low-level thinking and lack variety. To complete the exercises, students simply need to differentiate between connectives serving different discourse functions, i.e., additive, adversative, causal or sequential, and fill out the blanks according to the meanings expressed in the sentences or passages given. These practices, however, can hardly enable learners to understand the pragmatic and stylistic functions of individual additive connectives. Consider Extracts 10 and 11 below:

Extract 10. *From Developing Skills for HKDSE – Grammar & Usage (Set B)* (Harris, 2015, pp. 280-281)

Complete the sentences using words and phrases in the box. There may be more than one possible answer and some of the words/phrases may be used more than once. The first one has been done for you as an example.

as	because of	but
for example	for one thing	for this reason
however	in addition to	in fact
in spite of	to be frank	what's more
_____ Physics, I really enjoy Chemistry.		

Extract 11. *From Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Grammar Book* (Booker, 2010, p. 175)

Ms Wong is talking to her students about preparing for exams. Complete what she says by circling the correct connectives in brackets.

Listen carefully, everyone ... there are things you can do to make sure that you're ready for them.
...
The third student was not as clever as the others. (12) (Meanwhile / Nonetheless), she worked hard and revised early. (13) (In addition / In conclusion), she tried to reduce her stress. (14) (All in all / For example), she often went swimming. (15) (On the other hand / Therefore), it wasn't surprising that she did the best among the three students.
...

These activities test whether learners are able to choose the connectives which the textbook writers consider correct. Yet, in Extract 10, the decontextualized, sentence-level practice can be improved if a context is present to help students consider the formality and decide which additive connective should be used. For the item shown in Extract 10, using *in addition to*, which is considered the correct answer, also makes the sentence clumsy and semantically unacceptable. Cowan (2008) explains that *in addition (to)* is used to add parallel ideas, yet in the sentence the two subjects (i.e., Physics and Chemistry) are not parallels as the speaker or writer uses the emphasis marker *really* which stresses his or her favourite is Chemistry (Fraser, 1996). The use of *in addition to* is thus faulty.<sup>3</sup> In Extract 11, despite the presence of a context, i.e., a teacher giving advice on examination preparations, learners only need to identify which type of connectives, i.e., additive, adversative, causal or sequential, each of the given choices belongs to and select the one that fits the intended meaning. These language practices



make no attempt to help learners consider the distinctive characteristics of individual additive connectives.

In some cases, the low-level drillings may lead to learners' misconceptions about the use and pragmatic implications of individual additive connectives. Taking Extract 11 as an illustration, almost every sentence begins with a connective, and the text's artificiality simply does more harm than good when it comes to the quality of the passage as the teacher's sharing becomes ponderous and stilted. In Extract 12, learners are presented arguments for and against compulsory cooking class, and are told to choose the connectives from the choices given. One part of this exercise requires learners to choose the sentence-initial connectives *first* (Item 17),<sup>4</sup> *besides* (Item 18) and *moreover* (Item 19) to connect three reasons.

Extract 12. *From Developing Skills for HKDSE – Grammar & Usage* (Set B) (Harris, 2015, pp. 286-287)

Should cooking class be made compulsory at school?

...

(17) (Furthermore / First / The reason is / Indeed), I don't think running cooking classes in schools is practical. There may not be enough space for every school to accommodate the equipment needed. (18) (Besides / Because of this / On second thoughts / Not to mention), there may not be enough teachers qualified to teach the subject. (19) (In the second place / In a similar way / Moreover / In spite of this), cooking can be a dangerous activity, so special safety procedures would have to be put in place to keep students from injuring themselves.

...

It appears that each reason is introduced using a sentence-initial connective, but again such an activity design will leave learners, especially those having limited exposure to authentic English, with the delusion that sentence-initial additive connectives can simply be used to add reasons in discursive writing and provide a superficial linkage between ideas without considering other ways to present their thoughts effectively. The distinctive characteristics of individual additive connectives are also neglected here. In Item 18, *besides*, which is considered the correct answer, is not entirely appropriate as there is an additional reason forthcoming, i.e., cooking being a dangerous activity, although the reason introduced by *besides*, i.e., lacking qualified teachers to teach cooking classes, reinforces the previous one, i.e., lacking space. From these examples, it is apparent that the practices have weaknesses, which may hinder learners' understanding about additive connectives and their ability to use them appropriately, both pragmatically and stylistically.

### Pedagogical implications

The findings above illustrate the shortcomings of the presentation of additive connectives in the surveyed materials, which may cause induced errors. Suggestions for improving the textbook explanations, examples and practices of additive connectives are given below.

### ***Explanations***

Simplistic explanations should be avoided. To enhance learners' register awareness of different additive connectives, it would be better to provide more detailed register-specific descriptions of their usages and stress that connectives belonging to the same functional category are not always interchangeable since they have their own distinctive pragmatic and stylistic restrictions (Granger & Tyson, 1996; Ha, 2015; Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016; Milton & Tsang, 1993). For instance, to explain the connective *besides*, learners need to know that its function transcends simple addition because it is used in colloquial contexts to mention a final point that reinforces the previous idea in an argument (Yeung, 2009). Textbooks should also highlight that in written English, smooth transitions between ideas are created through lexical and syntactic cohesive ties and thematic progression (Paltridge, 2012), and simply inserting a sentence-initial additive connective to bind ideas does not achieve this purpose effectively. Learners can be taught how to use connectives to reiterate a previously-mentioned idea before introducing a new one, rather than the connective alone to make the connection between two ideas more explicit (Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016).

### ***Examples***

Carefully-chosen examples should be given to reflect accurately the semantic, pragmatic and stylistic functions of different additive connectives. Textbook authors tend to create contrived examples to illustrate the target structure (Ellis & Shintani, 2014; Philip et al., 2012) but they should refer to more authoritative grammar references (e.g., Cowan, 2008; Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016; Parrott, 2010) as well as the existing empirical corpus analyses (e.g., Yeung, 2009) to understand how additive connectives are used to achieve coherence and cohesion in real language use. Textbook could present excerpts from authentic materials, and ask students to identify the function of a connective (e.g., simple or emphatic addition) and the context(s) it is typically used (e.g., informal or formal). This guided discovery approach and some awareness-raising activities can help learners recognise the subtle differences of individual additive connectives and use them correctly (Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016; Tankó, 2004).

### ***Practices***

While controlled exercises may help learners distinguish the semantic meanings of different connectives, students need to be cognizant that those connectives should not be misused or overused. Rewriting activities could teach learners how to use additive connectives in a pragmatically and stylistically appropriate manner. Learners would be given a short paragraph which overuses or misuses additive connectives and, with guidance, they can improve it to create smooth links between ideas and enhance readability (Green et al., 2009). Learners can be taught about thematic progression patterns (see Paltridge, 2012, pp. 130-133) by deconstructing a cohesive paragraph or text to raise their consciousness of how various points supporting an argument can be linked. This will help students practise turning the rhematic information of the previous sentence into the theme of the following sentence, and to decrease learners' over-reliance on additive connectives as a means to link arguments. Other activities such as reconstructing a jumbled paragraph (see Cowan, 2008, pp. 630-634; Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016, pp. 566-569) would develop broader organisational skills that may supplement or replace additive connectives.

## Conclusion

This small-scale study shows that the four English grammar textbooks reviewed have limitations on the explanations, examples and practices of the use of additive connectives. The explanations provided overlook the pragmatic and stylistic functions of additive connectives, and are followed mostly by discrete and contrived examples and low-level language practices. To avoid textbook-induced errors, it is essential to raise textbook authors' and teachers' awareness of the potential problems existing in the textbook presentation of additive connectives and their sensitivity to the subtle differences among additive connectives, such that they can be in a better position to improve the presentation of additive connectives in instructional materials and enable learners to use connectives appropriately and write smooth texts. Although this study examines only four books published in Hong Kong, the findings are relevant to other English language teaching contexts where similar problems concerning the teaching of additive connectives may be found. Future larger-scale textbook evaluations may analyse writing and speaking course books to see how they teach users to use connectives to organise ideas, or if there may be a correlation between textbook input and learners' use of connectives in production tasks.

## Notes

1. For more about the differences in the use of additive connectives between L1 and L2 users of English refer to (Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016, pp. 564-565).
2. I thank one of the reviewers of this paper who suggested that junior secondary grammar textbooks could be included in the present study. This will be taken into account in future research.
3. I thank one of the reviewers of this paper who drew my attention to the word *really*.
4. I thank one of the reviewers of this paper who commented that for Item 17, *indeed* could be correct because it is a commentary pragmatic marker or, specifically, an evidential marker indicating the student's confidence in his or her claim that running cooking classes in schools is unfeasible (Fraser, 1996). As the focus of this exercise is on the use of connectives, *first* is considered the most appropriate answer. Yet, learners who know the pragmatic meaning of *indeed* and choose it as the right answer may wonder why it is incorrect.

## About the author

Yu Hang Kwan is a senior research assistant in the Department of Education Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University. He completed his MA in Language Studies (with Distinction) at Hong Kong Baptist University in 2014. His research interests include discourse analysis, pragmatics and second language writing.

## References

- Adamson, B., Kwan, T., & Chan, K. K. (2000). *Changing the curriculum: The impact of reform on primary schooling in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. London: Longman.
- Bolton, K., Nelson, G., & Hung, J. (2002). A corpus-based study of connectors in student writing: Research from the International Corpus of English in Hong Kong (ICE-HK). *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 7(2), 165-182. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/ijcl.7.2.02bol>
- Booker, R. (2010). *Longman elect new senior secondary grammar book*. Hong Kong: Pearson.
- Chow, A. W. K., & Mok-Cheung, A. H. M. (2004). English language teaching in Hong Kong SAR: Tradition, transition and transformation. In W. K. Ho & R. Y. L. Wong (Eds.), *English language teaching in East Asia today* (pp. 150-177). Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.
- Cowan, R. (2008). *The teacher's grammar of English: A course book and reference guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Debes, D., & Werth, M. (2013). *Classroom grammar and usage for senior secondary students*. Hong Kong: Classroom.

- Ellis, R., & Shintani, N. (2014). *Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Field, Y., & Yip, L. M. O. (1992). A comparison of internal conjunctive cohesion in the English essay writing of Cantonese speakers and native speakers of English. *RELC Journal*, 23(1), 15-28. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/003368829202300102>
- Fraser, B. (1996). Pragmatic markers. *Pragmatics*, 6(2), 167-190.
- Fraser, B. (1999). What are discourse markers? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31(7), 931-952. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(98\)00101-5](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(98)00101-5)
- Frodesen, J., & Eyring, J. (2000). *Grammar dimensions 4: Form, meaning, and use*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Granger, S., & Tyson, S. (1996). Connector usage in the English essay writing of native and non-native EFL speakers of English. *World Englishes*, 15(1), 17-27. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.1996.tb00089.x>
- Green, C., Yang, H., & Li, E. S. H. (2009). *Analysing and applying English grammar*. Hong Kong: Open University of Hong Kong Press.
- Ha, M. J. (2015). Linking adverbials in first-year Korean university EFL learners' writing: A corpus-informed analysis. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 29(6), 1090-1101. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2015.1068814>
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Harris, C. (2015). *Developing skills for HKDSE – grammar & usage (Set B)*. Hong Kong: Aristo.
- Harwood, N. (2014). Content, consumption, and production: Three levels of textbook research. In N. Harwood (Ed.), *English language teaching textbooks: content, consumption, production* (pp. 1-41). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. (2015). *2015 subject examination report and question papers: English language*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority.
- James, C. (1998). *Errors in language learning and use*. London: Longman.
- Lam, M. M. (2009). *Mastering grammar for the HKDSE*. Hong Kong: Pilot.
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Celce-Murcia, M. (2016). *The grammar book: Form, meaning, and use for English language teachers*. Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Lee, I. (2005). English language teaching in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR): A continuous challenge. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Teaching English to the world: History, curriculum, and practice* (pp. 35-45). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Lei, L. (2012). Linking adverbials in academic writing on applied linguistics by Chinese doctoral students. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 11(3), 267-275. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2012.05.003>
- Milton, J., & Tsang, E. S. C. (1993). A corpus-based study of logical connectors in EFL students' writing: Directions for future research. In R. Pemberton & E. S. C. Tsang (Eds.), *Studies in lexis: Working papers from a seminar* (pp. 215-246). Hong Kong: The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.
- Paltridge, B. (2012). *Discourse analysis: An introduction*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Parrott, M. (2010). *Grammar for English language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Philip, A., Mukundan, J., & Nimehchisalem, V. (2012). Conjunctions in Malaysian secondary school English language textbooks. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 1(1), 1-11. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/ijalel.v.1n.1p.1>
- Saville-Troike, M. (2012). *Introducing second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tankó, G. (2004). The use of adverbial connectors in Hungarian university students' argumentative essays. In J. M. Sinclair (Ed.), *How to use corpora in language teaching* (pp. 157-181). Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Yang, S., Huang, Y. Y., & Lee, N. (2000). Some reflections on English textbook input for Hong Kong students – based on a case study of tense-aspect acquisition problems. *Asia Pacific Journal of Language in Education*, 3(1), 1-24.
- Yeung, L. (2009). Use and misuse of 'besides': A corpus study comparing native speakers' and learners' English. *System*, 37(2), 330-342. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.11.007>