CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction.

This chapter will highlight various studies relating to the study of cohesion. First, a historical background of the linguists involved in Modern Linguistics will be discussed. This will be followed by a description of Halliday's systemic theory of language. The Halliday and Hasan model of cohesion and the criticisms surrounding their theory will then be presented. Finally, contributions of other researchers in the area of conjunctions will be reviewed.
2.1 British school of linguists and their contributions to Modern Linguistics.

Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of Modern Linguistics (1857-1913) put forward several language theories. One of the most important contributions that he made to the world of linguistics, is the distinction between paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations (Halliday and Hasan 1985). A syntagmatic relation in a sentence, is the relationship that linguistic units have with other units because they occur together in a sequence. A word is said to have syntagmatic relations with the other words which occur in the same sentence in which it appears, but it has paradigmatic relations with words that could be substituted for it in the sentence.

These paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations are illustrated in Figure 2.1.1 below:

![Diagram: Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic Relations](image)

In the above sentence, the words *I, bought, a, book, from, the* and *bookstore* are all syntagmatically or structurally related to one another. However, all these words are in a paradigmatic relation to all the other words that could easily substitute them in the sentence. For example, *bought* is paradigmatically
related to purchased, ordered and borrowed. These words could easily substitute ‘bought’ in the sentence. In other words, paradigmatic relations are to do with ‘choices’ that one could make linguistically. ‘Choice’ here is dependent on the meaning that is intended to be conveyed.

Following Saussure, Malinowski (1887-1942) in 1923, introduced the concept of ‘context of situation’ (which means the environment of the text) and the concept of ‘context of culture’ (which means the cultural background/history). Both these concepts play an important part in the interpretation of the meaning or adequate understanding of a text, that is the semantics of a text (Halliday and Hasan, 1985). Malinowski’s notion of context of situation for the study of meaning/semantics was later adopted by J.R.Firth (1890-1960) who developed it further for the purposes of a linguistic theory. In Firth’s view, ‘all linguistics was the study of meaning and all meaning was function in a text’ (Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 8).

M.A.K. Halliday, another ‘product’ of the London School of Linguists, was greatly influenced by the works of the above scholars. It was Halliday who later developed the systemic grammar in the 1960s.

2.2 Context of Culture and Context of Situation

As mentioned above, Malinowski, in 1923, introduced the concept of context of situation and context of culture for the adequate understanding of a text. By context of situation, he meant the environment of a text which is the situation in which the text is uttered. By context of culture, he meant the
environment more than the immediate environment which is the whole cultural history behind the participants and behind the kind of practices that they are engaged in.

In formulating a method for describing the context of situation in which a text functioned, Halliday came up with a simple conceptual framework of three headings. They are field, tenor and mode.

Field of discourse refers to what the text is about, what events are taking place in the text or what events the participants in the text are engaged in. Tenor refers to the participants who are taking part in the discourse, their status and the kinds of role relationships the participants are involved in. The mode of discourse is the function played by language in that situation, the channel of presentation of language i.e. written or spoken and the rhetorical mode of the text, whether persuasive or expository and so on (Halliday and Hasan, 1985).

These three headings - field, tenor and mode - correspond to the three major functions or semantic components of language introduced by Halliday which are the experiential, interpersonal and textual functions (Halliday and Hasan 1985).

The field (what is going on) is expressed through the experiential function which is that part of the linguistic system which is concerned with the expression of 'content' and the representation of experience.

The tenor (the relationships involved) is expressed through the interpersonal function which is concerned with the social and expressive functions of language, with expressing the speaker's 'angle': his attitudes and
judgements, his encoding of the role relationships in the situation, and his motive in saying anything at all.

And the mode is expressed through the textual function in the semantics. The textual component is the text-forming component in the linguistic system.

The description of the context of situation - i.e. the field, tenor, and mode - of each of the five texts used in this study are given in Chapter 3.

2.3 Halliday’s School Of Thought

In further developing Saussure, Malinowski and Firth’s ideas of language theories, Halliday ‘invented’ a theory of language which has gained much popularity over the last couple of decades. This theory is known as the systemic theory. It is also called the systemic functional theory or the functional theory of language. Some very distinct characteristics make the core of this theory.

First and foremost, while some linguists like Chomsky (1957) adopt a psychological mode to explain a language theory – meaning there is a special device in the human brain which is responsible for one’s language acquisition, Halliday takes the direction of a social approach, as seen in the following quote,

‘...For us then, the perspective primarily adopted – not to the exclusion of others, but because this is where we look first to seek our explanations for linguistic phenomena – is the social one’ (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:4).

This explains why Halliday defined language as a ‘social semiotic’. By social semiotics, he is simply referring to the definition of a social-system/culture, as a system of meanings. Therefore, language is a system of meanings
embedded in one’s “social system which is synonymous with the culture” (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:4). So, language as a ‘social semiotic’ means language as ‘social meanings’.

This explains our second point that is, why Halliday, following Firth’s thinking, accords great importance to the study of meaning in his view of language as he says,

“A functional theory of language is a theory about meanings, not about words or constructions” (Halliday, 1971:110).

This is not to say that, grammar, which accounts for the textual function, is not given equal prominence. In fact, according to Halliday, grammar should be recognised as having just as much to do with the meaning. This is because, no one function is less significant than the other. All are equally important to make meaning clear (Halliday 1970). However, the point of departure here is meaning and not grammar.

Third, Halliday points out too, that language is a choice, meaning there is no obligatory one-to-one relationship between structure and function. This means the same function could be represented by a different choice of words. The same message can be expressed in different ways.

2.4 The Systemic Functional Linguistic Theory.

A systemic linguistic theory denotes a theory in which the basic concept is that of a ‘system’. A system provides a range of choices ordered along the paradigmatic environment that is made available at all strata of language. The
choices are associated with meanings in the grammar of the language. The origin of systemic linguistics can be traced back to Firthian linguistics. However, Firth and Halliday differ somewhat in where they lay their focus on. While Firth gave equal status to the concepts of system and structure in his model, Halliday, in his systemic linguistics, has given priority to system (Martin 1992). In other words, the systemic theory focuses more on the description of the paradigmatic relations, that is, a set of choices or alternatives available for a particular context.

For example, in the following sentence,

'Ve went up following the sudden inflation.'

In the place of 'went up', a whole range of alternatives depending on the meaning we want to convey is available. They may be *escalate, skyrocket, jump, soar, rise* or *increase* as illustrated in the following system network (Figure 2.4.1). (A system network represents a way of presenting facts/ideas in the systemic functional theory.)

![System Network - Price of goods](image)

**Figure 2.4.1: System Network - Price of goods**

If we mean 'a drastic rise', then the alternatives available, as seen in Figure 2.4.1, are *escalate, skyrocket, jump* or *soar*. Otherwise, it will be *rise* or *increase*. These
choices are associated with meanings in the grammar of the language. The origin of systemic linguistics can be traced back to Firthian linguistics. However, Firth and Halliday differ somewhat in where they lay their focus on. While Firth gave equal status to the concepts of system and structure in his model, Halliday, in his systemic linguistics, has given priority to system (Martin 1992). In other words, the systemic theory focuses more on the description of the paradigmatic relations, that is, a set of choices or alternatives available for a particular context.

For example, in the following sentence,

‘The price of goods went up following the sudden inflation.’

In the place of ‘went up’, a whole range of alternatives depending on the meaning we want to convey is available. They may be escalate, skyrocket, jump, soar, rise or increase as illustrated in the following system network (Figure 2.4.1). (A system network represents a way of presenting facts/ideas in the systemic functional theory.)

![System Network - Price of goods](image)

Figure 2.4.1: System Network - Price of goods

If we mean ‘a drastic rise’, then the alternatives available, as seen in Figure 2.4.1, are escalate, skyrocket, jump or soar. Otherwise, it will be rise or increase. These
alternatives form the linguistic resources that one could choose from to say what he means.

Although system networks are not the focus of this study, the point to be made here is that a system network such as the above represents language as a resource, rather than a set of rules. Just like the choices of alternatives illustrated in the paradigmatic axis earlier, the most delicate choices on the right of the system network represent the resources that are available for use at any one time.

This underlying concept of language as a resource and choice is what is subscribed to strongly in this study. In other words, the study is concerned with paradigmatic relations – that is a wide range of conjunctive resources available to one, for his/her use at any one time.

2.5 Halliday and Hasan’s model of cohesion.

The study of cohesion began to gain momentum after the publication of Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) work on cohesion – ‘Cohesion In English’. Since then, a lot of research has been carried out in cohesion and in related areas. Cohesion is a semantic relation within a text by means of which ‘elements that are structurally unrelated to one another are linked together’ (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:27). It is, in fact, one of the linguistic system’s major resources for text construction.

In their 1976 model of cohesion, Halliday and Hasan introduced five cohesive devices that can be used to achieve cohesion in a text, especially in written texts. They are reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexis.
They classified the first three devices – reference, substitution and ellipsis as grammatical devices and lexis as a lexical device on its own. Conjunction, which is what the present study is about, falls on the borderline of the two. It is mainly grammatical but with a lexical component in it (Halliday and Hasan 1976).

2.6 Models of Conjunctions within the Systemic Functional Theory.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) define conjunction as the specification of the way in which what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before. Unlike reference, substitution, ellipsis or lexis, conjunctions are not devices for reaching out into the preceding (or following) parts of the text but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in a discourse.

Four models of conjunctions under systemic linguistics will be discussed in this section. They are the models of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Martin (1983), Halliday (1985) and Martin (1992).

Halliday and Hasan (1976) in their model of conjunctions, divided conjunctions into four different relations, namely additive, adversative, causal and temporal and analysed ‘cohesive conjunctions’ rather than coordinate conjunctions.

Cohesive conjunctions are the conjunctive expressions which connect clause complexes in separate sentences (intersentential) whereas coordinate conjunctions connect clauses within clause complexes in the same sentence (intrasentential).
In his 1985 model, Halliday made some modifications to the types of conjunctive relations he introduced in his book with Hasan in 1976. Here, he classified conjunctions within the domains of elaboration, extension and enhancement to suit his grammar-based transitivity analysis of language. While the 1976 model focused on conjunctions between sentences, the 1985 model had its focus on paratactic and hypotactic conjunctions. Paratactic and hypotactic (coordinating and subordinating types) analysis of conjunctions involve the study of conjunctions which appear within a sentence, which is intrasentential.

Martin too, contributed his ideas on conjunctions following Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) model. In his 1983 model, Martin analysed conjunctions mainly in hypotactic sentences having recognized four main types of logico-semantic relations for conjunctions – additive, comparative, temporal and consequential.

Martin’s 1992 analysis of conjunctions was an extension of his 1983. However, his main emphasis this time was on the distinction between internal and external relations of conjunctions. The present study too, attempts to determine if the conjunctions used in the texts chosen are internal or external. A description of what internal and external conjunctive relations encompass will be given in Chapter 3.

In short, the differences among the various models mentioned above, lies in the points of departure of each type of analysis carried out. In Halliday’s 1976 model, the point of departure was clause complexes i.e. intersentential / between sentences, Martin’s 1983 was hypotactic conjunctions, Halliday’s 1985 was hypotactic and paratactic conjunctions and Martin’s 1992 model was on
hypotactic and paratactic conjunctions but with greater emphasis on internal and external relations.

As the present study is about cohesive conjunctions, that is conjunctions connecting ideas between sentences, the theoretical framework chosen is based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) and Martin's (1992) models. However, only part of Martin's 1992 model is adopted here since this study is only concerned with conjunctions connecting clause complexes, i.e. intersentential. The internal/external relations which is also studied here will be modelled on both Halliday and Hasan's (1976) and Martin's (1992) frameworks for the study of conjunctions.

2.7 Criticisms on Halliday & Hasan's 1976 Model.

While Halliday and Hasan's pioneering work on cohesion sparked off a lot of interest in conducting further studies on cohesion and coherence, it also received a certain amount of criticisms.

Most of these criticisms are based on the 1976 model. It is generally felt that the mere presence of cohesion in a text does not guarantee a coherent text. One such criticism comes from Morgan and Sellner (1980) who disagree with Halliday and Hasan (1976) in that there must be more than some linguistic property like cohesion that makes a text coherent. They argue that coherence of a text was a matter of content which happened to have linguistic consequences. They add that cohesive ties should not be construed as the cause of coherence but rather the effect of coherence.
This point is supported by Carrell (1982) whose criticism of Halliday and Hasan's model, concern with the schema theory which maintains that processing a text is an interactive process between the text and the prior background knowledge of the reader or listener. This is especially so in Halliday and Hasan's discussion of lexical cohesion.

Giving the following pair of sentences to illustrate their point, 'The picnic was ruined. No one remembered to bring a corkscrew', Carrell maintains that this mini-text coheres not because there is necessary linguistic cohesive tie between 'picnic' and 'corkscrew' but rather because we can access a familiar schema for interpreting it. She adds that for anyone who cannot access such a schema, the text will fail to cohere. According to her, the illusion of lexical cohesion is created by the text's coherence.

Stoddard (1991) too argues that, it is not accurate to speak of cohesion as being wholly 'in' the physical text. Cohesion, to her, is much more complicated than just the presence of linguistic signals in the physical text. She is of the opinion that cohesion could be a mental construct of the producers of text (writers) or of the processors (readers) of those texts.

Criticism is also passed by Yvette Field (1994) on the term 'conjunct' used by Halliday to mean a specific type of conjunction. She notes that many researchers tend to shy away from the conjunctive term not only because of the danger of confusion with grammatical coordinates but also because Halliday and Hasan (1976) do not give a ready made term for referring to cohesive conjunctions. Instead, she says Halliday and Hasan use the expression
‘conjunctive elements’ (1976:233). According to her, other terms like logical connectors or connectives are preferred and therefore more readily used.

2.8 Other research on conjunctions.

Various terms have been used to refer to words which connect ideas in between sentences. Among the terms are, connectives, logical connectives, logical conjunctions, logical connectors, language connectives, discourse markers, linkers, sequence markers and sequence signals.

All these words, function as transition words which contribute to the smooth flow of thought in written discourse. They also serve as signposts which indicate the direction that the new clause is going to take. For example, the linker or connector ‘however’ gives us an indication of ‘contrary to what was said thus far’ and therefore, the direction to be taken hereafter is one of adversative or contrastive.

What subsumes cohesive conjunctions, which is what the present study is about, may differ slightly from what is grouped under the various terms above. Certain words which fall under the latter, may not be cohesive conjunctions (what subsumes cohesive conjunctions will be explained in Chapter 3).

Yvette Field & Yip Lee Mee Oi (1992) are of the opinion that although the alternative terms are more accessible and convenient and therefore widely used, they lack the systematic basis that the Halliday and Hasan scheme provides for use in analysis as can be seen on Table 3.5.1 in Chapter 3.
However, based on the similarity of their function as connectors of ideas between sentences or parts of a passage, a review of work done using terms other than 'cohesive conjunctions', cannot be ignored here. After all, the underlying function is still the same.

Vivian Zamel (1983) points out that, while students need to be taught how to use all the cohesive devices available, they particularly need careful instruction in the use of cohesive conjunctions. However, he comments that most compositions or writing texts categorize these conjunctions according to function, thus ignoring their semantic and syntactic restrictions. This unfortunately, gives students the erroneous idea that certain cohesive conjunctions can be used interchangeably. He proposes more effective strategies for presenting these links i.e. by presenting longer units of discourse for students to work on, instead of linking exercises which comprise only pairs of sentences.

Marion Crowhurst of the University of British Columbia (1987) examined the kinds of cohesive ties used by students at various developmental levels. Specifically, the study examined argumentative and narrative prose written by students at grades 6, 10 and 12 in order to determine the types of cohesive ties used at each grade in each of the two modes of writing using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) coding system.

As for the conjunctions used, results showed that causal and temporal conjunctions decreased with grade level. This, according to the researcher, reflected decreases in the immature over-use of such sentence connectives as 'so' and 'then'.
As to mode differences - argumentative and narrative - temporal conjunctions occurred with greater frequency in narration than in argument. This difference was attributed to less developed skills in the writing of argument which led to lower frequency of use of the kinds of temporal conjunctions that might be expected in arguments.

Fang Xuelan and Graeme Kennedy (1992) of the Victoria University of Wellington conducted a study of the ways in which the notion of causation is expressed in written British English. The focus of the study was on how causation is expressed explicitly in the computerised one million word LOB corpus (Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen corpus: 1 million words of British English modelled after the Brown corpus of 1 million words of American English). Among the findings was that the use of causative conjunctions such as 'because' and 'since' was found to be the most frequent of eight major ways of expressing causation followed closely by causative adverbs which also include cohesive conjunctions like 'therefore' and 'consequently' analysed in the present study.

Hong Kong student writers' tendency to overuse cohesive conjunctions in their essay writings compared to their native speaker counterparts, led to a number of researches carried out in this area. Yvette Field & Yip Lee Mee Oi (1992) of the Hong Kong Baptist College adopted a quantitative approach and analysed English essays of Form 6 writers from a native speaker group and three groups of Cantonese speakers for the organizational (internal) cohesive conjunctions used. The purpose of their analysis was to determine the differences between native and ESL writers based on the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976).
Results showed that Cantonese writers use a significantly higher frequency of cohesive conjunctions in their English writing than their native speaker counterparts.

Yvette Field & Yip Lee Mee Oi’s view is supported by the findings of Sylviane Granger & Stephanie Tyson (1996) whose study is focused on discourse and more specifically on connector usage. Although at first their study revealed no overall overuse of connectors by learners, a more qualitative look, however, showed strong evidence of overuse of individual connectors as well as semantic, stylistic and syntactic misuse. So, the researchers concluded and proposed that learners should not be presented with lists of ‘interchangeable’ connectors but instead, taught the semantic, stylistic and syntactic behaviour of individual connectors, using authentic texts.

Vijayalekshmi Viswanathan (2000) of the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics has done a descriptive study of conjunctions used in authentic texts. Expository texts from the field of agriculture and science were studied using Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) and Martin’s (1992) models of conjunctive relations. This study which involved the analysis of conjunctions inter and intrasententially revealed the predomination of the use of consequential and comparative relations (based on Martin's classification of conjunctions) in both registers - agriculture and science.

The present research is also a descriptive study of conjunctions used in expository texts but from the field of politics. The texts chosen for the study were all written-to-be-read aloud mainly as keynote addresses in seminars and
conferences. The focus of this study is on cohesive conjunctions used only intersententially using Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) classification of conjunctions - additive, adversative, causal and temporal and Halliday & Hasan’s (1976) and Martin’s (1992) definitions of internal/external relations. It does not involve any structural analysis.

2.9 Conclusion.

This chapter has discussed the historical background of the British School of Linguists and their contributions to Modern Linguistics. This was followed by a description of the systemic theory introduced by Halliday. Then, Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) model of cohesion and the criticisms against their model were highlighted. Finally, studies done by others in the area of conjunctions were reviewed.