

## Coherence and flow in writing

Coherence refers to the logical flow of ideas, sentences, clauses and phrases. We will look at typical problems of East Asian writers with transitionals (connectors), as well as other transitional devices.

### 1. Transitionals

Look at the following and identify the stylistic problems with these sentences, or stylistic improvements that could be made.

#### 1.1. Adverb placement

1. They had planned very well and even defeated Pearl Harbor utterly.
2. The information is various from the exchange rate and stock prices and to the current of national economy. Especially, economic predictions are useful to make a plan for long-term economic policy for several reasons.
3. Especially the negative aspect of the violence is living in the mind of young people.

#### 1.2. Complex sentence structure

4. Bilingual education can have a positive influence on young children's cognitive development and academic development in second language learning. Because one study (Cambell & Sais, 1995) found that bilingual children have shown advantages in cognitive and linguistic levels before going to school.
5. [a] Gender turned out to have a significant effect in past studies, so it was entered as a control variable. *cf.*  
[b] Because gender turned out to have a significant effect in past studies, it was entered as a control variable.
6. Paintings tend to use muted and cool colors. The background is light while the middle distance is dark and the foreground figures in the light. The shininess, weight and patterns of textiles can still be considered rendered, but details become less important. Pastel chalk, which forbids both mixing pigments for exact color rendering and clearly defined lines, gains popularity and gives a soft appearance to portraits. Portraits painted during the 18th century abound. Many are excellent sources of information, but individual artists sometimes felt that portraits demanded timeless rather than fashionable dress (Tortora & Eubank, 1999).

#### 1.3. Contrastive markers

7. But, statistics show the greatest escape rates from poverty by welfare benefits.
8. It sounds like that it is very boring place, but, it's very good for students because they are able to concentrate on only their study.

9. America and Korea have many cultural differences. Because of this, people who visit America or Korea for the first time are easy to be confused. Although there are many western cultures that Korea has received from America, still there are many different cultures that cannot be changed.

10. The book offers nothing in terms of a satisfactory conclusion to the problem.

#### 1.4. Topic transitionals

11. In case of daylight, it is composed equal intensity of color light in visible spectrum.

12. In case of Turkey, if the buildings were designed by proper method, the severe calamity could be reduced.

13. With regard to this symptom, I have same experience.

14. Second, in Korea, there is no specific high-stake for graduating a junior and a high school. ...Third, most of students in the U.S.A. have not improved learning in a school.

15. However, there is no fundamental limitation to OLEDs efficiencies.

16. Although there are many Western cultures that Korea has received from America, still there are many different cultures that cannot be changed.

#### 1.5. Other transitionals

17. A conference trip to Hawaii is unaffordable. Besides, the daily expenses there would exceed the departmental allowances for daily expenses.

18. The first step of the scoring processes is to decide whether or not a sentence in the summary is a reproduced sentence or a combined sentence.

19. When reading, the subjects indicated that they attempted to recognize the rhetorical patterns, e.g., description, comparison, causation, etc.

#### 1.6. Punctuation

20. So, to go further, it is necessary to research the effects of cultural factors on English learning, including Korean culture.

21. Then, they might have some problems in making various kinds of English sentences, because they tend to make easy, short sentences to avoid making grammar mistakes.

22. However when the four skills are advanced together the capacity of language could grow.

23. He planned on a fruitful day of on-line trading, however, he did not anticipate the stock market crashing that day.

24. Therefore bilingual education in preschooler age is effective.

Comma patterns for *so, then, but*:

Comma patterns for *however, therefore, moreover, furthermore*:

Comma patterns for *i.e., e.g.*:

## 2. Sentence transitional devices

### 2.1. Sentence adverbs

Some adverbs occur sentence-initially and indicate the speaker's attitude or intention toward the sentence. Some of these are more colloquial or informal.

actually, apparently, basically, by the way, briefly, certainly, clearly, conceivably, confidentially, curiously, especially, evidently, essentially, fortunately, hopefully, hypothetically, ideally, incidentally, indeed, interestingly, ironically, naturally, oddly, predictably, presumably, realistically, regrettably, seriously, strangely, surprisingly, thankfully, theoretically, therefore, truthfully, ultimately, unfortunately, wisely

For example:

Apparently, an overwhelming majority in the Senate would be assured, if they can win seats in North Carolina, Minnesota, and Mississippi.

### 2.2. Topical adverbs

Similarly, topic adverbs comment on the theme or interpretation of the sentence.

aesthetically, analytically, anthropologically, artistically, biologically, computationally, economically, emotionally, environmentally, ethically, financially, etiologically, evolutionarily, hypothetically, intellectually, mathematically, medically, numerically, philosophically, physically, politically, psychologically, presently, scientifically, sociologically, statistically, theoretically, zoologically

E.g.:

Economically, this would be infeasible to implement while the markets are too unstable. (cf. "This would be economically infeasible to implement")

## 3. Inversion

For the first section the following paragraph, discuss the two possible conclusions. Does one sound better, or somehow different, from the other?

Aging is a process that begins long before retirement. In old age we feel the effects of decades of lifestyle habits. These include healthy living habits as well as experiences in dealing with illness or emotional crises, the ability to resolve conflicts, interests, lucidity and openness towards new things, support offered by family, friends or neighbors, as well as financial savings or housing arrangements. For many of these areas, thinking ahead reduces worries later on<sup>1</sup>.

Which ending to the above paragraph sounds better? Or how do these sound different?

1. Social relationships are particularly important, as stable and resilient networks of relationships are elderly people's primary source of practical and emotional support in their daily lives.
2. Particularly important are social relationships, as stable and resilient networks of relationships are elderly people's primary source of practical and emotional support in their daily lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from <http://www.hear-the-world.com/en/experience-hearing.html>.

Would #2 work as a conclusion to the following paragraph?

3. Aging brings unique challenges and needs. Joints and muscles become sore for no apparent reason. More frequent medical visits and checkups become necessary. Income becomes more limited. Particularly important are social relationships, as stable and resilient networks of relationships are elderly people's primary source of practical and emotional support in their daily lives.

The second option above uses inversion – putting the subject after the verb, and putting another phrase before the verb – an adverb, adjective, participle, or prepositional phrase. Here are other examples of this structure.

1. You are working on an important research project that you want to finish and get published, as publishing it will likely land you the job that you want. But along comes a rival contender with similar research, threatening to “scoop” you<sup>2</sup>.
2. You plan to present some great research findings at a major conference. But lurking at the conference is a rival contender, planning to present similar research, threatening to “scoop” you.
3. Particularly important was the finding that the treatment had no effect at higher doses.
4. Much less expected was the finding that subjects not remember seeing even the stimulus presented at the longest duration.
5. Rather more significant was the interaction effects between the two variables.
6. Especially noteworthy is the finding that patients recovered 20% more quickly in the treatment condition.
7. Of greater concern / importance is the fact that the treatment had adverse effects on patients' moods.
8. More interesting are inverted sentences, like this one.

#### 4. Flow of clauses and sentences

*How would you improve the following comma splices (fused sentences)?*

1. Lobsters are cannibalistic, this is one reason they are hard to raise in captivity.
2. Normal people need eight hours of sleep per night, graduate students only need four.

*How are the colons and semi-colons used in these examples?*

1. The tissue was cut into 0.1 mm strips; the slices were then examined for the effects of the drugs on the neural tissues.
2. There is something that graduate students simply cannot live without: coffee.
3. Floodwaters have closed the following sections of the city: the downtown district, the Garden Street district, the valley area, and sections along the highway.
4. Traffic light: a device that turns red as you approach it.
5. There was only one possible conclusion: the ship had sunk.

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<sup>2</sup> Scoop: To get an exclusive on a story, to publish something first, to beat others in publishing something new (journalism / newspaper slang).