

# MARKING LOGICAL CONNECTION IN PRESENTATIONS

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**Abstract:** This paper focuses on cohesion in presentations in two languages: English and Hungarian. One type of cohesion, conjunction was observed and compared in presentations given in English and in Hungarian to see if the two languages have similar or differing systems in this respect. The results suggest that English and Hungarian presentations differ both quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of the way in which they mark logical connections via conjunctions. In the English presentations, there are fewer conjunctions than in the Hungarian ones on the whole, and conjunctions are also used differently in the two corpora, especially in the opening and closing sections of presentations. As cohesion is claimed to significantly contribute to discourse comprehension, it is important to raise students' awareness of its role in discourse structuring as well as of its possible variation across languages.

**Keywords:** cohesion, conjunction, presentation, discourse analysis, cultural differences

## 1 Introduction

Languages differ not only grammatically, but also rhetorically. One of the areas of rhetorical difference is marking logical relations. The languages compared in this study are English and Hungarian. English belongs to the Indo-European, while Hungarian belongs to the Finno-Ugrian language family. On the basis of this difference, there seems to be ground to expect that their systems for text organisation might be remarkably different. An indication of this difference occurs in Connor (1996) in the form of a cross-cultural résumé writing exercise. The difference between the résumés written for the American and the Hungarian setting is striking. The one intended for the American context is short and contains the candidate's accomplishments in a glossary form, whereas the one for the Hungarian context takes the form of a longish narrative providing details that would look unnecessary in an English-language environment.

Several authors have pointed out that the presentation is a special genre that bears the features of both written and oral genres (details in 2.1) enabling a comparison to both types of texts. The skill of organising a text appropriately for the intended audience falls in the domain of discourse competence i.e. the ability to create and construe cohesive and coherent texts over sentence length regarding the connection between the elements of the text (Canale & Swain (1980). Contrastive rhetorical studies about cross-linguistic influences on textual organisation have highlighted the difference between the rhetorical structures preferred in texts created in different languages. Motivated by this finding, error analysis took the popular view that the biggest problem in SLA is L1 interference. Texts, both written and oral, showing signs of other than the rhetoric structure of the English language have often been downgraded (e.g. Scarcella, 1984), more than that, the students who prepared them have been

stigmatized referring to their subject knowledge, intelligence or lack of good manners (see e.g. Kaplan, 1966, or Michaels, 1981).

For the purposes of this study, it is worth looking at studies comparing English and Finnish rhetoric conventions by reason of the linguistic relationship between Finnish and Hungarian. When looking at the writing of English and Finnish scientists, both Ventola and Mauranen (1991) and Mauranen (1992) found a more limited range and lower frequency of cohesive devices in the texts written by the Finnish writers than in the ones by English writers. Mauranen's study (1993) about Finnish and English academic texts of economists also revealed text organisation differences between the two groups under investigation. The Finnish writers used much less metalanguage than English native speaker (NS) writers in organising the text and orienting their readers in terms of what is to follow and how it is to be interpreted. In fact, what Finnish writers do not state, on the ground that it is obvious, is explicitly expected to be stated by English readers as clarification.

Based on the above, there is ground to expect further differences in the organisation of texts created in English and in Hungarian. This study was designed to investigate whether one type of cohesion, conjunction functions differently in presentations given in the above two languages. Conjunction was selected for investigation as it contains explicit, overt signals to express relations within or among events and situations of the textual world the use of which, however, is not compulsory. In other words, it is a question of interpretation when to use conjunction. World-knowledge helps readers or listeners in establishing relations like additivity or causality between clauses or sentences. In fact, as de Beaugrande and Dressler (2000) point out, the overuse of conjunctions would have a negative effect on the target audience, the text would be boring. The exception to this tendency is the intention to achieve special effects, i.e. to make an interdependency emphatic or to make it obvious, especially when the verb systems do not make the distinctions unambiguous. De Beaugrande and Dressler (2000) mention the following cases of applying conjunction: to help make reception of a text efficient, to assist the text producer during the organization and presentation of a textual world, to imply or impose a particular interpretation. They assert that the reason for not marking every relation by conjunction is to uphold informativity.

As we have seen in the above-mentioned studies, the extent to which text producers want to exert control over how relations are recovered by receivers varies among different cultures (see also 2.2). From the teaching perspective, cohesion and within that the category of conjunctions has been found to be problematic for second and foreign language learners (Scarcella, 1984). Similarly, Tyler, Jeffries and Davies (1988) pointed out that incorrect or unexpected use of lexicalised discourse markings in lectures, for instance the overuse of the coordinating conjunction *and* as a generic discourse marker to indicate topic shift by non-native speaker (NNS) teaching assistants lead to comprehension problems for the NS audience. Therefore, the present study is motivated by the following research question:

Is there any difference regarding the conjunction use of presentations given by professionals in English and in Hungarian?

## 2 Literature review

This section describes the basic concepts relevant to understanding the genre of presentations, their structure, preparation and delivery. It will be described how presentations relate to other similar genres and how the presenter's L1 influences the organisation of the

presentation. The effect of the expectations of the discourse community will also be mentioned.

## 2.1 The genre of presentations

Swales (1990), with his definition of genre, turned the attention of scholars in contrastive rhetoric towards texts created for explicit communicative purposes. The communicative purpose determines the structure of the text in terms of content, style and intended audience.

For teachers of ESP, the presentation has been defined as follows: “a pre-planned, prepared, and structured talk which may be given in formal or informal circumstances to a small or large group of people. Its objective may be to inform or to persuade.” (Ellis & Johnson, 1994, p.222). To be able to approach the genre of presentation, a comparison with similar genres, monologues and lectures, is fruitful. As we will see, several genres and modes interact in presentations.

As an oral genre, the presentation can be compared to the lecture. Motivated by previous studies pointing out that English-language lecture comprehension constitutes a considerable difficulty for a growing number of international NNS students, Crawford Camiciottoli (2004) compared academic lectures given by NS and NNS guest lecturers. She found speaker language background a major influence on discourse structuring. In order to aid lecture comprehension, NNS lecturers used more interactive discourse structuring, i.e. “macro-markers or metadiscursive comments on how the lecture itself will be organized, or phrases which signal to listeners what is about to happen” (p.40). The NNS lecturers in the study also used the word *explain* significantly more frequently than NS colleagues, which is interpreted as an understanding for NNS students language-related difficulties based on the NNS lecturers’ personal experiences as well as a clear sign of concern to ensure understanding. The facilitating intention of NNS lecturers was also reinforced by the higher frequency of *I/we/you will* patterns and the inclusive *let* compared to NS lecturers. As a conclusion, Crawford Camiciottoli actually encourages NS guest lecturers to consciously apply more interactive discourse structuring for the sake of L2 listeners, and to be more successful lecturers at the same time.

Thompson (1994) classifies business presentations as belonging to both EAP and ESP defining them as *monologues* where “the turn-taking machinery is suspended” (p.59). Thompson points out that monologues are close to written texts in that they are both carefully planned producing a textual whole and produced by one person. At the same time, monologues are delivered and perceived in real time, therefore, the listeners have little chance to retrieve the exact wording used, which makes presentations similar to written discourse.

The similarity of presentations to both written and spoken genres is also described by Swales (1990), who looked at biomedical presentations and found that while some presentations bore marks similar to written research papers, most presenters resorted to the narrative genre in giving an account of their experiments, which manifested in the extensive use of the narrative past tense. Unlike in the written research paper genre, a unique style shifting was also found within the presentations ranging from formal openings through informal comments on slides and even colloquial asides to formal endings. Looking at academic lectures, Csomay (2000, p.32) outlines a similar phenomenon and classifies lectures

as a hybrid register standing on a continuum between academic prose with high informational load and face-to-face exchanges displaying features of spoken discourse.

Crawford Camiciottoli's (2004) study comparing academic lectures given by NS and NNS guest lecturers reinforces the earlier findings about the lecture being a hybrid genre containing both typical spoken/informal language elements like metadiscourse, opinions, hedgings, informal textual connectives and context-bound references as well as typical written/formal language elements like the specialised vocabulary of the topic. The tendency to mix formal and informal registers/features can also be seen in the higher frequency of phonologically reduced forms in one of her NS corpora, which Crawford Camiciottoli partly attributes to the mutual familiarity with the audience, and partly to the reflection of the so called 'informal American style'. Also, Crawford Camiciottoli herself asserts that the hybrid genre of lectures given by NNS guest lecturers in her corpus can be seen in some of the characteristics that it shares with presentations. For example, NNS lectures contained mainly descriptive features, which in presentations are used to introduce a company, product or service. In contrast, the more theory oriented NS lectures were filled with hypothesis introductory *Let's say*, which was not detected in NNS lectures at all. Furthermore, Crawford Camiciottoli found another similarity between presentations and lectures in one of her NS corpora namely the frequent references to upcoming visual aids.

Crawford Camiciottoli (2004) interpreted the fact that in both her NS and NNS corpora there were more instances of discourse structuring patterns containing *I* than *we* as a reinforcement of earlier findings that university lectures are becoming more personalised and individualistic.

It seems that the presentation is a genre in which cultural differences might influence the effect on the audience, and in turn, the success of the presentation. As Smith and Frawley (1983) claim, conjunctions reveal the way ideas are connected in different genres, therefore this study on the use of conjunctions in presentations is hoped to contribute to the description of the genre of presentation as well.

## **2.2 Cultural differences in text organisation**

On the basis of L1 interference found in L2 student writing, contrastive rhetoric studies have verified that language and writing are cultural phenomena (see e.g. Hinds, 1987). From this it follows that each language has peculiar rhetorical conventions (Connor, 1996). Kaplan's (1966) suggestion that Anglo-European essays demonstrate a linear rhetorical structure compared to the more digressive structure of compositions written in Semitic, Oriental, Romance and Russian languages has been asserted by several studies. Hinds (1987) pointed out that the listener/reader and the speaker/writer of a text are expected to contribute to the coherence of the text to a differing degree in different languages and cultures. In Japanese, it is the responsibility of the reader or listener to create a coherent text without the help of overt structure markers. In western languages, however, the speaker or writer is expected to provide landmarks of coherence for instance in the form of transitional statements so as to guide the audience in making the intended inferences. Also in the Japanese context, Connor (1988) found culture-specific differences between the writing of an American and a Japanese marketing manager in the form of non-linear organisation of argument, and numerous hedges and indirect requests in the Japanese reports.

These findings together with the ones cited in chapter 1 suggest that rhetorical differences have a major impact on the creation and interpretation of texts created in a second or foreign language. Therefore, students need to be made aware of the similarities and differences in text organisation between their mother tongue (L1) and the second or foreign language they study.

### **2.3 The influence of the discourse community**

Halliday (1985) remarks that there is considerable variation in the use of conjunctions among different registers. The strongest influence on the style, including conjunction use, of business presentations probably comes from the discourse community of international businessmen. The concept of discourse community was defined by Swales (1990, p.24) as a community that “recruits its members by persuasion, training or relevant qualification”. Swales proposes six characteristics that identify a group of people as a discourse community:

- An agreed set of common public goals.
- A mechanism of intercommunication among members.
- The aim of the above mechanism is to provide information and feedback.
- The existence of discursal expectations as to the genre utilised for intercommunication.
- Specific lexis used in intercommunication.
- Members possess a minimum degree of expertise regarding content and discourse.

Bizzell (1982) and Berkenkotter, Huckin and Ackerman (1988) have revealed that pursuing membership of the discourse community, students of a discipline go through an acculturation process. During this process, they have to learn the genres and conventions (for instance of argumentation) that members of the disciplinary community employ together with the achievements, prevailing paradigm, issues of interest and practices of the discipline.

McGee (1999) as an EFL teacher and researcher with a business background describes the perceptible pressure that international business people as a discourse community put on presenters to conform to the speech norms of the ‘club’ in terms of the language to be used (often set phrases), the expected level of formality, politeness and form. Similarly to NNS student writers using the rhetorical conventions of their L1 in L2 compositions (see introduction), business presenters face the attribution of social prestige and even ability based on their performance. The latter fact may give rise to misunderstandings both at the linguistic and the sociological level.

The above studies indicate that there is a perceptible expectation as to the rhetorical characteristics of professional communication which presenters must meet. Therefore, it is in the interest of business students to learn these conventions to be able to fit in the professional community of business people. This study aims to detect the expectations regarding an important rhetorical element: conjunctive cohesion in presentations.

### **2.4 Creating an integrated text**

To enable the classification of a text as communicative, de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) identify seven standards of textuality constituted by cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality (cited in de

Beaugrande & Dressler, 2000). In other words, cohesion may be regarded as a major constituent of textuality. Cohesion refers to grammatical means which form reciprocal connections among words within a sequence. In de Beaugrande and Dressler's text model (2000), conjunction is one of the means by which a text can be made cohesive apart from recurrence, partial recurrence, parallelism, paraphrase, pro-forms, ellipsis, tense, aspect, and functional sentence perspective. Earlier, Halliday and Hasan (1976) identified five general categories of cohesive devices that signal coherence in texts: referential cohesion, ellipsis, substitution, lexical, and conjunctive cohesion. For them, conjunctions are both lexical and grammatical. The two systems partly overlap, but they are not identical. Nevertheless, both systems contain conjunction. Smith and Frawley (1983) emphasise the role of conjunction in creating a text due to its semantic function in showing cross-clausal relationships at a textual level.

## 2.5 Categories of conjunction

In their influential work, Halliday and Hasan (1976) determined four main types of conjunction: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal. They added though that there may be other categorisations of conjunction. In a later work, Halliday (1985) supplemented the system with the category of continuatives as follows:

- **additive** (e.g. *and, in addition, besides, in other words, that is, alternatively*)
- **adversative** (e.g. *though, however, but, instead, nevertheless, as a matter of fact*)
- **causal** (e.g. *so, then, hence, because, it follows, to this end, as a result*)
- **temporal** (e.g. *then, next, finally, meanwhile, in conclusion, up to now, in short*)
- **continuatives** (e.g. *now, of course, well, anyway, surely, after all*).

Nevertheless, when Smith and Frawley (1983) tried to apply the above categories in their analysis of four genres, they discovered the need for an additional category: the hypothetical (mainly manifested in the use of *if*), which was lacking in Halliday's categorisation and which they added to their own analysis.

As for the Hungarian language, Tolcsvai Nagy (2001, p.260) describes the main types of conjunction on the basis of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Rudolph (1996) as follows: **additive, adversative, temporal, and causal**. The typical connections are represented by the conjuncts *és, de, (a)mikor* and *mert, ha* (i.e. *and, but, when* and *because, if*) respectively. As it can be seen, Tolcsvai Nagy merges Halliday and Hasan's (1976) causal category and Smith and Frawley's (1983) hypothetical. Tolcsvai Nagy (p.261) also refers to van Dijk's (1977) categorisation in which the disjunctive *vagy (or)*, the hypothetical *ha (if)* and the concessive *hacsak nem (unless)* represent new and separate categories.

Tolcsvai Nagy (2001, p.265) also remarks that van Dijk (1977) and Rudolph (1996) list some conjunctions as coordinating that are categorised as subordinating in the Hungarian grammatical tradition, though he provides no examples. This seems to be the case with the Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday (1985) systems as well. Adamik, Adamikné Jászó and Aczél (2004) state that subordination operates within a sentence, whereas coordination operates between sentences. On the basis of the chart of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions in the Hungarian language that Adamik et al. (p.517) cite from Adamikné-Hangay (1995), the conjunctions referred to by Tolcsvai Nagy are probably temporals, *though* and hypothetical *if*. Two of the Hungarian sources, Tolcsvai Nagy and Szikszainé

Nagy (1999) do not deal with subordination only with coordinating conjunctions when describing cohesion.

As it can be seen, there are as many categorisations as there are authors. It seems a comparison of the conjunction schemes used in presentations given in English and Hungarian can only be carried out by merging the above systems. Since most studies use one form of the Halliday and Hasan (1976) system, for ease of comparison that system is kept with some additions for the purposes of this study. The categories applied in the present study are as follows:

- (1) additive
- (2) adversative
- (3) causal
- (4) temporal
- (5) continuative
- (6) hypothetical
- (7) disjunctive.

## 2.6 Studies on logical relations

Smith and Frawley (1983) regard conjunction as a tool to gain insight into the logic of texts. To that end, they compared four genres: fiction, journalism, religion and science. They carried out two analyses. In the first analysis, they used the traditional categorisation of conjunctions as coordinating or subordinating. In the second one, they used Halliday and Hasan's (1976) categories including additive, adversative, causal and temporal, plus their own hypothetical. In the first analysis, they found that the texts from the Brown English Corpus generally contained few conjunctions and more coordinating than subordinating conjunctions. In all four genres, *and*, *but* and *or* were the most frequent coordinating conjunctions, and *that* and *as* the most frequent subordinating conjunctions. Considerable variation was found among the four genres regarding conjunctiveness. Religion and fiction turned out to be more conjunctive than science and journalism. Also, a preference for one type of conjunction was shown within each genre: for example, journalism and science use coordination less frequently. Smith and Frawley concluded that fiction and journalism create a sequential event line, whereas religion and science are more logic oriented. An interesting finding is that science, a logic oriented discourse has the most coordination, which the authors attribute to two characteristics of the genre. The high functional load of sentences and discourse specific lexical items in science necessitate a simpler syntax for readers to be able to process the text.

In the second analysis, Smith and Frawley (1983) found that conjunction was not very often used as a cohesive device. They inferred that the reason for this was the definition of cohesive conjunction by Halliday and Hasan (1976), i.e. that conjunction occurs extra or cross-sententially and only in sentence initial position, all other conjunctions are structural. When Smith and Frawley broadened that narrow scope beyond traditional sentence boundaries to include the full stop, the question mark and the semi-colon, the modified analysis gave totally different results. Applying the modified sentence interpretation to Halliday and Hasan's categories, they found that fiction and religion are rich in cohesion through conjunction, whereas journalism and science generally avoid cohesive conjunction. The mostly employed cohesive ties were in fiction adversatives and additives, in religion causals, in journalism adversatives and temporals, and in science additives and hypotheticals.

The least frequently applied cohesive ties were in fiction and in religion temporals, in journalism hypotheticals and causals (hence the suggestion of objectivity in journalism), and in science temporals and adversatives. A surprising finding was the paucity of causals in science. The category of continuatives, being a later addition by Halliday to the system in 1985, was not applied in their analysis.

It also is possible to take into consideration not only overt signals of logical relations between clauses and sentences for analysis but also unmarked relations. Mann and Thompson's (1988) rhetorical structure theory (RST) proposes an explanation for the coherence of texts with a visual representation of both marked and unmarked relations, i.e. the macrostructure of a text. RST is based on the assumption that if coherence is the absence of unrelated parts and gaps, there must be a function to every part of a coherent text. In other words, in two stretches of words each part has an evident role relative to the other. The relations between parts of a text are referred to as coherence relations, discourse relations or conjunctive relations in linguistic studies. Admittedly, Mann and Thompson's concept of coherence can be traced back to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) notion of cohesion (Taboada & Mann, 2006). Also, some RST relations bear a striking similarity to Halliday and Hasan's conjunctive relations.

Intentionality, i.e. the intended effect on the receiver, is a central part of RST analysis, but not all relations can be equalled with intentions. Nevertheless, the authors warn that there are some limitations to applying RST relations. Multilingual texts, texts in languages where the clausal units are not as easily defined as in English and spoken language do not lend themselves easily to RST analysis. Therefore, in the present study the conjunct category system based on Halliday's work (1985) is used. Also, for a small-scale pilot study and from the pedagogic point of view, looking at overt cohesion signals seemed a more practicable goal than detecting overall coherence.

The literature review has shown that it is important to raise students' awareness regarding the genre-specific use of conjunctions due to the differences found in the rhetorical structure preferred in different languages as well as the genre-specific expectations on conjunction use by discourse communities. A further reason is that cohesion in general and conjunction specifically have been reported to be problematic for second and foreign language learners. Furthermore, the comprehension difficulties encountered by learners when listening to native lecturers, as well as by native English speaking audiences when attending NNS lectures also point to the possibility of similar difficulties with presentations. There appears to be a need to clarify the use of conjunctions in the relatively modern genre of presentation for the purpose of educating international business school students, who not only listen to guest lecturers and present in front of guest professors, but also are preparing to work in multinational workplaces.

### **3 Methods**

#### **3.1 Aim of the study**

The aim of the present research is to compare English and Hungarian presentations in order to discover the similarities and/or differences in marking logical relations in the two languages. Based on Mauranen's study (1993), it is hypothesised that there is a difference in

conjunction use namely that English presentations contain more conjunctions than Hungarian presentations. Also, a qualitative difference is expected in the conjunction use of English and Hungarian L1 speakers. The results will probably be informative as to whether students need instruction on using conjunction in their English presentations; and if so, whether instruction should aim at achieving quantitative or qualitative change in conjunction use, or both.

### 3.2 Participants

The study focuses on the comparison of two Hungarian and two English language presentations. All four presentations were delivered at an Information Technology (IT) conference in Budapest, 2001. The conference program included presentations mainly in Hungarian and some in English, some of which were interpreted. The English conference presentations were part of the annual Professional Developers Conference (PDC) that Microsoft organises with American presenters touring all over the world and informing IT professionals of new developments. The analysed English presentations were not interpreted. Since the American presenters present in English in each country with some interpretation, it is not supposed that the presenters modified their talk for an L2 audience. This is reinforced by the complex grammatical structures, specialised vocabulary and frequent style shifts that can be observed in the texts of the English presentations investigated. Though there is no explicit information about the audience on the DVDs, it is presumed to comprise mostly Hungarians based on the following facts. First, the conference had a Hungarian title and most presentations were given in Hungarian. Second, one of the American presenters analysed refers to the occasion as his first visit to Budapest, and encourages the audience to ask their questions either in English or in Hungarian with interpretation. Together with other presentations given at the conference, the four analysed ones were recorded and published by the conference organiser, Microsoft Corporation (2002) in DVD format, and circulated among interested professionals and teachers of programming. The DVD format makes it possible for viewers to see both the presenter and the visual aids used while listening to the presentation.

The general topic of the conference was starting development with the so-called .NET technology. In order to gain comparable data, presentations about a similar topic (i.e. applying the .NET technology) and of similar size were chosen; their length ranges from 51 to 94 minutes (due to the limited number of presentations available a narrower range of length was impossible to find). The speakers were identified as native speakers of English and Hungarian on the basis of their names and pronunciation. All four speakers were males in the apparent age range of 25 to 40 (no age information was available in the source). In order to provide confidentiality, the speakers are not referred to by their names but, on the basis of the language of the presentation, as Hungarian 1, Hungarian 2, English 1 and English 2.

### 3.3 Procedures of analysis

The presentations were transcribed and the texts were divided into t-units. In the analysis, the definition of the t-unit as described by Schneider and Connor (1990, p.427) was applied:

- Any independent clause and all its required modifiers.
- Any non-independent clause punctuated as a sentence.
- Any imperative.

As the analysed texts were originally oral, the identification of t-units was based on the speakers' intonation instead of punctuation. The choice of the t-unit for the purpose of analysis was necessitated by the oral genre of the text to be analysed so that fragments could also be included in the analysis.

After identifying the t-units, the following categories of conjunctions were identified in the texts:

- (1) additive
- (2) adversative
- (3) causal
- (4) temporal
- (5) continuative
- (6) hypothetical
- (7) disjunctive.

As mentioned earlier, the above categories were established by merging the relevant categories available in both the English and Hungarian sources (Halliday, 1985; Smith & Frawley, 1983 and Tolcsvai Nagy 2001). The following transcription extract demonstrates the texts divided into t-units and the conjunctions identified.

4

My talk today is called .NET today. / I chose that title for a couple of different reasons. / First,

the goal of this opening here now is to give you a big picture view of .NET today. / Of what

4      6

.NET comprises, of what .NET means today, right? / Second, if you've been following .NET,

5

you know that we've been hearing about this for ... well, it seems like forever. / (E1)

The extract comes from the beginning of the talk coded E1, when the presenter justifies the aims of his talk. The slashes represent the boundaries of t-units. The conjunctions identified are underlined; the numbers show the type of conjunction. As it can be seen, the presenter uses temporals (*first, second*) to list the aims, and a continuative (*well*) to add clarification and probably to give a more dramatic impression. An interesting point of the extract is the use of two conjunctions right after each other (*second, if*). The combination illustrates how the listing of goals is strengthened by a hypothetical, which creates a bond between the audience and the presenter (*we've been hearing*). At the same time, it is implied that the issue addressed by the presenter has been an unsolved problem since the introduction of the IT program that the conference is about, i.e. the .NET framework. (For a sample transcription of an English and a Hungarian presentation see the Appendices.)

To cater for the reliability of coding, expert opinion was sought from a discourse analysis researcher. After the analyst identified the t-units and the conjunctions in a transcription extract, the researcher checked whether the identifications are in line with the categories of analysis. Also, the analysis was carried out applying the established categories systematically and every effort has been made to provide enough data to enable a replication of analysis.

## 4 Results and discussion

This chapter deals with general findings first, after which it details the conjunction use differences between the investigated English and Hungarian presentations.

### 4.1 Differences in rhetorical structure

A look at the sample transcriptions (see Appendices) reveals that the presentations in this investigation are in line with the studies mentioned earlier (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2004; Csomay, 2000; Swales, 1990; Thompson, 1994), referring to the hybrid genre of presentations. Numerous formal–informal style shifts can be found in, for example, presentation E1 (App. A). The presenter starts with an informal introduction with the geographical link usual at the beginning of talks between American conversation partners. Then, he continues to catch the attention of the audience with a casual aside about a surprising evaluation he has received (*I want you to be the father of my children*), which also creates a positive attitude towards him as the audience laughs. After that, he changes to formal style giving the topic and contents of his presentation as well as justification for the topic choice. The second reason starts another style shift with directly addressing the audience and creating audience involvement again (*if you've been following .NET*). The audience is made up of IT specialists, therefore it has been more or less their task to follow professional developments. The following title justification goes back to the formal register, just to be followed by an extremely informal aside (*what the heck is .NET*). A similar quick style shift ends the sample from formal (*this is Microsoft's preferred way to think about .NET*) to informal (*Huu, it's a vision, okay?*). The surprising finding about the style shifts is that they occur almost in every second or third sentence in the introduction.

In contrast to the English presentation in App. A, the Hungarian sample (App. B) shows a much shorter introduction. At first sight, the speaker does not spend much time catching the attention of the audience. His personal introduction is limited to his name, institutional affiliation and his quick jump to the contents, all in formal style. The reference to the institution as justification for the presenter as an expert is extremely formal, and creates an authoritative atmosphere. He fails to offer an overall justification for his presentation, instead, he justifies the elements of the contents. With a quick style shift, the contents are described in an informal register though less colloquial than that of presenter E1. The Hungarian presenter seems to apply other means to link to the audience. He uses *we* (*mi, a program fejlesztői*) and first person plural verb forms (*tudunk, felhasználhatjuk, kihasználhatjuk*) to describe the possibilities of the .NET framework for IT professionals, and a kind of careless language such as loose word order (*szót kell, hogy ejtsünk; egyfajta szolgáltatása lesz majd az asp.net frameworknek*) and leaving out the definite article (*\_Második részben beszélni fogok*), which implies that he is talking to friends or intimates. It can be seen that the style shift is also present in the Hungarian talk, however, the changes are not so frequent. At the same time, the style shift takes different directions on the formality–informality scale. It seems that while the Hungarian presentation moves from very formal to neutral, slightly informal, the English presentation bounces to and fro in the neutral, slightly formal, extremely informal range. As the present study was not intended to investigate the registers occurring in presentations in detail, future research could reveal more of the differences in that respect.

Crawford Camiciottoli's (2004) finding that lectures are becoming more individualistic is reinforced by the English presentations in this study. The comparison of the similar size excerpts in the Appendices show that the English presentation introduction contains 20 instances of *I*, whereas the Hungarian one only had 7 verbs in the first person singular. As to the proportion of *we* and first person plural verb forms, the English introduction had 2, while the Hungarian one had 15; so the tendency is reverse. The dominance of the individualistic versus the inclusive perspective is another rhetorical difference between English and Hungarian presentations.

## 4.2 Conjunction use in the presentations investigated

Conjunctions are looked at from three angles. First, overall conjunction use is discussed, then body parts and openings–closings are described separately.

### 4.2.1 Overall conjunction use

As Table 1 shows, both the two Hungarian and the two English speakers demonstrated similarities regarding the amount and types of conjunctions in their presentations. These areas for the Hungarian presenters are additives, adversatives, hypotheticals, and to a certain extent, disjunctives.

conjunction type	Hungarian 1	Hungarian 2	English 1	English 2
<b>additive</b>	0.240	0.249	0.087	0.164
<b>adversative</b>	0.014	0.016	0.043	0.023
<b>causal</b>	0.042	0.020	0.035	0.034
<b>temporal</b>	0.167	0.090	0.033	0.042
<b>continuative</b>	0.039	0.082	0.020	0.037
<b>hypothetical</b>	0.015	0.015	0.037	0.035
<b>disjunctive</b>	0.002	0.005	0.018	0.001

Table 1. The means of conjunctions per t-unit used in the four presentations

The areas of similarity of the two presentations given in English fall in the causal, temporal, hypothetical and, to a lesser extent, in the adversative and continuative categories. Looking at Table 2, one can compare the mean values for the Hungarian and the English presentations. Strikingly, there is only one category where the two languages show similar tendencies, namely causal conjunctions. The remaining three categories are equally divided between Hungarian and English as to which language contains higher values. The Hungarian presenters used twice as many additives, more than three times as many temporals and about twice as many continuatives as their counterparts presenting in English. The English language presentations contained more than twice as many adversatives and hypotheticals, and three times as many disjuncts as the Hungarian presentations. On the whole, the English presentations contained fewer conjunctions than the Hungarian ones. In fact, if one considers all types of conjunctions under investigation, one finds that Hungarian speakers used 1.642 times more conjunctions. This finding is in contrast to studies that found a lower frequency of cohesive devices in Finnish texts (Mauranen, 1992; Ventola & Mauranen, 1991). The same is true for the above studies pointing out a more limited range of cohesive ties in Finnish texts; all the conjunction types were present in both the Hungarian and in the English presentations.

<b>conjunction type</b>	<b>Hungarian presentations</b>	<b>English presentations</b>
<b>additive</b>	0.244	0.125
<b>adversative</b>	0.015	0.033
<b>causal</b>	0.031	0.034
<b>temporal</b>	0.128	0.037
<b>continuative</b>	0.060	0.028
<b>hypothetical</b>	0.015	0.036
<b>disjunctive</b>	0.003	0.009
<b>TOTAL conjunctions</b>	0.496	0.302

Table 2. Comparison of conjunction types per t-unit used in the Hungarian and English presentations

As a genre, the presentation can be compared to the findings of Smith and Frawley (1983). The most frequent conjunctions (Table 3) in both the English and Hungarian presentations were additives and temporals. In that respect, the presentation is similar to science texts (with a preference of additives) and to journalism (preferring temporals). The dominance of additives combined with hypotheticals in the English presentations shows a similarity to science texts. However, the Hungarian presentations dispreferred hypotheticals, and applied continuatives frequently apart from additives, which is not similar to any genre studied by Smith and Frawley. This difference seems to be important for teaching purposes. The absolute dominance of additives in all the presentations under investigation might refer to a similar tendency to the one pointed out by Tyler, Jeffries and Davies (1988), i.e. the overuse of the coordinating conjunction *and* as a generic discourse marker to indicate topic shift in NNS texts. This seems to be true particularly for the Hungarian presentations as the other conjunction types appeared rarely compared to additives, which amount to almost half of all conjunctions used. Perhaps it is the oral nature of the presentation genre that does not make the overuse so obvious, which would otherwise make the text boring (de Beaugrande & Dressler, 2000).

Rank	English presentations	Hungarian presentations
1.	additive	additive
2.	temporal	temporal
3.	hypothetical	continuative
4.	causal	causal
5.	adversative	adversative
6.	continuative	hypothetical
7.	disjunctive	disjunctive

Table 3. The rank order of conjunction types in English and Hungarian presentations

The least preferred conjunctions (Table 4, App. C) in both languages were adversatives and disjunctives. The dispreference for adversatives is described as a characteristic of science by Smith and Frawley (1983), however, the dispreference of disjunctives seems to be a peculiarity of presentations. There is one difference regarding the least preferred conjunctions in the investigated presentations: for the Hungarian speakers, the second least preferred conjunction was the hypothetical, which is a similarity to journalism; while for the English ones, continuatives were the second least preferred conjunction, which is unprecedented in Smith and Frawley's study.

#### 4.2.2 Conjunction use in the body parts

As a general rule, the presentations included descriptive and demonstrative sections between the opening and closing sections. In Crawford Camiciottoli's (2004) study, English L1 lecturers had a dispreference for descriptive parts. The English presentations investigated in this study showed no such tendency in the organization of content parts; neither did the Hungarian presentations. Crawford Camiciottoli also mentions that English L1 lecturers demonstrated a preference for the hypothetical *Let's say*. Hypothetical conjunctions were found to be among the preferred conjunctions in the English presentations and among the dispreferred ones in the Hungarian presentations (Table 4, App. C). Nevertheless, the expression cited by Crawford Camiciottoli to introduce hypothesis has not been referred to as belonging to hypothetical conjunctions in any theoretical sources, which raises the question if it should be included. The inclusion might change the results of conjunctiveness surveys such as the present study.

Observing tendencies within the presentations themselves (Table 5, App. D), it appears that in the uniform alternation of descriptions and demonstrations, H1 and E2 used more conjunctions in the demonstrative sections than in the descriptive ones; whereas H2 and E1 applied fewer conjunctions in the demonstrative sections. That is, no clear tendency emerges between the two languages as to using more or fewer conjunctions in either section type. However, the figures for the conjunction types do point out interesting tendencies. All four speakers reduced the number of adversatives and raised the number of temporals in the demonstrations compared to the descriptive sections. Only one area shows a clear difference between English and Hungarian, disjunctives, which were increased in the Hungarian and decreased in the English demonstrations compared to the descriptive part of the presentations.

Qualitatively, English and Hungarian body parts show similar tendencies. A clear dominance of additives can be observed (Tables 4 and 5, App. C and D), which makes presentation body parts similar to fiction and science as reported by Smith and Frawley (1983). The second most preferred conjunction, in both the English and Hungarian presentations, is continuatives, which differs from the overall tendency. The least applied conjunctions in both languages are disjunctives, hypotheticals and adversatives. Smith and Frawley describe the lack of hypotheticals and adversatives as characteristic to journalism and science respectively.

#### 4.2.3 Conjunction use in the openings and closings

Openings and closings deserve special attention because they are parts of presentations that lend themselves to comparison more than the body parts as their content is similar. Every presentation has an introduction and a closing; and if they are missing, the lack of them is peculiar. Introductions have a standard content though with a variable order: introduction of the presenter, justification of topic choice and description of the content of the presentation, and referring to a possibility for the audience to ask questions. Closings also contain standard elements such as summary of the important points of the presentation, indication of the end of the talk and of a possibility to ask questions, and providing contact details of the presenter. Another reason for looking at introductions and closings in more detail is that their variability as to length is smaller than that of the body part of presentations. Introductions and closings in the presentations investigated demonstrate interesting trends as Table 6 (App. E) illustrates. Regarding the total number of conjunctions, Hungarians used about 2.5 times as many conjunctions in their openings and closings as the presenters in English, which is in line with the overall tendency of Hungarian presentations to contain more conjunctives than English ones. As the body parts of presentations do not show a clear difference in the frequency of conjunctions, the comparison is not applicable.

Comparing the number of conjunctions among the two sections in question, it emerges that the Hungarian presentations under investigation had more conjunctions in the closings; while the opposite was true for the English presentations. It is true for both openings and closings that Hungarian speakers used much more additives and temporals than the presenters in English; while adversatives were used exclusively in English presentations. The higher frequency of adversatives and temporals reflect the overall tendency; but the body parts of presentations only show a preference for temporals. The dispreference of adversatives corresponds to the overall tendency as well as to the tendency found in the body parts of presentations. Almost no disjunctive and hardly any adversative, causal, continuative and hypothetical conjunctions appeared in the opening and closing parts of the presentations under investigation, which also reflects the overall tendency as well as the tendency found in the body parts.

Generally, openings and closings contained fewer t-units and fewer types of conjunctions: usually only two or three types. There was a difference in the conjunction use of the speakers as well. While H1 and H2 used maximum four types, namely additive, causal, temporal and rarely continuative; E1 and E2 used all types of conjunction (Table 6, App. E). In fact, the Hungarian presentation introductions show a similarity to Crawford Camiciottoli's (2004) finding in using more interactive discourse structuring than English L1 presenters and a lot of efforts to help comprehension by inclusive *let* and *I/you/we will* patterns.

## 5 Conclusions

On the basis of the aforementioned small scale analysis, it may be claimed that the use of conjunctions in English and Hungarian presentations shows both qualitative and quantitative differences. Contrary to expectations, English used fewer conjunctions than Hungarian did. Though the study has pointed out qualitative differences in conjunction use as expected, the difference affects only two of the seven investigated conjunction categories. At the same time, the difference in those two categories is remarkable. As only causal conjunctions are used in a similar way both quantitatively and qualitatively in English and Hungarian, and as all the other analysed conjunctions are used differently either qualitatively or quantitatively, Hungarian learners of English need to be instructed in the use of English conjunctions for the purposes of making presentations in English if L1 influence is to be avoided.

The study has also confirmed the hybrid genre of presentations manifested in containing both formal and informal elements and style shifts as well as the conjunction use showing overlaps with several genres (mainly science and journalism). There were differences in the style shifts between the two languages in question. The English presentations investigated mainly remained within the colloquial-neutral range, while the Hungarian presentations varied within the neutral-formal range. The differences in conjunction use may reveal cultural differences. While the third most preferred conjunction in the English presentations was the hypothetical, which bears a similarity to the genre of science; for Hungarian presenters, the continuative took the same position, which seems to be a speciality of Hungarian presentations, unprecedented in other investigated genres. Hypotheticals, which belong to the preferred conjunctions in the English presentations, belong to the dispreferred conjunctions in the Hungarian ones. At the same time, continuatives, which belong to the preferred conjunctions in the Hungarian presentations, are actually in the dispreferred conjunction group in the English presentations. Unlike other investigated genres, the presentation has shown a clear dispreference of disjunctives, which seems to be a distinctive feature of the genre. Conjunction use in the opening and closing parts of the Hungarian presentations reflects earlier studies that pointed out a lower frequency and fewer types of cohesive devices in texts created by non-English L1 speakers. The above differences can easily be used in developing more effective teaching strategies in presentations skills instruction.

Another, though unexpected, finding that might contribute to presentation skills instruction is the individualistic versus inclusive perspective difference between the English and Hungarian presenters.

However, the above are only tentative conclusions due to the limitations of the present study. A limitation of the present research is the small size of the sample, which occurred due to two factors: the small number of available presentations on the same topic with a similar length in both English and Hungarian, and the time constraint, which limited the amount of performable work. The exact number of presentations to be analysed in order to gain representative results is difficult to determine as business presentations are rarely recorded and made available to the general public; not to mention the rarity of presentations on the same topic in differing languages. Also, it is probable that the Hungarian speakers in the

sample have taken part in numerous English language presentations, consequently, it is not clear how that fact influenced the style of their presentations.

Another issue to be taken into consideration for future studies is that the category of disjunctive conjunctions as used in the current sample might be merged into the category of additives (as in Smith & Frawley, 1983), which might modify the final results. Further areas of research could aim at carrying out a more comprehensive study of text organisation in English and Hungarian presentations including register differences, cohesion and coherence devices or even pointing out underlying logical relations applying RST analysis.

*Proofread for the use of English by: Simon Thomas, School of Economic Studies, University of Hertfordshire-Számalk Zrt., Budapest.*

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## APPENDIX A

## Sample Analysis Presentation E1

(Applause.) Thanks. / It's a pleasure to be here. / Ah, I have been to Budapest once before. /  
 1  
 Erm, two years ago. / And ... it's a beautiful city. / I spent a weekend here walking around,  
 looking at the Christmas market. / It was very nice, I liked it. / It's a fun place. / You know, I  
 1  
 speak a lot to groups. / And erm this is not a huge group. / I speak to different size groups. / I  
 4  
 spoke a while ago to a very large group, about 8000 people, something like that. / And I got  
 1  
 this giant stack of evaluations, right? / This big stack of evals? / From the 8000 people. / And  
 1  
 I read through them all. / And in the stack ... I got the evaluation that I've been waiting my  
 entire life to see. / Erm ... it was written in green ink, a very female hand. / It said: / David, I  
 5 5  
 enjoyed your talk. / Great talk. / I want you to be the father of my children. / Now, sadly, ...  
 3 2  
 there was no name on this evaluation. / So I never learnt who this was. / But, as you could  
 3  
 imagine, it was the talk to software people. / So there were only about three women in the  
 2  
 entire group. / I probably could have found her if I tried. / But, I think she was kidding. / My  
 4  
 talk today is called dotnet today. / I chose that title for a couple of different reasons. / First,  
 the goal of this opening here now is to give you a big picture view of dotnet today. / Of what  
 4 6  
 dotnet comprises, of what dotnet means today, right? / Second, if you've been following  
 5  
 dotnet, you know that we've been hearing about this for ... well, it seems like forever. / For  
 well over a year. / What you may not realise is that dotnet, the key parts of dotnet that we  
 3 1  
 most care about are only a few weeks from release. / So I called this talk dotnet today also  
 3  
because after more than a year of waiting, dotnet really is just about *today*. / It's a talk about  
 4  
 dotnet in any way at all. / You have first to address this very difficult question. / The question  
 is what the heck is dotnet? / What is dotnet? / It is not an especially easy thing to define. / I  
 think, I think there are three ways that you can think about dotnet. / The first one is, and this is  
 Microsoft's preferred way to think about dotnet, dotnet is a vision. / Huu, it's a vision, okay? /

## APPENDIX B

### Sample Transcript of a Hungarian Presentation

Jó napot kívánok, A... I.... vagyok és a BME-ről jöttem, az Automatizálási és Alkalmazott Informatikai Tanszékről, a webes alkalmazások fejlesztéséről fogok beszélni. Nézzük rögtön a tartalomjegyzéket.

Először beszélni fogok a Web Formokról. Ezek az áspédotnet alkalmazások építőkövei, úgyhogy erről mindenképpen szót kell, hogy ejtsünk. Második részben beszélni fogok az áspédotnet alkalmazásokról, illetve arról hogy milyen szolgáltatásokat kínál nekünk az áspédotnet framework, milyen szolgáltatásokat használhatunk ki mi, a program fejlesztői ebben a környezetben és végül beszélni fogok a gyorsítótárakról is, ez is egyfajta szolgáltatása lesz majd az áspédotnet frémvörknek.

Kezdjük is rögtön a web formokkal. Mik is ezek a web formok? Illetve, hogy a web formok milyen kapcsolatban állnak az áspé oldalakkal. Egy web form maga egy áspédotnetes oldal, talán annyiban különbözik egy áspédotnet oldaltól, hogy képes szerver oldali eseményeket is generálni, a kliens oldali interakció eredményeként, arról is beszélnünk kell, hogy az áspédotnet technológia hogyan illeszkedik be a dotnetes frémvörkbe: a dotnetes technológia csomagba. Az áspédotnet technológia az integráns részét képezi a dotnetes csomagnak. Tulajdonképpen a dotnetes csomagnak egy olyan kiterjesztése, amit webes alkalmazások fejlesztéséhez tudunk felhasználni, és ezeknél a webes alkalmazásoknál felhasználhatjuk mindazokat a tulajdonságokat, amiket a dotnetben megszoktunk. Azaz például több nyelven is fejleszthetünk webes alkalmazásokat, a webes alkalmazásoknál kihasználhatjuk a dotnetnek a biztonsági modulját, kihasználhatjuk a tranzakció kezelési lehetőségeket, amiket a dotnet biztosít a számunkra, kihasználhatjuk azt, hogy a CLR, azaz a Common Language Runtime által felügyelt módon futunk, és kihasználhatjuk azt is, hogy alkalmazásunk natív kódban fog működni.

**APPENDIX C**

	overall English	overall Hungarian	descriptive English	descriptive Hungarian	demonstrative English	demonstrative Hungarian	opening English	opening Hungarian	closing English	closing Hungarian
<b>preferred conjunctions</b>	additive	additive	additive	additive	additive	additive	additive	additive	additive	additive
	temporal	temporal	adversative / continuative	continuative	continuative / hypothetical	temporal	causal / continuative	temporal	hypothetical	continuative / hypothetical
<b>dispreferred conjunctions</b>	continuative	hypothetical	temporal / continuative / hypothetical	temporal / hypothetical	adversative / continuative	adversative / hypothetical	causal / temporal / hypothetical	adversative / continuative / hypothetical	causal / temporal	adversative
	disjunctive	disjunctive	disjunctive	disjunctive	disjunctive	disjunctive	disjunctive	disjunctive	disjunctive	disjunctive

Table 4. Preferred and dispreferred conjunctions in the English and Hungarian presentations overall, in body parts (descriptive and demonstrative), and openings and closings

The first and last lines indicate the most preferred and most dispreferred conjunctions.

**APPENDIX D**

conjunction type	descriptive H1	demonstrative H1	descriptive H2	demonstrative H2	descriptive E1	demonstrative E1	descriptive E2	demonstrative E2
<b>1 additive</b>	0.171	0.250	0.326	0.179	0.075	0.115	0.124	0.291
<b>2 adversative</b>	0.039	0.018	0.043	0.022	0.068	0.040	0.069	0
<b>3 causal</b>	0.026	0.040	0.054	0.029	0.037	0.034	0.031	0.083
<b>4 temporal</b>	0.039	0.089	0.021	0.074	0.031	0.052	0.031	0.062
<b>5 continuative</b>	0.065	0.059	0.119	0.074	0.025	0.057	0.093	0
<b>6 hypothetical</b>	0.013	0.049	0.010	0.007	0.056	0.017	0.015	0.125
<b>7 disjunctive</b>	0	0.009	0	0.022	0.056	0.005	0.007	0
<b>TOTAL conjunctions</b>	0.353	0.514	0.573	0.407	0.348	0.320	0.370	0.561

Table 5. Mean values of the types of conjunctions per t-unit used in the descriptive and demonstrative sections of the four presentations

H1, H2, E1, and E2 refer to the presenters Hungarian 1, Hungarian 2, English 1, and English 2 respectively.

**APPENDIX E**

conjunction type	Opening H1	Closing H1	Opening H2	Closing H2	Opening E1	Closing E1	Opening E2	Closing E2
<b>1 additive</b>	0.230	0.310	0.222	0.272	0.132	0.027	0.075	0.166
<b>2 adversative</b>	0	0	0	0	0.037	0.027	0.025	0
<b>3 causal</b>	0.070	0.034	0	0	0.056	0.013	0	0
<b>4 temporal</b>	0.300	0.241	0.222	0.045	0.037	0.013	0.025	0
<b>5 continuative</b>	0	0.034	0	0.136	0	0	0.075	0.055
<b>6 hypothetical</b>	0	0	0	0.045	0.037	0.041	0	0
<b>7 disjunctive</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0.013	0	0
<b>TOTAL conjunctions</b>	0.6	0.619	0.444	0.498	0.299	0.134	0.200	0.221

Table 6. Mean values of the types of conjunctions per t-unit used in the opening and closing sections of the four presentations

H1, H2, E1, and E2 refer to the presenters Hungarian 1, Hungarian 2, English 1, and English 2 respectively.