Effective discourse is characterized by clear relations between sentences and coherent structure. For adult language users causal relations are conceptually fundamental in distinguishing and expressing relations between states of affairs in their first language. Since adult language users have already acquired the cognitive competence and linguistic markers in their L1, it could be expected that they can transfer these relations to L2 after acquiring the necessary connectives, unless there is linguistic complexity involved (Martin et al., 2010). Yet adult L2 acquisition seems to follow the same continuum as child L1 in respect to cognitive complexity: complex relation markers are acquired later than simple ones. One example of this phenomena is the absence or at least very marginal occurrence of concessive conjunctions before B2 level texts.

Previous research on connectives in adult L2 acquisition has been mainly quantitative. Results have shown overuse of high-frequency connectives in low-level texts, increase in control and range but decrease in density of connectives across levels of proficiency. Also, contrary to the predictions made in the CEFR, learners use a range of different connectives already in intermediate level texts (e.g Carlsen, 2010). This paper aims to elaborate on different dimensions of complexity involved in the emergence order of connectives. I will also demonstrate the different types of semantic-pragmatic relations that high-frequency causal connective koska (equivalent to because) expresses in written L2 Finnish. My approach is based on the cumulative complexity model (Evers-Vermeul & Sanders, 2011), which elaborates on Bloom et al. (1980) and the cognitive approach to coherence relations (Sanders et al., 1993).

The data has been collected from Finnish adult migrant placement testing and includes three different text types (descriptive, narrative and argumentative) from 2397 different Finnish L2-writers. The writers are from different backgrounds at language levels from A1 to B1.

Keywords: connectives, L2 writing, Complexity, semantic and pragmatic relations.