

## تحليل أخطاء العطف والإتباع لدى طلاب السنة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية في جامعة البعث

الطالبة مرح غصب

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية- كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية- جامعة البعث

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### ملخص البحث:

تُعنى هذه الدراسة بأخطاء العطف والإتباع التي يرتكبها طلاب السنة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية بجامعة البعث، وتستعرض العطف والإتباع كأدوات ترابط وتماسك في الكتابة، ولكي تحقق هذه الدراسة الأهداف المرجوة منها تمّ استعمال اختبارين اثنين:

اختبار ملء الفراغات واختبار الترجمة، وكان هدف هذين الاختبارين اكتشاف وتحليل الأخطاء التي يرتكبها المشاركون في هذه الدراسة فيما يتعلق بالعطف والإتباع.

في اختبار ملء الفراغ بلغت نسبة الأخطاء التي نجمت عن إعادة الصياغة 34%، أما نسبة الأخطاء التي نجمت عن التدخل السلبي للغة الأم فكانت 20%، وكانت نسبة الأخطاء المتنوعة 20% أيضاً، أما الفراغات التي تركها المشاركون بلا إجابة فبلغت نسبتها 5%، وبلغت النسبة المئوية الوسطية للإجابات الصحيحة في اختبار ملء الفراغ 42,6% أما في اختبار الترجمة فبلغت نسبة الأخطاء الناجمة عن عدم الإجابة 30% وعن التدخل السلبي للغة الأم 22% أما الأخطاء المتنوعة فبلغت 10% وكانت النسبة المئوية الوسطية للإجابات الصحيحة في اختبار الترجمة 89,2%

إن هذه الأخطاء تؤثر في قدرة المشاركين على التعبير عن أنفسهم، وعلى الطلبة الذين قد يتعلمون على أيدي هؤلاء المشاركين في المستقبل. ولذلك تم تحليل هذه الأخطاء في هذه

الدراسة من أجل مساعدة الطلبة على تجنبها، أما بالنسبة لمعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية فإن عليهم أن يذكروا طلابهم على الدوام بأهمية القراءة والكتابة؛ لأنه لا يمكن تخطي الأخطاء من دون التمرين.

لقد سلطت هذه الدراسة الضوء على مواطن الضعف عند الطلبة فيما يخص العطف والإتباع، وهو ما سيمكن معلمي اللغة الإنكليزية من معرفة كيفية التعامل مع مواطن الضعف هذه، والتوصل إلى طرق تعليم ناجحة ترسخ في الذاكرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العطف – الإتباع – تحليل الأخطاء

## **Analysis of Coordination and Subordination Errors Made by Third-year Students of English at Al-Ba'ath University**

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### **Abstract**

This study is concerned with coordination and subordination errors third-year students of English at Al-Ba'ath University make. It tackles coordination and subordination as devices of coherence and cohesion in writing. To achieve the objectives of this study, a fill-in-the-gap test was designed. The mean percentage of the correct answers was 42.6%. These errors do not only have an impact on the participants' ability to express themselves, but also on the potential students these participants are going to teach in the future. Error analysis was carried out in this study to help them avoid these errors. Students should be aware from the beginning of the differences between writing paragraphs in English and in Arabic. As for English instructors, they should constantly remind their students of the importance of reading and writing, because without practice, errors cannot be overcome. This study sheds light on the students' shortcomings as regards coordination and subordination and this will help teachers of English to know how to deal with these errors.

**Key words:** coordination, subordination, error analysis

## Introduction

Where a sentence contains two or more clauses they are generally related syntactically in one of two ways, coordination or subordination, as illustrated in (1) and (2):

1. coordination [*My mother is a professor*] [*and my father is a lawyer*].

2. subordination [*They knew* [*that my father is a lawyer*]].

In (1) the two clauses are of equal syntactic status: they are not functionally distinguishable, each being coordinate with the other. In (2), by contrast, they are of unequal status, with one (*that my father is a lawyer*) subordinate to the other, the superordinate clause.

In traditional grammar, where the concept of constituent structure played a much less significant role than it does in most modern theories of syntax, the superordinate clause in (2) is just *they knew* (Trask,1993; Richards et al., 1985). Modern grammar, however, mostly takes the superordinate clause in such examples to be co-extensive with the whole sentence,<sup>1</sup> so that the subordinate clause is embedded within, i.e. a constituent of, the

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<sup>1</sup> In the sentence *They did it when they got home*, the subordinate *when* clause may be either a constituent of its superordinate main clause, which begins with *They* and is *coextensive* with the entire sentence, or dependent on a more limited main clause *They did it*.

superordinate clause, as indicated by our bracketing above. More particularly, it has a dependent function within it: it is a complement of the head verb *knew*.

Moreover, coordination and subordination join sentences with related ideas. Coordination joins sentences with related and equal ideas, while subordination joins sentences with related but unequal ideas. Sentences can be coordinated using either a coordinating conjunction and a comma or a conjunctive adverb and a semicolon.

However, subordination can sometimes be faulty. This generally means that two clauses are joined in an illogical order, as in: *\*Although she went to university, it was raining*. This is a faulty construction because the two parts separated by the comma have no logical relationship.

Subordination allows us to express differences in significance between details within a sentence. We can use the technique within a single sentence or to combine two or more smaller clauses. In this case, we should always present the most important idea in an independent clause. Subordination involves identifying one idea as less important than another. Coordination and subordination enable writers to make connections between ideas, emphasize certain ideas as more important than others, and, most importantly, create transitions between different ideas.

## **1.2 Significance of the study**

This paper seeks to help third-year students of English at Al-Ba'ath University to avoid the errors of coordination and subordination. This study is also of a great benefit to the research sample of this study. Being third-year students, they should not make coordinators and subordination errors in English. This is where the present study plays a significant role, as it aims to pinpoint the errors these students make and analyze them.

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

One objective of this study is to present an analysis of coordination and subordination in English to have a better understanding of these two processes. Moreover, this study seeks to identify and classify the faulty coordinators and subordinators used by students of English at Al-Baath University. The findings of the study are expected to help teachers and students of English in Syria to understand the nature of these errors so that they could try to overcome them.

## **1.4 Research questions**

To achieve the objectives of this study, two major questions will be explored.

- i. What are the types of the errors in coordination and subordination that occur in the writings of the participants in the research sample?

- ii. What is the impact of the errors in coordination and subordination on the students' writing?

### **1.5 Limitations of the study**

There are two limitations of this study. They are as follows:

- i. This study only covers coordination and subordination errors. It does not investigate other errors, such as grammatical errors or sentence structure errors.
- ii. The research sample is limited to third-year students of English at Al-Ba'ath University.

## **2. Literature Review**

This section focuses on the relevant terms, definitions and classifications of coordination and subordination. It also reviews some studies that investigate coordination and subordination errors.

### **2.1 Coordination**

Coordination joins two sentence elements, called conjuncts. In a coordinate structure like *taxis and busses*, the conjunction coordinates the conjunct *taxis* with the conjunct *busses*. In several languages, conjunctions like *and* and *or* can conjoin words or phrases of almost every category. Crystal (2008, p. 115) observes that coordination is "a term in grammatical analysis to refer to the process or result of linking linguistic units which are

usually of equivalent syntactic status, e.g. a series of clauses, or phrases, or words."

### 2.1.1 Types of Coordination

There are three types of coordination, namely syndetic coordination, asyndetic coordination and polysyndetic coordination. Coordination is usually but not invariably marked by one or more coordinator. Three patterns to be distinguished are shown in (3), (4) and (5):

3. simple syndetic            We need [sugar, apples, butter, and lemons].
4. polysyndetic:            We need [sugar and apples and butter and lemons].
5. asyndetic:                *We need [sugar, apples, butter, lemons].*

#### 2.1.1.1 Syndetic Coordination

Coordination between clauses can be realized in two ways: syndetic and asyndetic. Syndetic coordination, as in examples (6) to (8), provides the coordinated clauses with overt signals such as coordinating conjunctions, also called simply coordinators. Slowly and stealthily, he crept towards his victim.

6. I will bring eggs and bread.
7. The course was short but intensive.
8. I don't like laziness or dishonesty



As mentioned above, coordinated constructions are series of two or more items connected with some kind of conjunction (syndetic coordination) or simply juxtaposed (asyndetic coordination) that must be understood as constituting a single unit with a unitary syntactic status, rather than in a hierarchical relation with each other:

9. John and Mary went to the party.

In (9), two coordinated NPs, *John* and *Mary*, constitute a single unit in so far as sentence structure is considered; the NP *John and Mary* is the subject of the verb *went* and the two NPs are syndetically coordinated by means of the coordinating conjunction *and* (Quirk et al. 1985; Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990).

### 2.1.1.2 Asyndetic Coordination

Asyndetic coordination occurs when the coordination is not overtly expressed or signalled and it is up to the reader to decipher the relationship between the clauses (Quirk et al. 1985). According to Haspelmath (2004), asyndetic coordination uses no conjunctions and separates the items on a list with commas. It differs from the conventional treatment of lists and series. It uses only commas between all items except the last two, these being joined by a conjunction.

10. Quickly, resolutely, he strode into the bank (Nelson, 2001, p. 114).

11. Carefully, slowly, he made his way back toward the stairs.

Moreover, as observed in Crystal (2008), syntactic constructions can also be analyzed without the existence of an explicit marker, as is the case in asyndetic coordination. For example, a sentence like *There was an awful awkward, silence*, where the coordinative role of the two adjectives can be tested by the insertion of *and* between them.

### **2.1.1.3 Polysyndetic Coordination**

Polysyndeton uses multiple repetitions of the same conjunction, most commonly the word *and*, as in examples (12), (13) and (14) (Nelson, 2001, p. 114) and (15) (Quirk et al., 1985, p, 927):

12. He just talks and talks and talks.

13. I've said it again and again and again.

14. This play will run and run and run.

15. The wind roared, and the lightning flashed, and the sky was suddenly as dark as night.

As can be seen from the above examples, polysyndetic coordination refers to the repeated use of conjunctions to link together a succession of words, clauses, or sentences, as pointed out in Quirk et al. (1985).

## **2.2 Faulty Coordination**

According to Thurman & Shea (2003), faulty coordination occurs when two unequal ideas are placed in coordinate clauses as though they deserved equal emphasis, as in example (16):

16. The American playwright Mark Wilson has won two prizes for his work, and he now lives in California.

The clause *he now lives in California* has little or no connection to *the American playwright Mark Wilson has won two prizes for his work*. Therefore, the clauses should be coordinated.

Faulty coordinators, furthermore, can result from unmarked coordination, as in the following examples:

17. \*The couples will bring up good and some morals.

The faulty coordinator in (17) connects phrases of unequal rank; i.e. *good* is an adjective, while *morals* is a noun. The coordinator should connect parts that are equal in rank.

Example (17) can be corrected as follows:

18. The couples will bring up good children and teach them some morals.

### **3. Subordination**

Subordination refers to "the process or result of linking linguistic units so that they have different syntactic status, one being dependent upon the other, and usually a constituent of the other; subordinate is sometimes contrasted with superordinate" (Crystal, 2008, p. 463). Subordination, moreover, is the process

that involves inequality, a relationship between a subordinate element and a superordinate one. A subordinator is a signal or marker contained in the superordinate clause (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990).

### **3.1 Types of Subordination**

Subordination is discussed below in terms of function, including cause-and-effect, time, place, contrast, and condition.

#### **3.1.1 Subordinate conjunctions showing cause and effect**

The subordinating conjunction that is simplest to explain is *because*. On its own, a clause beginning with *because* is incomplete (Greenbaum and Quirk, 1990), as shown in the following example:

19. \*Because he would not wear a seatbelt.

Example (19) is faulty. There is something missing in this construction. However, in the following example, *because* is part of the entire sentence:

20. John was not allowed in the car any longer because he would not wear a seatbelt.

#### **3.1.2 Subordinating conjunctions of time and place**

Another function of subordinating conjunctions is to show a relationship between two clauses involving a transition of time or

place. Some examples of such subordinating conjunctions are *once, while, when, whenever, wherever, before* and *after* (Leech, 2006).

### **3.1.3 Subordinating conjunctions of contrast**

Contrast, by definition, is the difference between two or more people or things that we can see clearly when they are compared or put close together; or, it is the process of comparing two or more things in order to show the differences between them. The following words and phrases are contrast conjunctions: *although, though, even though, even if, while, and whereas* (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990; Hewings, 1999), e.g. *Even though I got ready to go, we decided to just stay at home.*

### **3.1.4 Subordinating conjunctions of condition**

Subordinating conjunctions of condition show how one action depends on another action. This can be expressed using *if, unless, provided that/provided* and *as long as*. Moreover, the commonest conjunction in conditional clauses is *if*. When the if-clause comes first, the main clause is sometimes reinforced with *then*, particularly when it seems like a logical result. *Unless* often has the meaning of 'if ... not' (Hewings, 1999), e.g. *Unless I'm mistaken, she was back at work yesterday.*

### 3.2 Faulty Subordination

Fowler and Aaron (2009) identify a major type of faulty subordination: redundancy, which of course arises because of ignorance. In this case, the learner adds redundant words, making the construction erroneous. Fowler and Aaron (2009) point to the fact that *but* is the item which mostly causes redundant constructions among learners. An example of this type of error is:

21. \*But although we stopped to buy food, we weren't late.

22. \*But unless I'm mistaken, he was a teacher.

In both (21) and (22), *but* is redundant.

Two more types of faulty subordination are identified by Fowler and Aaron (2009) by Hacker and Sommers (2011), namely ineffective subordination and excessive subordination. Hacker and Sommers (2011, p. 148) give the following example to illustrate ineffective subordination:

23. \*Closets were taxed as rooms, and most colonists stored their clothes in chests.

Hacker and Sommers (2006, p. 148) rectify example (23) as follows:

24. Because closets were taxed as rooms, most colonists stored their clothes in chests.

Most learners find *and* the easiest word to connect ideas, which is why such errors might arise.

### 3.3 Previous Studies on Syntactic Errors by Arab Learners of English

The most relevant studies related to the present study are Noor (1996), who investigates syntactic errors made by Saudi students of English, Diab (1997), who studies errors arising from negative transfer in Lebanese students of English, Abu Rass (2015), who investigates problems facing Palestinian students of English in writing, and Al Khresheh (2011) investigates the carryover of Arabic (L1) syntactic structures into English (L2). These studies, although they provide some information on subordination errors, do not devote any special attention to these errors. Nevertheless, the data available in these studies point out that subordination errors committed by Arab learners of English could be considered interlingual ones because they have arisen from differences between Arabic and English. Thus, such differences between L1 and L2 might make the process of acquiring the L2 more complicated for Arab learners of English. Moreover, Noor (1996) and Al-Khresheh (2011) both conclude that Arab learners of English prefer the use of coordination rather than subordination. Noor (1996) asserts that the Arabic-speaking learners, in processing English syntactic structures, adopt certain strategies similar to those of L1 learners; e.g. simplification, overgeneralization, etc. Diab (1997) demonstrates that the transfer of Arabic structures in the English writings of Lebanese students produced a number of errors on the grammatical, lexical, semantic, and syntactic levels.

## **4. Methodology of Data Collection**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the errors in coordinators and subordinators by students of English at Al-Ba'ath University. This section discusses data collection, participants and test material.

### **4.1 Participants**

The target sample consists of fifty third-year students (their ages ranged between 21 and 23). Choosing third-year students as the sample of the study has to do with the fact that they must have adequate knowledge of English grammar and writing skills relating to coherence and cohesion, because coherence and cohesion in writing are of prime significance as they give a text its textuality.

### **4.2 Material**

A gap-filling test was designed to achieve the objectives of the study. It consisted of twenty gap-filling items. Each item in this test took the form of a sentence with a gap and the students had to fill in the blank with the appropriate conjunction.

### **4.3 Data Collection**

In order to collect the data, I went to a lecture room and told the students who were there that I needed 50 of them to participate in my study. The students who wanted to participate stayed in the



lecture room while those who did not want to participate left the room. The test papers were administered to the students and there was no time limit for them to finish, but they all finished the tests approximately within 40 minutes.

## **5. Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results**

The purpose of the test is to explore the students' weaknesses regarding the process of understanding their performance as regards coordination and subordination. In addition, the test should help in finding out how one can establish beneficial methods for helping students overcome the difficulties in using coordination and subordination of all kinds. This section statistically analyzes the data and discusses the results in relation to reasons and factors which might contribute to the development of learners' competence of coordination and subordination.

### **5.1 Error Analysis**

Error analysis was first established by Corder (1967). It was a method that depended on comparing between the learner's first and second or foreign languages to predict errors as argued by Brown (2000), who points out that error analysis has proved that the contrastive method was only useful regarding negative transfer errors and that it was unable to predict a great majority of errors. The learner's language can be characterized as linguistically incorrect or contextually incorrect.

The items from the data gathered were marked as correct or incorrect. Spelling errors were not taken into account because the purpose of this study is to investigate the learner's competence in coordination and subordination only. The results of the test are analyzed statistically and then discussed in terms of error types.

After checking the data, an error analysis was carried out in order to find out how the learners get to learn the use of coordination and subordination. Errors should reflect the learners' internal knowledge of the target language, as mentioned above. The purpose of this analysis is to assess the students' weaknesses regarding English coordination and subordination and to investigate the factors that affect their overall proficiency. Moreover, for the purposes of the present study, the classification of errors for the test that is used is as follows:

- i. Negative L1 interference
- ii. Blank (or no response)
- iii. Paraphrase
- iv. Miscellaneous errors

## **5.2 Analysis of the results**

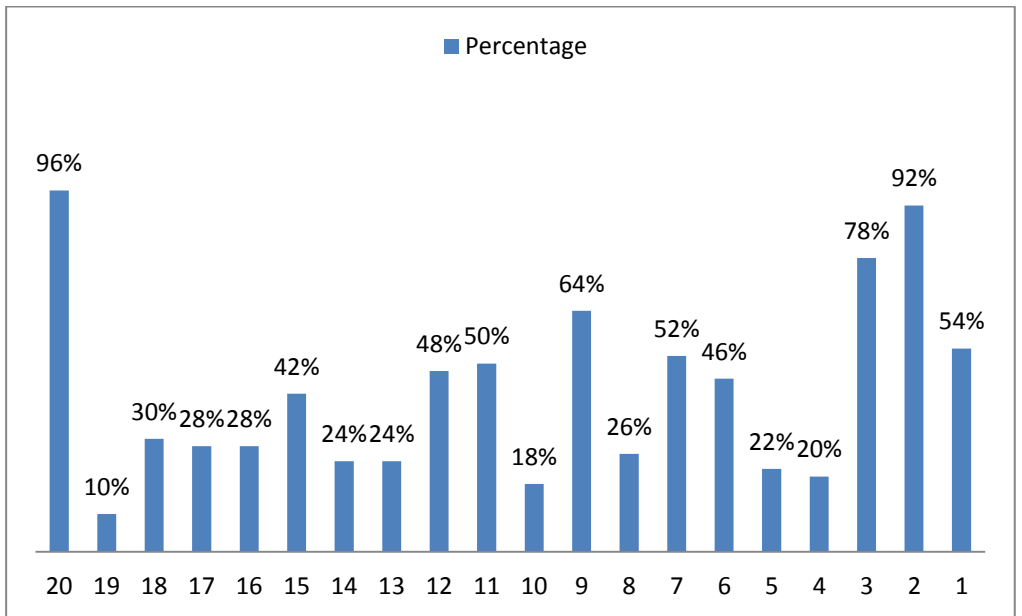
The students, who participated in the test were fifty third-year students of English at Al-Ba'ath University, were given a set of 20 sentences containing blanks which had to be filled with the appropriate coordinators or subordinators.

The following table shows the number of correct answers and the percentages of both correct and incorrect answers for each item (for the reader's convenience, the correct answer for each item is placed between brackets). Moreover, figure 1 illustrates the percentages of correct answers. The percentages of incorrect answers, as shown in figure 2 below, are calculated to look at the coordinators and subordinators' order of difficulty for the research sample

Test item	Number of correct answers	Percentage of correct answers	Percentage of incorrect answers
1. Johanna speaks three languages, _____ Jim speaks five languages. (but)	27	54%	46%
2. John plays tennis. _____ Dan plays tennis, as well. (and)	46	92%	8%
3. Catherine studies hard. _____ She passes her exams. (so)	39	78%	22%
4. Suzanna sings beautifully _____ she practices music very well. (for)	10	20%	80%
5. Maria listens to all types of music _____ she cannot differentiate the types of music. (yet)	11	22%	78%
6. She is _____ intelligent _____ beautiful. (both ... and)	23	46%	54%
7. You cannot eat your cake with a spoon _____ fork. (or)	26	52 %	48%
8. _____ the basement flooded, we spent all day cleaning up. (After)	13	26%	74%
9. _____ spring arrives, we have to be prepared for more snow. (Until)	32	64%	36%
10. _____ the car stopped, three men were running by. (When)	9	18%	82%
11. Scarlet begins to sneeze _____ she opens	25	50%	50%

the window to get a breath of fresh air. (whenever)			
12. Have you made a decision about _____ to go to the movies _____ not? (either ... or)	24	48%	52%
13. _____ strawberries _____ blueberries last very long. (Neither ... nor)	12	24%	76%
14. They moved south _____ the weather. (despite)	12	24%	76%
15. Sam will be late to work, _____ he has a dental appointment. (because)	21	42%	58%
16. They called us _____ they arrived. (as soon as)	14	28%	72%
17. _____ Jack _____ the students play the guitar. (Either ... or)	14	28%	72%
18. _____ spring arrives, we have to be prepared for more snow . (When)	15	30%	70%
19. He wanted to go skiing _____ he hurt his leg. (though)	5	10%	90%
20. Sara is neither polite _____ funny. (nor)	48	96%	4%

**Table1. Number and percentage of the correct VS incorrect answers**



**Figure 1. Column chart illustrating the percentage of correct answers on each item in the gap-filling test**

Furthermore, in order to find out whether they struggled more with coordination or subordination, the mean percentage of the incorrect answers for both coordination and subordination are compared together, as shown in the following table:

<b>Coordination</b>	<b>Subordination</b>
1. For (80%)	1. Though (90)
2. Yet (78%)	2. When (76%)
3. Neither ... nor (76%)	3. Despite (76%)
4. Rather ... or (72%)	4. After (74%)
5. Or (48%)	5. As soon as (72%)
6. But (46%)	6. Because (48%)
7. Both ... and (44%)	7. Whenever (50%)
8. Either ... or (42%)	8. Until (36%)
9. So (22%)	-
10. And (8%)	-
11. Nor (4%)	-
<b>Mean percentage of incorrect answers: 47.2%</b>	<b>Mean percentage of incorrect answers: 65.6%</b>

**Table 2. Coordination VS Subordination (mean percentage of incorrect answers)**

As is evident from table 2, the research sample struggled more with subordination. This result is in line with previous studies that highlight how Arab learners of English not only struggle with English subordination but also prefer coordination over

subordination (Noor, 1996; Diab, 1997; Al-Khresheh, 2011; Abu Rass, 2015 ).

### **5.3 Discussion**

The mean percentage of the correct answers in the gap-filling test is 42.6% which is rather low. An error analysis was carried out to find what the students did when they faced coordinators and subordinators they did not know, and to assess the testees' skills in the production of coordinators and subordinators. Therefore, studying learners' errors can help teachers find out what makes using coordinators and subordinators difficult and decide what should be emphasized in the classroom in order to raise the learners' awareness of the uses of coordinators and subordinators.

#### **5.3.1 Negative L1 Interference**

Negative L1 interference was evident in fifteen instances; i.e. fifteen students (which amounts to 30% of the research sample) wrote *and* instead of *but* in item number 1 in the gap-filling test. This is because the Arabic language favors coordination through *and* (*wa-* و) "linguistically, textually and rhetorically", as argued by Dickins (2017, p. 1). Moreover, the excessive use of *and* by Arabic-speaking learners of English has been highlighted in Kharma (1985), Othman (2004), Mohammed (2010), among others. Wright (1977) also observes that traditional Arab grammarians consider *wa-* to be the main coordinator in Arabic.

Furthermore, excessive use of *and* by Arab learners has been highlighted in Diab (1997), who studied writing errors made by Lebanese learners of English, and Al-Khresheh (2011), who studied the use of ‘and’ as a syntactic coordinating structure by Jordanian EFL learners.

### **5.3.2 Blank**

The second type of error the students made is leaving some items unanswered. In this test, five students left some items without giving an answer, which gives this type of error a percentage of 10%. In this case, the students preferred not to give any answer to some items they did not know maybe because they did not have any possible answer stored in their mental lexicons, and they probably did not want to write an incorrect answer. The conjunctions *since* and *so* were most left blank. This is because these words can be considered rather difficult for the students when they try to use them. There are two apparent reasons for this. First, these learners hardly practice writing. Second, they most likely do not read in English unless they have to study for their exams, and when they do so, they do not do it in order to learn but to pass. Another reason that may account for this is that these particular learners seem to always rely on a small number of conjunctions, such as *and*, *but* and *or*, to link sentences. This is also because they do not practice reading or writing.

### 5.3.3 Paraphrase

Seventeen students (34%) resorted to paraphrasing on items 12 and 13. Shormani & Al-Sohbani (2012) observe that resorting to paraphrasing is a common problem among Arab learners of English. It seems that when learners lack the knowledge of the exact words to get their ideas across in L2, they tend to adopt the strategy of compensation by paraphrasing. In the case of item 12 (where the blanks should be replaced by either ... or), most students who did not know either wrote *wanting* instead, so that the sentence became *Have you made a decision about wanting to go to the movies or not?*. Some of them wrote *preferring*. As for item 13 (where the blanks should be replaced by *neither ... nor*), most students wrote *not ... and not*; others wrote *not ... and neither*. Indeed, on diagnosing errors, James (1988, p. 63) observes that the learner's ignorance causes him or her "to try to express themselves in the TL by alternative means: they beg, steal or borrow". He calls this "substitutive language" (James, 1998, p. 63)

### 5.3.4 Miscellaneous Errors

As mentioned above, some errors cannot be classified. These errors apparently occur because of the learner's lack of knowledge. The percentage of miscellaneous errors was 20%; i.e. four students made these errors. These participants made errors



when they did not know the correct subordinator or coordinator. For example, on item 13, two participants wrote *not only ... but also* instead of *neither ... nor*. One student wrote *despite* instead of *after* on item 18; another wrote *despite* instead of *when* on item 10.

The percentage of each error type is presented in the following table.

Error Type	Percentage
Negative L1 Transfer	20%
Blank	5%
Paraphrase	34%
Miscellaneous Errors	20%

**Table 3. Rate of error types**

## 6. Conclusion

This section presents the main conclusion, summarizes the findings and answers the two research questions of the study. It also presents the pedagogical implications of the study and recommendations for further research.

### 6.1 Summary of the Findings

Paraphrasing accounted for most of the errors (34%); negative L1 transfer accounted for 20%; miscellaneous errors which mostly arise from ignorance also accounted for 20% of the errors; blank accounted for 5%. The mean percentage of the correct answers in the fill-in-the-gap test was 42.6%.

## 6.2 Answers to the Research Questions

In the introduction, two research questions were put forth: the first one was: What are the types of the errors in coordination and subordination that occur in the writings of the participants in the research sample? The second one was: What is the impact of the errors in coordination and subordination on the participants as students of English?

The first research question was answered in detail in the data analysis section. The types of errors detected and examined were: Negative L1 transfer, blank (or no response), paraphrase, miscellaneous errors, ignorance and strangeness.

As for the second research question, the errors of coordination and subordination most assuredly affect the students' ability to get their ideas across and express themselves correctly. It also affects the students' performance in exams. Furthermore, although the present study did not analyze pieces of writing of the research sample, their errors suggest that they may have the tendency for writing long sentences with inappropriate use of coordination and subordination. It also seems they write essays or paragraphs which lack cohesion.

Moreover, many participants, who were third-year students on the cusp of graduation, will likely seek jobs as teachers of English in the future, or start teaching English to kids

as private tutors, and the fact they exhibited a lot of errors in coordination and subordination is a bit alarming. These errors do not only have an impact on the participants' ability to express themselves, but also on the potential students these participants are going to teach in the future.

### **6.3 Pedagogical Implications**

To help students and teachers alike in the areas of coordination and subordination, the error analysis approach has been employed in this study. By doing so, the analysis has not only identified the errors made by the research sample, it has also provided an understanding of the level of cohesion and coherence the research sample has in their writing skills.

The study shows that writing good paragraphs or essays is not something easily achieved by the research sample because of the errors they exhibited. Error analysis is carried out in this study to help students avoid these errors. They should be aware from the beginning of the differences between writing paragraphs in English and in Arabic. In addition, students should expose themselves to authentic learning material through watching the news in English, reading short newspaper articles and analyzing samples of good pieces of written English. As for English instructors, they should constantly remind their students of the importance of reading and writing skills, because without

practice errors cannot be overcome. This study has shed light on the students' shortcomings as regards coordination and subordination and this will enable teachers of English to know how to deal with these weaknesses and conduct successful and memorable teaching. Finally, teachers should make their students aware of areas of differences between Arabic and English as far as coordination and subordination are concerned.

#### **6.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

Further researchers at the English Department at Al-Ba'ath University interested in coordination and subordination can

- i. analyze written samples from students of English at Al-Ba'ath University to gain more insight into their competence in writing.
  - ii. conduct a pre-test and a post-test to study coordination and subordination errors; between the tests, the researchers can teach their participants writing basics, focusing on coordination and subordination to find out what progress they can make.
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