

## **Conjunctions In Iraqi Media EFL Classroom**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

Writing communication is of significant importance for learners, specifically for journalists in the department of media at the university level. Journalists should know well how to communicate their messages clearly for the audience. Specifically, knowing how to use conjunctions accurately in writing is an important aspect of language that can create coherence and sustain the achievement of communication. Conjunctions serve to give reasonable meaning, helping the reader construct the different segments of a text, however they are not the only means to create cohesion. They play a massive role in giving the text its meaning. The use of conjunctions is a problematic topic for Iraqi media EFL undergraduate learners. A test is designed to identify the mistakes made by learners in using conjunctions. Then, the participants' mistakes are divided into three types according to the analysis of their responses.

**Keywords:** Conjunctions, Cohesion, Coherence, EFL, Writing, media

### **1. Introduction**

Writing is a challenge not only for native speakers (Norrish, 1983) but for English as a Foreign Language (EFL henceforth) learners (Ting, 2003; Ong, 2011). Due to the lack of nonverbal expressional clues that help articulating the message (Prommas and Sinwongsawat, 2011), this topic of a significant importance for Iraqi EFL learners, including journalist learners at the university level. Journalists should know how to clearly communicate their messages for the audience. As such, knowing how to use conjunctions, specifically in writing, is an important aspect of language that can create cohesion and coherence. Conjunctions are one of the main topics taught in grammar lessons. It is essential for learners to connect their ideas in writing to achieve communication.

Conjunctions can help build a grammatical structure that serve proper communication of a message, helping the reader constructs the different segments of a text to achieve unity, however they are not the only means to create cohesion (Heino, 2010). They play a massive role in giving the text its meaning. This study is an attempt to identify the mistakes committed by Iraqi media EFL undergraduate learners in employing conjunctions. The sample of the study is limited to Iraqi EFL fourth year students in the Department of Media, College of Arts, University of Babylon during the academic year (2020-2021). Iraqi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Journalism classes face difficulty in applying these words properly in their writings. This paper tries to identify this difficulty. In order to achieve this aim, the study sheds the lights on the uses of Conjunctions in English, clarifying types of conjunctions used by the Iraqi EFL learners. After presenting a theoretical background knowledge about uses and types of conjunctions and types, Iraqi EFL learners (year four from the department of media at the university of Babylon the academic year of 2020-2021) were tested and their answers were statistically analyzed. Hoping that this study can be of benefit for EFL teachers and learners in the future. As an experienced teacher of English, the

researcher hypothesizes that the Iraqi EFL learners in journalism classes tend to highly employ coordinate conjunctions in their writings. Most learners face difficulty in using conjunctions appropriately, because there are different types and functions. It is difficult for Iraqi EFL learners to comprehend their meanings and functions. Of course, there are many reasons that can contribute to this difficulty which may relatively differ from one learner to another. Because of word number limits, it is not possible to include them in this study.

### **1.2. Importance of Conjunctions**

Conjunctions serve to reasonably relate parts of a written text and make it readable (Geva, 1992). Ting (2003) adds that text unity, which is one of the most necessary features that must be available in language, is achieved by the use of Conjunctions. Zamel (1983) states that conjunctions give meaning to written ideas. They help readers expect what is coming; they serve as start of departure through discourse. Thus, learning how to use conjunctions is an essential skill that should be properly acquired at the beginning of learning language and writing pedagogy (Cook, 1989).

Ferris, 1994; Field & Oi, 1992; Jin, 2001 assert that number of cohesive devices properly used is a signal of good writing. Cohesive devices can affect the quality of a text. That is, quality of writing is related to the number of conjunctions used. Moreover, conjunctions can help shape representations, as the relationships among text segments can increase the reader's knowledge of discourse. That is, appropriate use of conjunctions can enrich a text with clarity and reason.

In discourse, conjunctions express a certain meaning that is indirectly expressed through their meaning, as they refer to other components that may not be available in words (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). However, they primarily serve to join preceding or following components of a text, expressing certain meanings that are available in other components. Cohesive here refers to their function, linguistically joining the elements of a text in addition to their semantic relations.

Siddiqui (2014) emphasises the importance of conjunctions that helps in achieving proper communication, both in speech and writing. Awareness of the appropriate use of the different conjunctions can help achieve proper ways of communication. Appropriateness of conjunctions can increase confidence in communication and speed in understanding the message without breaking sentences into small units to do so. That is, the perception of a text and its meaning is highly influenced by the use of conjunctions. McClure and Steffensen (1980) assert that conjunctions help clarify the logical relationships among propositions specifically in written texts as body movements are absent in written discourse. Consequently, the use of conjunctions can reduce misunderstanding that may happen.

They help readers identify kind of relationships among elements of a sentence; which element is related to a previous one. Thus, it is crucial for Iraqi media EFL learners to manipulate the proper use of conjunctions which is a challenge for them.

## **2. Conjunctions In English**

Conjunctions are parts of speech that function to link words or group of words to achieve meaning (Bernard and Summers, 1993). They are defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976) as indirect semantic cohesive elements that can semantically join parts of a text, delivering a certain meaning, assuming the availability of certain elements in that discourse. Caplan (2012) defines conjunctions as parts of speech that connect words, phrases,

clauses, or sentences. Conjunctions are given different labels, take for example conjuncts (Quirk, et al., 1985); connective or linking adverbs (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002); connectors (Granger & Tyson, 1996); discourse markers or connectors (Fraser, 1999); logical connectives or connectors (Crewe, 1990; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). They may take the form of a single word such as: 'and', 'but', or a pair of words like 'neither/nor', 'either/or'.

This study adopts Caplan's (2012) definition as it is a generally inclusive one that is suitable for university EFL level learning. Caplan (2012) classifies conjunctions into three subcategories: coordinating conjunction, paired conjunction, and subordinate conjunction. Each of the three categories can create different semantic relations among parts of a text. Thus, it is crucial for Media learners to understand the importance of conjunctions in creating a text. The following is a description of the types of conjunctions.

### **2.1. Coordinating conjunctions**

Coordinating conjunctions are generally divided into conjunctions of addition/negative addition, contrast, alternative and inferential. Conjunctions of addition just add without any qualification. Conjunctions of contrast help to show contrast. Alternative conjunctions help to choose between two alternatives. Inferential conjunctions help to draw inferences. Conjunctions have a way of being used in many different situations.

Coordinating conjunctions are single word conjunctions (Bernard and Summers, 1993) that are used to join parts of a sentence or sentences that are equal in importance, i. e., they are of the same sort or category (Walter, 2017) to achieve unity. There are only seven of them. They are: 'for', 'and', 'nor', 'but', 'or', 'yet', and 'so'. The primary function of these conjunctions is to join two words or two phrases or two independent clauses that have similar grammatical function in a sentence. They are referred to by the acronym FANBOYS:

- F: **for**: The teacher was upset, **for** the school had closed his favourite program.  
A: **and**: In this paper, I will write about conjunctions, their meanings, **and** types.  
N: **nor**: The students did not study hard, **nor** did they attend the test.  
B: **but**: The resources are several years old **but** still invaluable to my work.  
O: **or**: At the end of the course, the teachers can decide to present a paper **or** take a test.  
Y: **yet**: The student complained of poor teaching at the school, **yet** the headmaster refused to listen.  
S: **so**: I have been a teacher for three years, **so** I have little experience with teaching adults.

They are used to establish a connection between two or more words, phrases, and clauses of equally important ideas (Hinkel, 2001). They can help communicate the intended meaning, creating a coherent text. The combination of two simple sentences creates one compound sentence.

These coordinate conjunctions are also used to join paragraphs, not only sentences, if placed at the beginning of a following sentence or paragraph.

*The test was ready. But where were the examinees*

*I asked them to study hard to pass the exam. And they started to do just that.*

## 2.2. Paired or Correlative Conjunctions

Paired or correlative conjunctions and coordinating conjunctions have in common some features: first they serve to link clauses that are grammatically similar. Second, they serve the same functions that coordinating conjunctions do: addition/negative addition, contrast, alternative and inferential (See 2.1.). Then they join grammatically equal elements, parts of speech or phrases. But, they are formed by the combination of two words or phrases (Lester, 1990). Paired conjunctions obtained their name from the fact that they include two words or phrases used to create completion to the two balanced structures that are joined by them (Sahebkeir & Aidinlou, 1999). They include: 'either...or', 'neither...nor', 'both...and', 'as many...as', 'whether...or', 'not only...but also', 'such...that', 'so...that', 'hardly...when', 'scarcely...when', 'no sooner...than', and 'not...but'.

See the following examples:

**Both Maha and Nada met the deadline. (both Maha and Nada are proper nouns)**

**Maha not only finished her homework in time but also helped her classmate. (finished her homework and helped her classmate are two action verbal phrases)**

**They could either play or eat what they like.**

**He could neither read nor write.**

## 2.3. Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions precede dependent subordinate adverbial clauses, serving to join them with their independent clauses. That is, this kind of conjunction establishes a connection between a dependent clause and an independent clause. The dependent adverbial clause alone cannot be a complete simple sentence. It provides the reader with information about how, when, or why. By contrast, an independent clause can be a simple sentence by itself. That is, the dependent depends on the independent one for its full meaning (Bernard and Summers, 1993). Some examples of these conjunctions are: 'after', 'although', 'because', 'before', 'if', 'since', 'though', 'unless', 'until', 'than', 'when', 'whenever', 'where' and 'while'. They can achieve different relationships like cause-and-effect, a contrast, a condition, result, place, time or other kind of relationship that can exist between clauses. In the following example, the subordinating conjunction 'when' establishes a time relationship, showing that the action of (meeting him) is caused by (going home).

**I met him when I was going home.**

There are two ways to structure a sentence using a subordinating conjunction:

The subordinate conjunction has to be part of its dependent adverbial clause which can come before the independent clause or after. That is, the form of the sentence can be either as (independent clause + dependent adverbial clause) like the following:

**Make sure you clean your teeth before you go to bed.**

**I read books because I love reading.**

**or as (dependent clause + comma ',' + independent clause). A comma must be inserted before the independent clause in this structure.**

**Before you go to bed, make sure you clean your teeth.**

**Because I love reading, I read books.**

#### **2.4. Compound Conjunctions**

Compound conjunctions behave like coordinate conjunctions, as single conjunction, in joining sentence elements together (Quirk et al., 1985). They can be divided into groups. Those that end with an obligatory 'that' such as 'in order that', 'in that', 'except that', 'on condition that', 'so that', and 'such that'. Those that have an optional 'that' like 'now (that)', 'provided (that)', 'supposing (that)', 'seeing (that)', and 'considering (that)'. Another group having the word 'as' such as 'as well as', 'as much as', 'as though', 'in as much as', and 'as soon as'. For example

**He is seeking for a job in order that he could help his family.**

**I can help you on condition that you don't do this again.**

**I will offer you this opportunity provided that you know how to make use of it.**

**There are as many rooms as there are windows in this building.**

"That" can cause confusion because it serves different purposes and it can be optional sometimes. "That" can serve embedding (inserting) a dependent clause into an independent one. It can also serve as the object of different verbs in reported speech such as 'assert', 'argued', 'claimed', 'announced', 'hypothesized' and others. It is highly used in academic writing in order to introduce a paraphrase, summary, or quotation. In academic writing, most writers prefer to introduce a noun clause with "that" for clarity (Caplan, 2012). The removal of this conjunction can cause misreading the dependent clause. As the subject is read as being the object of the dependent clause (Jamieson, 2012). Consequently, this can confuse the reader. For example, leaving out 'that' from this sentence "Smith (2015) reported more research was necessary", "more research" can be read as the thing Smith reported. Whereas "was necessary" is the right reading of this sentence.

### **3. The Use Of Conjunctions**

Conjunctions form a crucial part of English language, as they are used in almost every communication. There is no text without conjunctions. A teacher can change a difficult topic into a simple if they know how to do this. There are certain techniques and strategies that must be learned by the teacher in order to know 'how'. They must know how to distinguish differences in meaning among conjunctions. Thus, practice plays an important role in improving learners' communication, creating readable and understandable texts for the readers.

As far as usage is concerned, it should be remembered that one conjunction is usually sufficient; only seldom is it the case that several appear together. Regardless of this, however, there are also multi-part conjunctions. It should also be noted that connective words can never be changed, so they always maintain their form. Now, compare the possible uses of them according to Sayah and Fatemi (2013, 23)

English conjunctions can join sentence elements which can be single words, such as: "Have you visited Maha and Nada?", or complete sentences, for example: "she was in a hurry, so she could not stay."



### **3. Methodology**

In this section, a general idea is given about what a test is and what are the most important features of a good test. In addition to how a test is designed, what material it includes and to how it has been applied.

#### **3.1. A Test and its Characteristics**

According to Al-Juboury (1999), the test is any means of checking what students can do and what they cannot do with a language. It must be characterized by validity, reliability and credibility. These characteristics, according to Al-Juboury (1999), are further explained in the following sections

##### **3.1.1 Validity**

Validity is how far a test can measure and identify the purpose of the test and how to use it successfully for a certain aim. For the test to be valid, it must achieve the following criteria:

##### **3.1.2 Content Validity**

Content Validity means that a test must be comprehensive. That is, it can cover the syllabus intended to be tested. This kind of validity can only be achieved by careful analysis of the subject or skill of the test.

##### **3.1.3 Face Validity**

This characteristic refers to the general form of the test. The test must be approved by the examinees, supervisors or those concerned with the learners' education.

##### **3.1.4 Reliability**

Reliability of the test refers the stability of the test results, in case the same test is repeated, under the same conditions, for the same group of learners.

##### **3.1.5 Practicality**

Practicality is also known as feasibility or usability. A test must not be expensive or difficult to administer or score.

#### **3.2. Test Design**

As far as the design, the test includes two questions. Each question consists of 20 items. One question is intended to measure the learner's performance at the recognition level and the other to identify their level of production. They are designed to examine the students' knowledge of conjunctions and how to use them in producing sentences, as the aim of this paper is to study and explain the misuse of conjunctions in Iraqi media EFL classroom.

#### **3.3. Procedures of the test**

The conjunctions are first taught according to Caplan's (2012) classification to help learners know the conjunctions' types, meaning and functions in order to produce them in their language. They are semantically divided into four types. Then, the researcher explains the instructions of the test to the participants in order to know how to answer the questions.

### 3.4. *Test material*

The questions of the test that is used in this study covers the topic of conjunctions taught in EFL classroom as part of teaching grammar.

### 3.5. *The Subject*

The test has been applied to thirty-six EFL undergraduate learners from year fourth, Department of Media, University of Babylon during the academic year (2020-2021). These male and female students at the College of Arts have agreed to answer the written test, the tool of the study. The participants have to answer the questions.

### 3.6. *Test Analysis*

#### 3.6.1. **At the Level of Recognition**

The results of question one is shown in the following table:

**Table (1)** *the performance of the learners at the recognition level. (Question 1)*

<b>Number of Item</b>	<b>Number of Correct Responses</b>	<b>Percentage of Correct Responses</b>	<b>Number of Incorrect Responses</b>	<b>Percentage of Incorrect Responses</b>
1	22	61,1%	14	38,9%
2	27	75%	9	25%
3	22	61,1%	14	38,9%
4	19	52,8%	17	47,2%
5	21	58,3%	15	41,7%
6	14	38,9%	22	61,1%
7	15	41,7%	21	58,3%
8	19	52,8%	17	47,2%
9	19	52,8%	17	47,2%
10	19	52,8%	17	47,2%
11	5	13,8%	31	86,2%
12	6	16,6%	30	83,4%
13	7	19,4%	29	80,5%
14	7	19,4%	29	80,5%
15	7	19,4%	29	80,5%
16	6	16,6%	30	83,4%
17	9	25%	27	75%
18	7	19,4%	29	80,5%
19	7	19,4%	29	80,5%
20	6	16,6%	30	83,4%

From the learners' responses of the first question items shown in table (1), it is noticed that most of their answers have failed to properly use conjunctions. Consequently, the belief that most Iraqi EFL undergraduate learners misuse conjunctions, and they tend to highly employ some of the coordinate conjunctions is verified. This table shows that Iraqi media EFL university learners are good at using coordinate and subordinate conjunctions but they rarely use correlative and compound conjunctions, as the ultimate number of correct choices of using them does not exceed (33,3%) for any of the ten items that deal with these types of conjunctions. The analysis of the data of this study shows that the type of coordinate conjunction is better understood and used by the learners than subordinate, paired or

correlative and compound conjunctions, as it achieves the highest percentage of correct responses.

Concerning the five items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) that deal with coordinate conjunctions, the results show that their responses are (61,1%, 75%, 61,1%, 52,8%, 58,3%). They range between (52,8% and 75%), which is a good indication. These positive results can be attributed to the learners' familiarity with these items of the test. Their correct responses (in number out of 36) are respectively (22, 27, 22, 19 and 21). Item (2) which examines the use of 'and' has the highest percentage of correct responses (75%). Items (1 and 3), that deal with 'but' and 'so', come second in percentages of correct responses, as they score (61,1%). The lowest percentage of correct responses is (58,2%), which is about the use of 'for'. This can be attributed to the EFL learners' ability to recognize the use of the coordinate conjunctions that are usually used throughout their study by Iraqi EFL teachers. As these types of conjunctions are most commonly used in teaching English in order to clearly and easily communicate the subject to the learners.

Concerning items from (6 -10), tackling the use of subordinate conjunctions, their correct responses are respectively (14, 15, 19,19, 19) and they are (38,9%, 41,7%, 52,8%, 52,8%, 52,8%) in percentages. The number of correct responses is less than the number of using coordinate conjunction, but it is still good in comparison with the use of other types. The highest percentage of the correct replies is (52,8%) that is a little higher than the incorrect ones which is the use of 'because', 'since' and 'for'. The correct use of 'though' comes fourth in rank and then 'if' which forms a real difficulty for the learners as they always ask to repeat how to use it in its three cases. Overall, these percentages of correct responses of using the subordinate conjunctions can mean that the learner is still able to identify them and their usages.

Coming to items from (11-15) that examine the comprehension of paired or correlative conjunctions, the learners' percentages of correct responses are respectively (13,8%, 16,6%, 19,4%, 19,4%, 19,4%), and results in the highest percentages of incorrect answers which are (86,2%, 83,4%, 80,5%, 80,5%, 80,5%). The lowest percentage of correct responses is (13,8%), which means that EFL learners have difficulties using paired conjunctions, as the highest percentage of the learners' responses is incorrect. This result means that most learners are unaware of the appropriate use of the paired conjunction, or have less information about their meanings and functions. This can also be due to the method followed of teaching grammar out of context. Teachers still using the traditional method of teaching.

Regarding compound conjunctions, which are tested by the items (16-20), the number of correct answers is respectively (6 ,9 ,7 ,7 ,6) out of 36. In percentages, they are (16,6%, 25%, 19,4%, 19,4%, 16,6%). The percentage of the incorrect answers are (83,4%, 75%, 80,5%, 80,5%, 83,4%), that is the least percentage of incorrect responses is (75%). The conjunctions 'so that' achieves the highest percentage of correct responses that is (25%). This result can justify that EFL learners do not have enough background information and they do not master the topic covered by that question item. This can also mean that learners are facing difficulty familiarizing themselves with the subject of conjunctions. EFL learners avoid using new expressions because they cannot separate their learning from their culture, which is against change or using new expressions which can be considered a behaviour of showing off. That is, they have been influenced by their culture in deciding their responses, as they have to stick to the common and use simple and clear expressions only.



### 2.4.1. At the Level of Production

**Table (2)** Performance of the learners at the level of production. (Question 2)

Number of Item	Number of Correct Responses	Percentage of Correct Responses	Number of Incorrect Responses	Percentage of Incorrect Responses
1	19	52,8%	17	47,2%
2	16	44,4%	20	55,6%
3	17	47,2%	19	52,8%
4	19	52,8%	17	47,2%
5	16	44,4%	20	55,6%
6	13	36,1%	23	63,9%
7	14	38,9%	22	61,1%
8	10	27,7%	26	72,3%
9	9	25%	27	75%
10	10	27,7%	26	72,3%
11	5	13,8%	31	86,2%
12	7	19,4%	29	80,5%
13	6	16,6%	30	83,4%
14	6	16,6%	30	83,4%
15	5	13,8%	31	86,2%
16	6	16,6%	30	83,4%
17	7	19,4%	29	80,5%
18	6	16,6%	30	83,4%
19	7	19,4%	29	80,5%
20	7	19,4%	29	80,5%

Responses of the items of question (2) that investigate performance of the learners at the level of production clearly show that the frequency of the use of conjunctions in descending order is "coordinate > subordinate > compound > paired or correlative".

It is noticed that the frequency of coordinate conjunction is high. The percentage of using them is higher than other types of the conjunctions employed. The participants employ the coordinate conjunctions 'and', 'so' and 'but' more frequently than others such as 'or, or for' whose frequency is seen to be low. The participants often use coordinate conjunctions, as they record the highest percentage of correct responses which are respectively (19, 16, 17, 19,16) in number, and (52,8%, 44,4%, 47,2%, 52,8%, 44,4%) in percentages. This shows that the recognition of coordinate conjunctions meanings and functions is better than other conjunctions. Coming to items (1 and 4), it is found that the total number correct answers is (19) while the number of incorrect answers is (17). This can have a positive indication. It can refer to the learners' knowledge of the point that makes it easy for them. Concerning item (2 and 5), the percentage of the correct responses is (44,4%), while the percentage of incorrect answers is (55,6%). This item has the highest incorrect responses. In comparison with the result of table (1), it is clear that writing is difficult for Iraqi media EFL learners, they cannot produce proper sentences joined by appropriate conjunctions. Moreover, they do not have enough vocabulary to express themselves, as free practice is completely neglected by in EFL classroom, as the number of learners exceeds 50 learners and the limitations of time, with only two 50 minutes lessons per week.

Turning to items from (6-10), the correct responses are (36,1%, 38,9%, 27,7%, 25%, 27,7%) as shown in table (2). As regard the subordinate conjunctions, the use of 'because', (item 7, (see table 2)) is known for most students as it is highly employed. It is the most frequently used conjunctions. By contrast, 'until' is the least identified and used conjunctions among EFL learners. Concerning the correct responses of 'since' and 'for', these conjunctions are perceived as mere adverbs as they serve the indication of the perfect aspect. That is, they are not recognized as conjunctions.

On the other hand, coming to items (11, 12, 13, 14, 15) that study the learners' comprehension of paired conjunctions, the total number of correct responses is (5, 7, 6, 6, 5). That is, they have the lowest percentage of correct responses (13,8%, 19,4%, 16,6%, 16,6%, 13,8%). Incorrect answers are highly more than all of the conjunctions. This indicates that learners have not properly used them. From table (2) above, it can be concluded that learners encounter difficulties in the use of paired conjunctions. The high percentage of the incorrect responses indicate that learners misuse conjunctions in their writing. The number of incorrect responses is high. That can explain the EFL learners' insufficient knowledge and practice required to master the topic of conjunction tested by these items. The lowest percentage of incorrect responses is (13,8%, 19,4%, 16,6%, 16,6%, 13,8%) while the percentage of the incorrect responses are (86,2%, 80,5%, 83,4%, 83,4%, 86,2%). This can be attributed to many explanations, one of them is that learners can depend on guessing answers. However, there are many other reasons related to different factors that can be related to the traditional method of teaching and the negligence of the importance of writing issues inside the Iraqi EFL classroom.

Concerning items (16, 17, 18, 19, 20), the high percentage of incorrect responses that reach (75%) in comparison with the percentage of the correct responses which is (25%) is due to many items that are left without answers. This action can indicate the difficulty that EFL learners face in practicing the production of conjunctions in their writings.

Item (16 and 18), the total percentage of the correct responses is (16,6%) while the incorrect ones is (83,4%). Learners are unfamiliar with the meaning of the items, they could not response correctly. The level of vocabulary used is high. Another reason is that there are many items left without answer. This can also be attributed to the learners' unfamiliarity with the item. Lack of enough information about the items and insufficient practice can be the reasons behind these scores that mark these items.

#### **4. Discussion Of the Results**

The quantitative analysis of the data of this study has shown that the use of the coordinate conjunction 'and' (to serve adding new or more information), 'but' to show contrast' are correctly used by Iraqi media EFL learners. Their high correct employment of coordinate conjunctions that serve addition and contrast in their effort to join simple sentences support this conclusion. They also succeed in using the subordinate conjunction 'because' to show causal relationship among sentences. That is, learners are capable of differentiating between the precise semantic functions of coordinate and subordinate conjunctions. As they do not employ the compound and paired conjunctions, they prefer the use of certain conjunctions to others. They limit themselves to the inaccurate use of coordinate and subordinate conjunctions specifically at the level of production. That is, this behaviour can reveal the fact that learners' comprehension of the topic is not as informative as it should be. Moreover, a high number of mistakes has resulted in unreadable sentences.

Improper semantic reading of relations created by wrong implementation of conjunctions use ruins cohesion and coherence. This is clearly noticed by their inappropriate use of paired conjunctions and in the limitation of correct use to some of the coordinate and subordinate conjunctions. Their writings, though at the level of the sentence, show no logical relations, connecting the different elements of sentences.

EFL learners' improper use of conjunctions, may be caused by their first language interference. Lack of practice within contextual constraints can help in achieving the learning aims. They can lead to proper use of these words in different texts. Meaning-focused instructions with clear and simple semantic, and syntactic properties can help learning conjunctions. This can also indicate that Iraqi teachers focus on the syntactic structure of sentences without paying attention to the semantic aspect of language. Thus, they cannot communicate, using English language. Teachers are still focusing on the sentence level, teaching only grammatical rules. They must move to the text level in teaching English language. The researcher believes that teaching all the types of conjunctions together at the same time is futile. This can be one of the reasons that make learning conjunctions difficult for learners. Pedagogically, instruction design for conjunction materials must be reconsidered to help learners achieve more accurate writings. Another reason is that learners may not have enough knowledge of conjunctions. Thus, they rely on the use of the same limited number of conjunctions such as 'and' and 'but' in their writings. Not to mention that the ability to form ideas, develop and organize them to create their piece of writing is a skill that needs attention in EFL classroom as it is neglected by teachers. This point leads to the crucial importance of reading gradable authentic texts in English that must be encouraged in Iraqi EFL classroom, as there are no books in English for helping learners in this aspect neither in the library of the department, nor the college or even the University that are suitable for the different levels of learners. Using the first language in EFL classroom in teaching English can be another reason that learning conjunctions is not satisfactory. Time of the lesson must be increased as 100 minutes a week is not enough to practice a foreign language. These issues which have been highlighted by this study can be solved.

## **5. Conclusion**

It is clear from the analysis of the data, that the topic of conjunctions is problematic for Iraqi media EFL learners. Learners have often produced awkward responses. They could not properly use conjunctions to achieve the right meaning or cohesive function of these words. Iraqi media EFL undergraduate learners' writings have shown poor thoughts that are unreadable. They cannot express themselves as they cannot join their thoughts properly to have a main point. The improper use of conjunctions creates weak sentences that lack meaning. Many of the learners' inappropriate responses have been attributed to the inappropriate use of conjunctions and learners' inability to produce complete and meaningful ideas in writing. In conclusion, Iraqi media EFL undergraduate learners are not taught the proper ways of writing well and organized sentences and essays.

The researcher has identified three major types of errors committed by the participants. Learners either choose incorrect conjunctions, or do not recognise the right conjunction, or leave questions without answer.

Language learners of media indispensably need to write coherent texts. Exposure to English language texts within contexts must be increased, concentrating on teaching coherent

writing and the importance of cohesive devices in their writings. Much more attention to the ways in which sentences are formed creating different meanings using different conjunctions must be taken into consideration.

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## Appendix 1

### The Test

#### Q1/Complete the following sentences with suitable conjunctions

1. Carol wanted to drive to Colorado, \_\_\_\_\_ Bill insisted that they fly. ( **but** )
2. "I have two cats .....one dog." ( **and** )
3. Our car won't start, ..... we called a mechanic. ( **so** )
4. "I eat at the café every weekend, .....they serve the best bagels in town." ( **for** )
5. Her arguments were easy to ridicule ..... hard to refute. ( **yet** )
6. ....next month, I can't afford to go to the movies. ( **Until** )
7. ".....of my dad, I know how to play basketball." ( **Because** )
8. ".....I don't drink milk, I do pour milk in my coffee." ( **Though** )
9. "I had a hair appointment .....I went to church." ( **before** )
10. "He has been afraid of driving .....the car crash last year." ( **since** )
11. "This summer, I want to visit .....France ..... England." ( **either, or** )
12. "I'm studying .....theater ..... communications at college." ( **both, and** )
13. "I want to be .....a wife and mother, **but also** a doctor." ( **not only, but also** )
14. .... Alex .....Robin can play baseball. ( **Neither, nor** )
15. I want ..... ice cream ..... cereal. ( **both, and** )
16. We love to go skinny dipping ..... busking in the sun. ( **as well as** )
17. He acted ..... it were his first time under the sun. ( **as if** )
18. I made a deal to see them ..... I was assured police protection. ( **provided that** )



19. *I hurried out of the room ..... I didn't have to listen to her anymore. (so that )*
20. They held the function on a Sunday .....everybody would be able to attend. (**in order that**)
21. You can share my room as long as you pay for your expenses.
22. The cat jumped in as soon as he opened the window.

**Q2/ Put each of the following conjunctions in a meaningful sentence:**

or, so, and, but, for, whether, because, although, since, **not only - but also, either- or, neither - nor, both - and, not - but, whether - or, as well as, as if, provided that, so that,**