

# The Effect of Logical Organization on the Academic Essay Written by EFL Student

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**ABSTRACT:** This study aimed to investigate Sudanese EFL undergraduate students' academic writing problems in terms of logical organization. It focused on the logical organization to explore the difficulties of both writing techniques and logical organization. A descriptive-analytic method was used. Three groups in three Sudanese universities were targeted for the study, which their major is English language and linguistics. A questionnaire and a test were used for data collection and 137 responses were received. The results of the questionnaire revealed that 75.19% of the respondents believed that academic writing techniques are crucial. The results of the academic essay writing revealed that students confronted difficulties in the logical organization, consistency, or drawing an effective conclusion. The study recommended that academic writing courses should be taught in all academic disciplines of the Sudanese higher education institutions and remedial classes on these facets should be covered effortlessly.

**Keywords:** Academic writing, Error Analysis, logical organization, writing difficulties, essay.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The present study is an attempt to explore, identify, analyze, and provide some possible resolutions for the logical organization in writing academic topics. Over the last three decades, It could be seen that most Sudanese undergraduates have been taught with a poor content of language textbooks, which were designed with many shorts in their objectives; they resulted in an aggrieve decline of the academic writing production. Sudanese educational institutions have measured with estimation the overall performance of the Sudanese EFL in all writing settings is to be relatively poor and unpersuasive. Regarding this problem, it is an attempt to analyze and investigate some writing difficulties that Sudanese EFL undergraduate student writers experience, probably overdue to variation in writing techniques especially the logical organization phases and steps. More significantly, getting close to the Sudanese EFL undergraduate students and observing some academic English essays, articles, and theses written by some Sudanese EFL writers, the researcher has noticed that most of them, especially the university students encounter serious structural problems when writing in English. Therefore, because of these difficulties, the quality of their written work seems to be indistinct. For instance, it could be seen that in some Sudanese EFL writers' essays one might notice more than one topic sentence in one paragraph. It is also observed that sometimes there are two or even three topic sentences in the same paragraph, because of which difficulties would merge, interdict the probable theme of the written text to be understood.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to investigate analyze and examine some writing difficulties that Sudanese EFL undergraduate students encounter, due to differences in writing techniques especially the logical organization of their essays. The findings of this study may help for better essay writing techniques in the English language.

The study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the difficulties that the Sudanese undergraduate students challenge in their academic essays?
2. What are the attributes of these errors in Sudanese undergraduate students' academic essays?
3. What are the possible remedial solutions for better academic essay production?

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Need for writing

Since academic writing has become highly significant to all undergraduate students' indifference fields of study, instructors have to increase the learners' awareness of proficiently in academic writing. Writing academic purposes can be an essay, textbook, and review, action research project, dissertation, research paper, syllabi, and paper-works, mini-thesis, a thesis which have a similar method. Nevertheless, most academic writing assignments are academic essays and research papers (Arnaudet & Ellen Barret, 1984).

Writing is a necessity for any intuition of learning mainly the university; due to the rising interest in education for communication with rapidly increasing technology. Many researchers have different viewpoints about the concept of writing according to the field of specialty. For Nunan, writing is "an extremely complex, cognitive activity for all which the writer is required to demonstrate control of several variables simultaneously". (1989, p. 36). Unlike speaking writing is acquired at an early stage throughout the process of exposition, writing is, however, most considered as a minor skill which is only achieved as a result of a more conscious process of learning (Harmer, 2004).

Writing development in history was a result of the growing industrialization and the community needs, there was an essential need for these skills to be taught and spread among the individuals. "Thus, we no longer have to ask ourselves whether the writing is a good thing or not. We take it as a fundamental right." (Harmer, 2004, p. 3). In other words, Harmer means that we learn to write to fulfill our social needs, and being educated gives people the impression of self-esteem over those who are not so fortunate. Moreover, Reid (as cited in Damayanti, 2009) identifies three main reasons for writing which are: to explain, to entertain, and to persuade. Therefore, while focusing on the purpose of writing, then the writer can move onwards with his writing by aiming at other stages.

### Logical Organization of Essay

The logical organization is one of the most important mechanisms of any essay that is often ignored. Many elements of writing an essay must come together to form a consistent coherent work. The topic should be purposive, motivating and the essay should be free from grammatical, spelling, punctuation errors. Sentences should be arranged in a logical order following a consistent pattern. The organization is one of the most important elements of an essay that is often overlooked. An organized essay is clear, focused, logical, effective, and comprehensible Logic is a formal system of analysis that helps writers invent, demonstrate, and prove arguments. It works by testing propositions against one another to determine their accuracy.

Writing is a sophisticated process consisting it needs to undergo many logical steps to finalize the production. Singleton-Jackson (2003) refers to writing as "...a mystery to researchers concerning how the process of writing occurs and what makes it proficient" (p.11). In this sense, the emphasis is put on the complexity of this task illustrating the interference of different cognitive activities in the task. Many researchers, among them Harmer (2004) state that the process of writing has four straightforward steps: (Planning, Drafting, Editing, and Publishing).

Harmer indicates that "The process of writing is not linear, as indicated above, but rather recursive" (p. 5). That to say, the process of writing cannot be taken for granted as a linear process. In this instance, Donahue (2008) agrees with harmer's claim: "... the writing process is recursive. This means that the writer is constantly

revising the previous stages and finding new ways of refining a piece of writing to improve it (p. 9)". This indicates that the process of writing is not stepped by step forward without returning to check or revise the previous steps, but a constant pre-process interrelated to each other in accordance.

Although teaching writing is a bitter job, the result is always tangible and its effect is helpful. For instance, teaching teenagers strategies such as planning, revising, and editing their compositions gives a significant impact on the excellence of their writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). Since the writing process is recursive, the teacher shoulders the heavy burden; he is the center of the process who leads the students towards a successful writing achievement. The writing strategies are identified by several researchers as the teaching of generic processes such as brainstorming (Troia & Graham, 2004), or the strategies for achieving writing tasks such as story writing (Fitzgerald & Markham, 1987).

### **Academic writing**

Academic writing is generally quite formal, objective (impersonal), and technical. It is formal by avoiding casual or conversational language, such as contractions or informal vocabulary. It is impersonal and objective by avoiding direct reference to people or feelings, and instead emphasizing objects, facts, and ideas. It is technical by using vocabulary specific to the discipline.

Different disciplines also have different styles and structures of writing. For example, some disciplines, such as in the humanities, expect longer paragraphs, which include topic sentences to show how your argument is structured. Other disciplines, for example in the sciences, expect short paragraphs, with no topic sentences, which are denser in factual information.

The academic essay has become the main assignment as well as material that is necessary to be learned and accomplished by the college students recently. It is given to measure how well the students write their ideas into the academic writing, moreover, the students are demanded to generate new ideas on writing it as well as listing some words, phrases, clauses, and also sentences into it. Beveridge (2007) states that academic writing as a document that has a defined structure – an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Regarding the statement above, before writing the academic essay we need to consider the points mentioned above so that our writing will be well organized.

According to Beveridge (2007), there are three types of academic essays that are commonly taught at the level of the university. They are the major essays that require a lot of thoughts and also reference in making it.

- A.** Descriptive essay has a function to describe a subject, e.g. a person, place, or event.
- B.** Expository essay is aimed to explain a concept or theory.
- C.** Argumentative essay presents an argument through reasoning and the use of evidence.

Based on the three types of essays, an argumentative essay is suitable for the college because it conveys a series of arguments through reasoning and the use of evidence. The students have to search for the appropriate arguments and also evidence that support theirs. In planning and drafting the essay, there are related points that need to be considered such as an introductory paragraph, the body of the paragraph, and conclusion. The introductory paragraph mainly contains a thesis statement that consists of one sentence as guidance to develop the body of paragraphs. The body of the paragraph mostly contains some evidence as well as related examples based on the thesis, the pieces of evidence or examples have to connect to the thesis statement. The last stage is the conclusion which contains a summary by restating the thesis statement.

Writing an English essay is not the same as writing an Arabic essay. Consequently, most of the students are disposed to make some errors while writing their essays. On the other hand, the students need to comprehend the new rule of writing the essay such as vocabulary, patterns, and pronunciation which are different from their native language. The error always comes to the students' minds especially in writing the English essay. Corder (1981:51) states that error is both an ancient activity and at the same time a comparatively new one, whereas Jeremy Harmer (2001:34) also defines error is part of the learner interlingua that is the version of the language which a learner has at any one stage of development and which is

continually reshaped as he/she aims toward full mastery. It is clear that error naturally happens because of the different rules of certain languages.

### **The error of students' writing**

Errors and mistakes are part of students' writing as they progress in learning to write. Bahri & Sugeng, (2010) argued that "Errors give the writer evidence of difficulty which students have a problem in practicing writing, although they do not provide them with all the possible evidence, nor they to be taken as the only proof" (p. 3). Considering errors as a proof that students face difficulties during writing, the emergence of error analysis (EA) was first established in the 1970s by Corder "as a type of linguistic study that focuses on the errors learners make" (Sawalmeh, 2013, p. 2). According to Corder (as cited in Sawalmeh, 2013) EA is of two main objectives.

The first is to understand learners as they learn in a second language (L2), while the second is to enable effective learning by using learners' knowledge of his native language (L1).

Error analysis is defined by Corder, et al, (1967) as a procedure used by teachers and researchers, which involves five steps namely; a collection of a sample of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors and error evaluation. Moreover, Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, (1982) and Ellis, (2002) mentioned that error analysis is the study of the language acquisition process, and it can indicate the strategies used by learners to acquire language. Therefore, errors can be used to measure the language performance of learners. Corder (1981) also discussed the advantages of error analysis for learners, teachers, and researchers. For learners, it is the learning instrument of language learning. For teachers, it shows what types of errors students produce, what skills language learners have done, and what remains for them to acquire. Richards (1974) defined the sources of errors as follows :

Interlingual errors: Mother-tongue interference (L1) is the cause of this error type. Learners use L1 to learn and produce the target language.

Intralingual errors: These errors occur during the learning process of the target language. False analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overlooking co-occurrence restrictions, hypercorrection, and overgeneralization in the target language are the causes of errors.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study used a descriptive-analytic method. The data was collected through two instruments: the students' questionnaire based on the five-Likert scale and students' Academic English writing Test, which was evaluated by an analytic scoring method. That is to say, each essay had been marked according to four main parameters. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments used for data collection, a pilot study was conducted on a randomly selected sample of the research subjects. The subjects were Sudanese EFL university undergraduate students in three Sudanese universities. They were the undergraduate students of B.A. students majoring in English studying at Alribat Alwatani, Omdurman Alahliya, and Sudan universities during the academic year 2018-2019. The type of questionnaire in this study is a close-ended questionnaire, which was administered to Sudanese university students of English language and linguistics.

## **4. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

### **Logical Organization Problems**

The results of this part of the study are extremely important as they are designed to investigate the problems that Sudanese EFL graduate students face when organizing their ideas in academic English writing. In general, text organization seems to differ from one language to another, based on logical organization ways that writers follow. As Kaplan (1996, cited in Lui & Qi, 2006) stated that, writers' ideas are expressed not only by the development of text and word string but also by the improvement of thoughts through an appropriate organization of sentences and paragraphs.

**Table 1: English writing test's result based on logical organization problems**

No.	Item	Clear		Unclear	
		Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
1.	Introduction has topic sentence	5	3.9%	132	96.1%
2.	A controlling idea of the Topic	3	2.2	134	97.8
3.	Supporting evidence	7	5.1	130	94.9
4.	Each paragraph has one controlling idea	3	2.2	134	97.8
5.	Paragraphs consistency	118	86.1	19	13.9
6.	Random shift of ideas	124	90.5	13	9.5
7.	Clarity of conclusion	132	96.3	5	4.7

As shown in Table 1, the minority of the students (3.9%) were able to state clearly a topic sentence in their introductory paragraphs. In contrast, 96.1% of their essays were found to be without clear topic sentences. Sometimes a topic sentence could be expected to be stated in the middle or end of a paragraph, but it was not there. In all recorded cases, it is placed in the beginning. It aids the readers to follow both order and unity of the paragraph easily. However, what has been noticed in the students' written work is that some of them did not tend to state their topic sentences in the introduction since they were not already aware of the topic, i.e. according to instructions given; they have to choose one topic to write on it. Thus, their introductory paragraphs look well as all sentences pertain to the topic. In contrast, suppose that the reader has no idea about such instructions, then, he/she may not be able to identify the topic sentence.

As presented in Table 2, almost 65.7% of the respondents agree that the topic idea must be outlined in an introduction and detailed in body paragraphs. Considering this, it would be fair-minded to state that this difficulty appears to have made the learners write too long introductory paragraphs when starting in English writing. The following three extracts, which have been chosen from the students' English writing test, indicate the problem of a clear topic sentence in introductory paragraphs:

**Table 2: Students' opinions on the students' logical organization problems in English writing**

Total	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Total
The essay must have an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.	30.66%	44.53%	12.41%	10.22%	2.19%	100.00%
The topic idea is outlined in an introduction and detailed in body paragraphs.	41.61%	24.09%	29.93%	2.92%	1.46%	100.00%
The introduction varies based on the type of essay.	22.63%	36.50%	33.58%	5.84%	1.46%	100.00%
Each body paragraph has one topic sentence.	37.23%	24.82%	29.93%	2.19%	5.84%	100.00%
Supporting sentences are used to support the topic sentence.	41.61%	28.47%	9.49%	18.98%	1.46%	100.00%
Linking words are essential to show the topic trend.	24.82%	24.09%	27.01%	13.87%	10.22%	100.00%
Examples and explanations are more important than supporting sentences.	22.63%	38.69%	27.74%	10.95%	0.00%	100.00%
Punctuation marks are used to divide the sentences and separate their thoughts.	19.71%	21.90%	42.34%	16.06%	0.00%	100.00%
Background sentences are important as a part of an introduction.	55.47%	30.66%	10.22%	3.65%	0.00%	100.00%
Students have difficulties writing the conclusion	21.17%	53.28%	15.33%	1.46%	8.76%	100.00%

1. *Technology is the science of craft from Greek techno at Art skill. It is handwork and is the sum of technology skill. Methods and processes used in the accomplishment of objectives such as scientific investigation. (B103).*
2. *2- Technology make our life to become easy because we can communicate each other easy through internet. So mobile, laptop and so on and make our life to became simple by using them, technological make the world as small as village. It let us to build our life easy. (B102)*
3. *3- Yes, I agree because technology make anyone been basy because a lot of people make it for fun. (A27).*

In the above examples, the students were asked to write about the topic (Some people argue that technological inventions, such as mobile phones, are making people socially less interactive) (see Table 2). These introductory paragraphs lack clear topic sentence, which means that the students are unaware of having a clear topic sentence in written English essays. For instance, in the case of the first student (B103), there is no indication of what he/she is going to say, and therefore his/her paragraph turns to be a group of words conveying no meaning. All three examples began with a generalization and then rattled on. Such a way of starting a paragraph seems to be very odd, if not unacceptable, to native English speakers, because they are accustomed to being put in the picture explicitly from the very beginning and has the overgeneralization pattern.

Moving on to the problem of a controlling idea of the whole text in the students' written essays, the findings reveal that (97.8%) of the students could not be able to provide the controlling idea of the whole composition as can be seen in the above extracts (B102, B102, and A27) in which the students violated the concept of the overall controlling idea by writing some different words to make a group of ideas in one paragraph. Indeed, without a clear controlling idea of the whole text, readers will become distracted for it would be hard to differentiate which of the provided ideas is the central one. Therefore, it was realized that well above 97% of the students' essays experienced difficulty in making one controlling idea. That is, only a few of their essays were assumed to meet the requirements of a central idea in the development of an English paragraph. In this respect, al-Hassan (2004) maintains that the idea of the paragraph in Arabic seems to be problematic, as it revolves around a series of central ideas some of which might not be developed further. If this is the case, one could contend that possibly most of the students under the study might have been influenced by what al-Hassan suggests: *they have been affected by characteristic features of Arabic writing.*

In general, what has been noticed in the students' Academic English writing test is that it is very difficult to identify the main central idea in their paragraphs as they add a series of ideas on the equalized ground for each paragraph to describe a specific opinion.

One of the apparent results of the study is that most of the students have produced inconsistent paragraphs. In other words, only 13.9% of them were found to have written meaningful paragraphs in Academic English topic and accordingly, it can be argued that such inconsistent instances of paragraph organization may be attributed to their misunderstanding of the essence of a paragraph in English writing. Most of them did not care about the logical sequence of the paragraphs: they only put emphasis on the quantity of the paragraphs. However, contrary to the researcher's prediction, the findings indicate that the students faced many problems in terms of providing evidence in paragraph development. In this regard, 5.1% of them were able to develop the topic sentence of the paragraph by employing various writing strategies of paragraph expansion such as paraphrasing the title, outline sentence, structural sentence, and so forth. Nevertheless, although most of the students did not succeed in providing supporting information when developing the paragraphs, many of them appeared to have problems with a random shift of ideas. To illustrate this claim, consider the following extracts taken randomly from the students' English writing test:

4. *Some of the advantages of technology in modern times include it has given people a sense of freedom so it easier to get what you want the opportunity to communicate and exchange views and ideas with others and opened the doors for discussions and dialogue with different spectrums. (A52).*

5. *Technology is bad for people it make thame not conneted with other and it make thame leazy and make there hea the bad but it make our life easy and make call with around the world and we can shopeing and can lerune. (A47)*
6. *Technology it is important of human life it helps them for a lot of things. Technology has positive and negative the positive like give the human a lot of fun and make them happy, helps students for their studying make people get a lot of information and they is easy to using. (A35)*

As stated, the academic technique of ideas' consistency is considered to be fundamental in the organization of any written text. Yet, the above examples show that the students exhibited problems of the random shift of ideas while writing their Academic English texts. As for the first student (A52), she/he started the paragraph with the "Some of the advantages of technology.....etc" the writer abruptly slipped into the body extraction without an outlining or introducing or structuring, also without giving any details that in what aspect it is useful meaningfully. Moving into the part 'open the doors of discussions and dialogues...etc', it seems there is a deep difficulty in manipulating the words to produce a direct sentence in English to express the concept. It would have been better if such a definition had been outlined at the beginning of the paragraph because it would make the reader to feel that the ideas are united and understandable.

Similarly, indicators of a random shift of ideas can be seen in the second student's (A47) extract. For example, apart from many unforgivable grammatical errors, the student started the paragraph by describing the technology as a bad item, but his/her random arrangement of ideas made the whole paragraph looks vague, especially when the words *it make thame, and leazy, and we can shopeing we can lerune*. That is to say, no one would imagine that these aspects to be described this way as bulk of words. Further, the student (A35) started the second paragraph with a correct outline: *Technology it is important of human life it helps them for a lot of things*. It seems that the linking work has been misused and there is no relationship between this paragraph and its predecessor, i.e. the mobile phones. Those factors have nothing to link them together in one paragraph.

Therefore, the pronoun 'it' does not make any sense as it may refer to the technology, mobile phones, or students. Broadly speaking, it can be argued that Sudanese EFL graduate students faced difficulties in presenting their ideas consistently, the reason why readers may get confused, as the ideas seem to be fragmented in their sequential order.

The final problem of the logical organization to be investigated is an 'unclear conclusion'. Just as the importance of a clear introduction, a clear conclusion also plays an essential role in one's written text's meaning. In other words, a clear conclusion will speak for itself, because it will encourage the reader to be satisfied with the overall meaning of the text. Relatively, the findings of the results indicate that 96.3% of the students encountered some difficulties when concluding their essays. Also, as table 4.3 shows, 74.5% of the students think that a lot of Sudanese EFL graduate students find it difficult to make a clear conclusion. Here are some examples of instances of unclear conclusions in the students' written test.

7. *This make the technology very bad and not useful. (A3).*
8. *How one went about washing onens from phones the ultimate gals (B117).*
9. *Technology has many advantages it simples everyday life. Take the example of a washing machine. It is hard to imagine nowadays (B93).*
10. *The second thing mobile phone help us in researchment some time we use mobile (B67).*

Based on the analysis of the above examples, the students' conclusions seem to be mysterious and incomplete, especially examples 7, 8, and 9. Similarly, in example 10, while the student was inclining to draw a conclusion, he/she jumped to talk about a new idea: *The second thing mobile phone help us in researchment some time we use mobile*.

Quite simply, one could say that Sudanese EFL graduate students seemed to have very little knowledge about how to draw an opposite conclusion when writing an Academic English text. That is, although it was observed

that a fewer number of them have produced well-written texts in terms of the body, but they failed to give effective conclusions.

### Coherence Problems

As achieving coherence in English writing is one of the most tedious problems that face most EFL/ESL learners, this part tends to investigate Sudanese EFL undergraduate students' academic English writing difficulties in terms of text's overall unity of ideas. The procedural steps will be adopted here to calculate the frequency of occurrences and percentages of coherence elements that are supposed to be examined. That is, the calculation of coherence elements is by calculating the total number of coherence errors that were made by students.

To highlight the results of this hypothesis, interpretations of the following two Tables 5.8 and 5.9 will be taken into consideration.

**Table 3: Coherence aspects examined in the students' English writing test**

No.	Coherence aspect	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Verb-noun agreement	65	32.66
2	Appropriate use of subordinates	5	2.51
3	Appropriate use of commas and Semicolons	16	8.04
4	Use of transitional expressions	12	6.03
5	Necessary repetition	6	3.01
6	Consistent parallelism	7	3.51
7	Literal translation	88	44.22
	Total	199	100.00

The above Table (3) shows that there is a lack in terms of coherence aspects, which can be identified in the target students' English writing test. Apparently, of the seven coherence aspects examined, the results indicate that the students experienced great difficulties in dealing with both necessary repetition and consistent parallelism. Despite, repeating the keywords or phrases is optional in academic English writing, but when this repetition uses for some unnecessary purposes and exceeds its usual limits, it becomes indifferent and boring. Therefore, what has been observed in the writing test is that although most of them inclined toward too much useless repetition, only less than 3.01% of them were found with the ability to repeat a word or a phrase.

Evidence of poor parallelism was also seen in most of the students' written essays. That is, nearly 3.51% of them have succeeded in formulating consistent parallel structures within and between the sentences to give a rhythmic movement between ideas. In general, parallelism can be perceived as not so essential as other grammatical factors such as subject-verb agreement in English writing, but it helps writers handle their sentences in the process of composing. However, what has been noticed in the target students' written essays is that they lack elements with which writers normally introduce parallel clauses, i.e. such as 'not only.....but also, neither...nor, either...or, not....but', etc.

To illustrate some cases of non-parallelism in the students' writing test, consider the following examples:

11. *Most technological devices rely on electricity, so if power is lost device cannot be used the technological devices tend to be expensive so poor did not afford. (B105).*
12. *The danger is not that computers will begin to think like men and technology in clouds the use of material men begin to think like computers (B100).*
13. *Technology is useful in my life it is help in my things such as in my job and it is a useful (A40).*

In the above examples, the students violated one of the basic notions of parallelism that the same word forms (e.g. verbs, adjectives, nouns) should be repeated in the same manner to give the same meaning. Nevertheless, what is evident in the three examples is that the students failed to follow the same tense pattern, and consequently, a reader may feel a sense of disunity between the clauses. For instance, in the case of the first student (B105), he/she mentioned that 'Most *technological devices rely on electricity, so if power is lost device cannot be used the technological devices tend to be expensive so poor did not afford*', but the parallel clause is in the present simple tense, so there is a kind of illogical shift of tense, which causes incoherence. Similar poor parallel constructions can be noticed in the other two examples: 12 and 13.

The third most frequent coherence problem that appeared in the students' writing analysis was tense and noun agreement. If one must say the obvious, only 32.66% of the target students were found to be able to show verb-noun agreement symmetry in some parts of their English writing test. As such, it can be argued that although the noun-verb agreement is one of the simplest phenomena of academic English, whether written or spoken, many Sudanese EFL undergraduate students failed to cope with this phenomenon. Although some researchers (e.g. Salebi, 2004 & Espada-Gustilo, 2009) contend that noun-verb agreement is a grammatical factor, I see it also as a signal of overall coherence in written discourse. Hall (1985), for instance, thinks, "If the verbs support the heart of the sentence, nouns are the blood of it". Without nouns, as he disputes, nothing would be doing the going". Regarding what Hall writes, one could think that what could be told about nouns also can be told about verbs. In a way, a bond of consistency must be made available between these two important categories so a meaningful message can be understood. However, to prove these claims, let us consider some extracts from the students' English expository writing test:

14. *There are many advantage to technology that are different to list all at points. ( B89).*
15. *Benefits of technology has many advantages it simplifies everyday life take the example of a washing machine. (B117)*
16. *The phones today is very semple of the communication. (A2)*
17. *I agree that a technological inventions is very useful for other it makes the people civilized and it makes incessantly between them. (B82)*

Considering these samples, it appears that the students' biggest difficulty of the noun-verb agreement is mainly centered on third-person situations. However, besides that, it has been found that the students encountered some difficulties in the relationship between verbs, pronouns, and adjectives. Of course, in discussing some of the previous parts of the study, we have attributed the contributing reasons for the target students' academic English writing problems to the styles governing Arabic writing. Yet, what can be seen here is that apart from some instances of adjective-noun order of Arabic found in some of the students' essays, there is no much Arabic interference. In light of this, one could conclude that the students' inability of noun-verb agreement might be due to a lack of understanding of the basic grammatical rules of the English language.

Another possible reason is that the students might consider such errors as trivial reflections of any written essay, and therefore do not assign much attention to them, but in reality, they are at the center of the text meaning – they might stray a reader from understanding the major theme of the written text.

Finally, it seems that the students are unaware of English collocational relations, especially those (seven patterns) suggested by Lewis (2000): adjective + noun, verb + noun, noun + noun, verb + adverb, adverb + adjective, adjective + preposition, and phrasal verb. Naturally, adequate knowledge of these relations would help writers overcome most problems of faulty predication and verb-noun agreement in general.

As for the appropriate usage of subordination, the findings of the study indicate that majority of the students did find it difficult to balance between the ideas of the main and subordinate clauses, which in turn led to an incoherent set of sentences muddling up readers' minds.

Generally speaking, the focus here is to examine the extent to which the target students have been able to maintain logical relationships that exist between the dependent clause and independent because using incorrect subordinating conjunctions could reduce the sentence unity. Thus, the writing test results show that 2.51% of the students used subordination to specify the relative significance of parts of sentences. In other words, they chose the subordinating conjunctions that are relevant to the relationship (paratactic & hypotactic) between the two clauses.

To testify some areas of the target students' shortcomings in using logical subordination, consider the following excerpts:

18- (Illogical) *Technological inventions make people socially less interactive Although, now all the world go with the invention step by step. (B118).*

*(Logical) Technological inventions making people socially less interactive because, now all the world go with the invention step by step. (Shows reason or cause).*

19- (Illogical) *Through WhatsApp people may plan events or even advertise them. (B6).*

*(Logical) However, people may use WhatsApp to plan events or even advertise them. (Shows contrast).*

20- (Illogical) *because more attached to our screen more than the people around us. (A24).*

*(Logical) because we are attached to the screen more than people are. (Shows reason or cause).*

Apart from subordinating conjunctions that signal contrast and cause relations, other subordinators were found to be very rare in the students' English writing test. Most of the students have used coordinating conjunctions such ('and', 'but') instead of using subordinating conjunctions. This is, as stated earlier because Sudanese undergraduate EFL learners are influenced by excessive use of coordinating conjunctions.

Another coherence problem that has been noticed in the students' English writing test is that most of them were not able to use transitional expressions to create coherence and consistency in their English writing. Therefore, the results indicate that 6.03% of the students were able to employ correct transitional words to show relationships among ideas and sentences. Again, there is congruence between hypotheses and writing tests that the students exhibited poor command of logical organization in written English communication and the transition words are considered significant in this course.

To illustrate an example of the absence of transitions in the students' English writing test, consider the following extract:

21. *Some of the advantages of technology in modern times include, it has given people a sense of freedom. So it is easier to get what you want every you want the opportunity to communicate and exchange views and ideas with others and open the doors for discussion and dialogue with different spectrums. (A52)*

22. *In my opinion technology is very important aspect of todays world no one of us can imagine our life without as same as the invention that pop up every day to make life easier and more comfortable for humans. Tech is a powerful tool we use to connect with one another and the world of the world. (A24)*

There is a lack of transitions between the sentences of the above extract. For example, after the first sentence in the first paragraph, the writer could have used a clarification transition (e.g. *that is, in other words, that is to say*, etc.) to explain in what way the technology is useful. Having done that, the writer could have also employed an emphasis transition (e.g. *in fact, indeed*, etc.) to link the second sentence's (in the second paragraph) idea to the previous one. Besides, before the sentence '*Tech is a powerful tool*', a result transition can be used to tell that due to its power which took place in the first part of the sentence, the writer could rely on the result by using *due to* or *thus* for instance.

Moreover, the end of the first paragraph can be developed as a separate paragraph, and therefore to be preceded by a contrast transition. For the most part, in the remaining two paragraphs, there is only one transition (*so*) between the sentences. In reality, this number seems to be small compared to the total number of words used in these two paragraphs. Based on these results, it can be said that Sudanese EFL undergraduate students face severe problems when using transitional expressions in English writing.

The appropriate use of commas and semicolons was also found to be one of the serious problems that Sudanese EFL undergraduate students encountered in their academic English writing. Percentage of 8.4% of them used commas and semicolons properly and correctly in some parts of their essays. Again, this percentage indicates that the majority of the target students lack a better understanding of punctuation aspects in English writing, namely commas and semicolons, which would enhance their overall academic English writing coherence, and therefore enable the readers to pursue the flow of ideas.

Broadly speaking, punctuation can be considered as an element of textual cohesion that plays an important role in determining the meaning of a text. Minelli (2005), for example, suggests that punctuation acts at the syntactical, semantic, and pragmatic levels, all of which are believed to attain both the cohesion and coherence (to some extent) of the text.

For more details in this regard, consider the following examples taken from the students' writing test:

21. *On the other side technology has made us lose some of our touch with realty and people we became much attached to our screen more than the people around us. (A24).*
22. *The second thing mobile phone help us in researchment some time we use mobile. (B76).*
23. *In conclusion technology has facilitated and developed horizons of scientific research especially with emergence. (A50).*
24. *The simplest form of technology is the development and use Finely technology be life essay. (B103).*

In previous examples, the students did not use commas. Most importantly, after each of the underlined words, a comma should have been used to show parts of the sentences. Surprisingly, some commas were used redundantly by these students, especially in sample 24. In general, what has been noticed in the students' written test is that semicolons were almost rare in addition to the fact that most of them confused between the usage of commas and semicolons as shown in example 23.

Finally, literal translation was also observed to be one of the students' areas of difficulty in terms of coherence attainment in English writing. Thus, the written test results reveal that nearly 44% of the students inclined toward literal translation when writing in English. It has been noticed that most of them although seemed to have unreasonable academic English writing techniques, but their ideas sound Arabic-oriented thinking. That is, most of the first form their ideas in Arabic and then translate them rather than semantically into English, which may fail to give a clear picture of the intended meaning. The following examples below show to what extent the target students have practiced literal translation techniques in their English writing.

27. *mobile is vary imbortin in our now suound to messg in call to all people can sead how are you and how do you do bit at technological is very vary good our life. (B96)*
28. *Technology has many dvantages – it's simpliest everyday life. Take the example of a washing machine it is hard nowadays how noe went about washing. (B93).*
29. *I like technological it's good it's helping in life like the study and cooking and every think and he has a nigativ think like he do the hidk and he bad to the ains. but we reed it in the life.*

*he ddo the esye life.*

*he help the people. (A7).*

Looking at the above examples, no one could believe his/her eyes that EFL learners at undergraduate levels majoring in the English language would write such rambling pieces of English writing. Therefore, this provides that because of an insufficient command of the English language, they are unable to demonstrate their thoughts in English. To compensate for this gap, they tend to think first in Arabic and then translate what has been thought into academic English writing, which will negatively affect the overall coherence of the written text.

After all, the bulk of the target students seemed to have exhibited serious difficulties in achieving coherence when writing in English. Accordingly, more than 90% of the respondents' failed to achieve coherence in

academic English writing to the fact that most of them have not been taught functions of coherence in academic English written.

## 5. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATION

Considering some pedagogical implications that resulted from the findings of the study, the researcher tends to propose the following recommendations hoping that EFL teachers, EFL undergraduate students, and EFL syllabi designers find them useful when dealing with academic writing issues:

Based on the findings of the study, one can recommend that academic English writing courses should be taught in all academic disciplines of the Sudanese higher education institutions. In other words, irrespective of the students' areas of specialization, the essence of academic English writing should be at the heart of the universities' curricula. That is, Sudanese universities can activate academic English writing importance, for instance, by establishing academic English writing development centers, which could provide academic support in English writing courses in terms of assistance to the university students, teachers, and the public sector, in particular, the business community in terms of latest educational techniques. Simultaneously, these centers can integrate academic English writing with other skills, namely business writing and communication skills. Also, the centers can benefit from the experiences of some academic writing experts and scholars in different disciplines such as journalism, law, science, and publishing centers, because as stated earlier, academic English writing should be a perceived quality in a sense by targeting different fields and styles.

As the results of the study reveal that the majority of the Sudanese EFL undergraduate students faced difficulties in achieving derivatives of the logical organization such as grammar, cohesion, and coherence in academic English writing, it is recommended that before the commencement of the scheduled programs; remedial classes on these aspects' to be covered and well understood by undergraduate students. This is because most of the target students seemed to be unaware of how to attain the logical organization aspects appropriately while writing an academic English test.

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