SUBORDINATION AND COORDINATION PITFALLS IN L2 FRENCH WRITING

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Abstract

This study investigates syntactic challenges faced by second-language learners of French. It specifically focuses on the production of coordinated and subordinated clauses. While these structures are essential for achieving advanced linguistic proficiency and narrative cohesion, they represent significant zones of "grammatical friction" due to their complex rules of symmetry, mood selection, and pronoun usage. Through a corpus-based error analysis of written compositions of 30 university-degree students of French between the sessions 2022 and 2025 in Akwa Ibom State University, this study identifies and categorizes recurring errors, such as faulty parallelism in co-ordination, the omission of repeated prepositions, and incorrect mood sequencing in dependent clauses. Findings suggest that many of these errors stem from inter-language interference (L1 transfer) and cognitive overload, where the learner prioritizes lexical choice over structural integrity. The result indicates that errors in subordination persist longer in the learner's development than coordination errors, suggesting a higher level of syntactic maturity required for the former. The study concludes by proposing pedagogical shifts, emphasizing the need for "logic-based" grammar instruction to move beyond simple sentence construction toward mastery of complex French syntax.

Key Words: Coordination, Interlanguage, Sentence, Subordination, Syntax.

Introduction

In Nigeria, learners often go through a trilingual interface: their indigenous mother tongue, Nigerian English, and French. This is because Nigeria is a multilingual and multicultural country with numerous "indigenous cultures and languages. It is divided into geo-political zones, states, and ethnic groups" (Inegbe, 2020, and 2015). These ethnic groups have different languages spoken by members of each linguistic group alongside with Nigerian official languages, English and French. However, even though French is not one of the national languages of instruction, it plays a growing role in the country's educational, international relations, tourism, film industry, and general economic landscapes.

The learner of French as a foreign language in Nigeria is faced with significant challenges and hindrances as a result of exposure to these numerous language cultures. These challenges often become sources of "negative transfer" (Inegbe, 2014) from one language to another especially among foreign language learners. Many Nigerian indigenous languages use serial verb constructions, where verbs are strung together without conjunctions. As a result of this, learners may omit the subordinating *que* or *pour* because their primary language allows verbs to follow one another directly. For example, in some structures, a student might say "Je veux j'aille" instead of "Je veux que j'aille" or "Je veux partir". In many Nigerian local dialects, coordination is often additive. There is the tendency to use "et" (and) to connect ideas that, in French, require more nuanced logical connectors (subordinators). Inter-language influence of translating, "I saw him and I ran" as "Je l'ai vu et j'ai couru" loses the logical subordination found in "Quand je l'ai vu, j'ai couru" or "Je l'ai vu, donc j'ai couru". There is also syntactic interference of omitting the word, "that", perhaps due to Nigerian English influence where learners are used to the expression, "I know he is coming", and then translates this literally to French as, "Je sais il vient", instead of the correct usage, "Je sais qu'il vient". The same translation is observed in, "The car I bought…" which is incorrectly expressed as "La voiture j'ai achetée …" instead of the correct expression of "La voiture que j'ai achetée".

In some Nigerian informal English varieties, it is common to end sentences with prepositions or use a "resumptive pronoun" (repeating the subject). For example, prepositional stranding— "The man I'm talking with." which is erroneously transferred to French as "L'homme que je parle avec." instead of correct expression "Avec qui je parle." Also, double subject (redundancy) often used by the learners for emphasis in Nigerian English, and in their mother tongue, is also transferred to the target language, especially in expression such as, "My father, he is coming." which erroneously translates to "Mon père il vient." However, while acceptable in casual spoken French, it is often treated as an error in Nigerian academic settings where "Mon père vient" is expected.

There is also the confusion of using "jusqu'à ce que" (until) (subordinator) when "avant que" (before) is required. In certain Nigerian linguistic contexts, the word, "until", is used in a way that implies a starting point rather than a deadline. For example, "I will not eat until you come." A French learner might use the indicative mood after "jusqu'à ce que" because he is not treating the arrival as a "triggering" event, whereas French strictly requires the subjunctive mood for these temporal subordinates.

In the study of second language acquisition, vocabulary is often seen as the bricks of a language, but syntax is the cement that holds them together. While many L2 French learners can master individual

words, they often struggle with the 'architectural integrity' of the sentence. This study examines exactly what happens when that cement fails. By analyzing how learners go through the complex balance of coordinated phrases and the hierarchical placing of subordinate clauses, one gains a unique insight into the cognitive pressures of the intermediate mind and the inter-language that exists between a learner's mother tongue and authentic French fluency.

This present study explores the systemic errors found in L2 French writing, specifically focusing on the breakdown of co-ordination and subordination. This study interrogates why learners fail to repeat prepositions, why they default to the indicative mood in dependent clauses, and how these errors are actually evidence of a developing mental grammar.

Theorising Interlanguage

The theory of inter-language explains how and why systems develop. It was introduced by Larry Selinker in 1972. He built his inter-language theory upon Pit Corder's 1967 previous work, *The Significance of Learner's Error* (Thomas, 2002, p. 179). Corder (1967) recognizes the shift from viewing language errors as "bad" to viewing them as evidence of learning. Selinker's 1972 concept maintains that learners' speak a "third language" between L1 and French. To this end, he describes Inter-language as "the separateness of a second language learner's system, a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and the target languages" (1972, p. 214). This, therefore, means that a foreign language learner develops an intermediate linguistic system which is neither his/her L1 nor L2, but rather a mixture influenced by both. It is also a pointer to the argument of VanPattern and Benati (2010) that at every stage of language learning, learners do not merely copy what native speakers do, they rather create an entirely new language system unique to themselves, especially what Selinker refers to as inter-language (p. 100). The theory posits that learners create a "mental grammar" by testing hypotheses about how the new language works. There is a strong belief on latent psychological structures in which a specific part of the brain is activated during L2 learning that is different from the one used for L1 acquisition. The theory identifies core processes that shape the inter-language which include, language transfer (influence from the native language), transfer of training (influence from how the language is taught), strategies of L2 learning (how the learner approaches the material), strategies of L2 communication (how the learner tries to get a point across with limited tools), and overgeneralization (applying a rule too broadly).

For instance, conjugation overgeneralization is the most common form in French. The learner applies the endings of the first group *–er* to irregular verbs in the third group. The error such as "Je bouvu" or "Je buvé" indicates that the learner knows that past participles often end in *–é* (like mangé) or *–u* (vendu). They try to force the irregular verb *boire* (to drink) into one of these regular shapes instead of the correct form, "J'ai bu". Also, almost all "vous" forms in the present tense end in *–ez* (vous parlez,, vous allez, vous finissez), thus, the learner overgeneralizes this suffix to irregular verb *dire* as "vous disez" instead of the correct form "vous dites". Learners often apply a spelling rule they just learned to words where it does not belong to preserve a specific sound, for example, "nous mangons". The learner has learned that to conjugate *–er* verbs for "nous", the –er is dropped and then –ons added as in "parl-ons". They apply this strictly to the verb *manger* instead of the correct form "nous mangeons" in which the "e" must stay to keep the "g" soft. However, in the context of inter-language theory, these errors are actually a sign of intelligence and progress. Thus, inter-language focuses on the cognitive processes behind the learner's

actual speech or writing. It explains the stages of the learner's language development. A major part of the theory is the concept of fossilization (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). This is when a learner's inter-language stops evolving toward the target language, and certain "errors" become permanent habits, even if the learner continues to study or live in the country where the language is spoken. However, Herschensohn (2000) maintains that second language (L2) acquisition, including French, is not entirely separate from first language (L1) acquisition but a "re-acquisition" guided by universal grammar. She suggests that focusing on mastering morphological features of lexical and functional categories L2 learners can build features progressively, challenging older models and supporting minimalist syntax. In other words, second language learning is viewed as a relearning process, not a completely new development.

The Sentence in French

The acquisition of language skills involves an innate linguistic ability. In the process of the mastery of language skills, whether receptive skills (listening and reading) or productive skills (speaking and writing), second language learners commit different types of errors due to cross-linguistic differences rooted in morpho-lexical variations, and linking them to functional categories (like tense, agreement), (Herschensohn, 2000; Inegbe, 2022), most of which are observed in writing, apart from speech. Hodges & Whitten (1977) also identify some of the errors in writing to include concord, dangling modifiers, faulty parallelism, apostrophies, misuse of comma and comma splices and the use of incomplete sentences, for example, *Parce qu'il pleut.* written as a full sentence. A sentence that lacks a subject or a main conjugated verb makes it structurally incomplete (sentence fragments). However, these identified errors could be classified into structural types and functional types.

Structural errors relate to the physical placement, ordering, and completeness of its components. Inegbe (2019) refers to these as "syntax errors". Syntactic challenges in French often arise because the learner's "internal grammar" is constantly negotiating the rules of their L1 and the complex, often opaque structures of French. One of the most persistent hurdles in French inter-language is the placement of object pronouns (clitics) (Ayoun, 2013). In English Language, pronouns often follow a predictable pattern, but French introduces a rigorous, non-intuitive sequence. Learners often struggle with the "pre-verbal" rule. For instance, in English, one says "I see him" but in French, it is "Je le vois". This is a classic case of language transfer. A learner may produce "Je vois le" because their inter-language is borrowing the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) template from English (Hemmings, 2015). When multiple pronouns are involved, example, "Je le lui ai donné", the learner must manage a specific hierarchy of person and case, which often leads to "systemic load" in the inter-language.

Functional errors occur when the words are in the right place, but they fail to perform their grammatical function or role correctly. These include errors in morphology (word form) and agreement. Agreement error is the failure of a word to match the "features" of the word it relates to. For example, using a preposition that does not function correctly with a specific verb can trigger prepositional errors (Hemmings, 2015) as illustrated in *jouer le piano* instead of "jouer du piano". Syntax in French is deeply intertwined with morphology. The use of relative pronouns—*qui, que, dont, lequel* requires the learner to understand the grammatical function of noun within the subordinate clause. Using *dont* to replace a phrase starting with *de* is notoriously difficult. This is often a fossilization point, because *que* is a functional "catch-all" in many learners' mind, who may never

move past using it for every relative clause, as it successfully conveys meaning even if it is syntactically broken. For example, an adjective not matching the noun it describes as in *une petit maison* instead of "une petite maison" or a verb ending that does not match the subject, as in *ils mange* instead of "ils mangent". Another illustration could be seen in choosing the wrong auxiliary verb, example, using *avoir* instead of *être* for a of motion like *partir*. This is also known as helping verb in compound tenses.

The structural types are classified according to the clause(s) contained in the sentence while the functional types are semantically determined as imperative, declarative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentences. Simple, compound, and complex sentences are syntactic descriptions based on the number of clause(s) in a sentence. Some French sentences bear just a single clause while some contain more than one clause one of which may be a subordinate clause. It must be noted that in French, subordinate clauses cannot stand independently to express a complete sense except in discourse context.

The sentence, as averred by Kolln & Funk (2009), is a "series of slots"(p. 34), the slots being syntactic constituents like subject and predicate on the one hand, and lexical units like nouns, verbs, adjectives and so on, on the other. The predicate consists of phrasal units like the verb phrase (VP) and within the verb phrase are the verb and everything that comes after it like adjective phrase, prepositional phrase, adjunct including an embedded sentence S' (S-bar) involving syntactic coordination and subordination. Subordination and coordination suggest that two sets of constituents have been brought together. Linking these constituents entails the use of conjuncts which are appropriate to the syntactic environment they are to appear, if not, then an appropriate punctuation mark is used.

In accordance with writing conventions of language and French grammatical conventions, sentences are orthographically defined by an initial capital letter and a terminal punctuation mark, including the full stop (.), question mark (?) or exclamation point (!). Based on this, a punctuation mark may indicate where a sentence boundary is. However, within the beginning and the ending of a sentence, a whole lot of things happen as observed by Stott and Chapman (2001). Punctuation does not just appear on sentences but their appearance must communicate some sense. Consequently, we cannot understand punctuation use without a sound knowledge of grammar and grammatical structures (Stott & Chapman, 2001). This suggests that a well-written piece contains correct spellings, good grammar and appropriate use of punctuation. This also includes the correct use of French negation.

French negation is syntactically unique because it is "split" around the conjugated verb. Misplacing the two parts of the French negative (ne…pas), for instance, *Je ne pas mange…* instead of "Je ne mange pas". The challenge for the learners is remembering to place *ne* before the verb and *pas* after it, especially in complex tenses— for example.,"Je n'ai pas mangé." and "Je ne mange pas". Learners often drop the *ne* (which mirrors informal native speech) but struggle with the placement of *pas* relative to auxiliary verbs. A learner might apply the rule for simple tenses to compound tenses, resulting in "Je ne ai mangé pas".

The null-subject parameter is not left out. This challenge depends heavily on the learner's L1. French is a Non-Pro-Drop language; it requires an explicit subject pronoun. Learners from "pro-drop" backgrounds often omit the subject pronoun, as in—saying "Vais au cinéma" instead of "Je vais…". The learner's inter-language assumes that the "parameter" for subjects is "off", as it is in their native

tongue. Conversely, English speakers may over-use pronouns where French prefers impersonal constructions like “il faut”

In considering interrogative syntax and variation, French has three ways to ask a question: Inversion (example., Vas-tu?), *Est-ce que* (example., Est-ce que tu vas?), and Intonation (example., Tu vas?). Mastering Inversion requires a syntactic movement that is cognitively demanding during real-time speech. Learners tend to rely exclusively on Intonation or *Est-ce que* because these structures do not require reordering the sentence. The inter-language seeks communicative efficiency over syntactic complexity. The inter language is not in any case a collection of mistakes, but a dynamic system. As the learner receives more “comprehensible input”, their inter-language syntax slowly reorganizes itself to closer resemble the target language.

Research Methodology

While this study provides a clear taxonomy of errors, it is limited by its sample size and medium. The data focused exclusively on written compositions, which allow for a degree of monitoring and self –correction that is absent in spontaneous speech. Furthermore, the avoidance strategy—where a student chooses a simpler sentence structure to avoid a complex one they do not master—may result in under –reporting the true extent of the syntactic challenge.

This paper will employ a mixed-methods approach, specifically a corpus-based error analysis. This approach will help to identify the frequency of specific syntactic errors while also performing a contrastive analysis between the learners’ native language (L1) and French (L2). To get clear picture of developmental pitfalls, the data for this study was gathered through observation of the written compositions of 30 university-degree L2 French students between the sessions 2022 and 2025 in Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria. Instances of errors in subordinating clauses and errors in coordinated phrases in French language are drawn from students’ scripts for close study. The representative examples are:

1. Je pense qu’il soit tard.
2. Il faut que tu viens.
3. L’ami que je te parle.
4. Le jour que je suis né.
5. Si j’avais su, je viendrais.
6. Malgré qu’il est malade…
7. Avant qu’il parte.
8. J’aime lire et la musique.
9. Il parle de son voyage et sa famille.
10. Il est entré et s’assoit.
11. Je ne veux pas de pain ni de vin.
12. Toi ou moi êtes responsables.
13. Il est riche, car il est triste.
14. C’est un homme que je connais et qui j’aime.
15. Il travaille rapidement et bon.
16. Je crois qu’il pleuvra et le vent soufflera.

Data Analysis and Discussions

Errors Involving Subordinating Clauses

Subordination suggests that there is a main clause upon which the subordinate clause depends as in the following representative excerpts. The first representative sentence **"**Je pense qu'il soit tard" while it is perfectly understandable, contains a subtle error in mood selection that reveals exactly how an inter-language operates. This is because, the learner is using a complex sentence—(a main clause + a subordinate clause starting with *que*), and he/she 'over-applies' the subjunctive rule to a verb that does not actually trigger it in the affirmative. In standard French, the sentence, should be: "Je pense qu'il est tard." This is because "Penser que" in the affirmative takes the indicative, not subjunctive. While this is true for many structures, such as, *Je veux que… or Il faut que …*, French syntax treats the verb *penser* (to think) and *croire* (to believe) uniquely. In affirmative, when stating a belief or something you are sure of, use the indicative (est). However, it is only in the negative or interrogative that one can switch to the subjunctive—*Je ne pense pas qu'il soit tard.*

The sentence (2) **"**Il faut que tu viens." contains error in the use of the indicative mood (viens) instead of the subjunctive (viennes). In standard French, the sentence should be: "Il faut que tu viennes." This is because "Il faut que" always triggers the subjunctive. The subjunctive is a complex system in French with specific triggers. A learner often simplifies the system by using the more familiar indicative mood for all contexts. The learner overgeneralized here since he or she knows that 'you come' is *tu viens*. He or she over-extended this general rule to the construction *il faut que*, ignoring the specific grammatical requirement for the subjunctive. However, the learner's native language (L1) lacks a distinct mood marker, thus, leading him/her to default to the standard present tense (the most frequent subjunctive form). French requires a distinct morphological change since in English (the most likely L1), the subjunctive has almost disappeared or is identical to the indicative "It is necessary that you come".

The sentence (3) "L'ami que je te parle." contains error in substitution of a relative pronoun *que* instead of "dont" (relative pronoun for indirect objects with "de"). In standard French, the sentence should be "L'ami dont je te parle." Thus, "dont" should be used because French uses *dont* specifically to replace the preposition *de*. In the learner's inter-language, *que* is often treated as an all-purpose relative pronoun for "that" or "whom". This is also because English uses a universal relative pronoun ",that" or none at all. The verb is *parler de quelqu'un*. For a learner, tracking which verbs require *de* versus *à* versus number preposition is cognitively demanding. The learner must remember the specific verb construction *parler de*, then select the specific pronoun. *Dont* is notoriously difficult for L2 French learners. By using *que*, the learner creates a functional sentence that conveys the meaning, even if the "surface structure" is grammatically incorrect in the target language.

The sentence (4) "Le jour que je suis né" contains error in temporal relative pronoun. The learner's inter-language assumes that since "que" (that) works for objects, it should work for time. In standard French, the sentence should be "Le jour où je suis né." This is because French uses the locative "où" (where) for temporal references or locations in time. The learner is extending the use of the "complementizer" *que* to indicate a relationship between a noun *le jour* and a subordinate clause, failing to distinguish between a direct object relationship and a temporal one. This is a very common error for English speakers because English allows "The day that I was born." The learner maps the English, "that", directly on to the French "que". There is a fossilization potential in sentence (4)

because this sentence is perfectly intelligible to a native speaker, hence, the learner might not be corrected often. This therefore, can lead to the error becoming a fossilized part of the learner's inter-language.

The sentence (5) "Si j'avais su, je viendrais." contains error in sequence—tense mismatch in a hypothetical *si* clause. Hypothetical "if" structures have three strict levels in French. Using the Present Conditional (viendrais) instead of the Past Conditional (serais venu) is a way for the inter-language to reduce complexity. The learner anages the "past" in the first half but "tires out" or defaults to a simpler conditional form in second half. In standard French, the correct sentence is "Si j'avais su, je serais venu." This is because third conditional: Si + Pluperfect requires Past Conditional.

The sentence (6) "Malgré qu'il est malade…" contains conjunction misuse and mood error. The standard French usage is "Malgré **s**a maladie…" or **"**Bien qu'il soit malade…" "Malgré que" is generally considered incorrect; French uses *Bien que* + Subjunctive. The learner unconsciously blends two different structures: *Malgré* + Noun; and *Bien que* + Subjunctive. The inter-language creates a "hybrid" (*Malgré que*) and then fails to trigger the subjunctive because the focus was on the 'logic' of the concession (the word *malgré*), not the formal grammar.

In sentence (7) "Avant qu'il parte", the expletive "ne" is incorrectly omitted. The correct sentence should be "Avant qu'il ne parte." While often dropped in speech, the "ne explétif" is required in formal writing after *avant que*. This "pseudo-negative" structure represents one of the highest levels of syntactic refinement in French. It appears in a sentence but has no negative value. It is essentially a marker of high-register, formal French. This is because the expletive "ne" is often pronounced quickly or elided in spoken French, a learner might hear a slight glide. This 'meaningless' *ne* is a kind of syntactic 'ghost'. There are other specific 'trigger' verbs that require this strange "ne" in French. For example: expressions of fear with *les verbes de crainte*; expressions for prevention and obstacle with *les verbes empêcher/ éviter que;* and expressing comparisons of inequality. When one is afraid of something happening, French adds a "ne" to the thing one fears. The structure is: Craindre/ Avoir peur que… + ne + Subjunctive. Example: Je crains qu'il ne pleuve. (I fear it will rain.) But when one says: "qu'il ne pleuve pas" to make it negative, the "pas" actually flips the meaning to "I fear it won't rain". In expression for prevention and obstacle, the structure is: Empêcher/ Éviter que … + ne + Subjunctive. Example: Évitez qu'il ne fasse une erreur. (Avoid him making a mistake.) In modern spoken French, this is the first place where the "ne" disappears. In expressions for comparisons of inequality, when one says something is "more" or "less" than something else, the second part gets a "ne". The structure is: Plus/ Moins/ Autre que … + ne + indicative. For example: Il est plus intelligent que je ne le pensais. (He is smarter than I thought.)

Errors Involving Coordinated Phrases

Each of these sentences contains a common grammatical error in French, ranging from faulty parallelism to incorrect conjunction usage. Below is an analysis of why they are incorrect and how to fix them.

The issue in sentence (8) *J'aime lire et la musique.* is lack of parallelism. The learner is connecting an infinitive verb (lire) with a noun phrase (la musique). In French, coordinated elements should share the same nature. The correct form of the sentence should be "J'aime lire et écouter de la musique." (two verbs) Or "J'aime la lecture et la musique."(two nouns). Coordination (using et, ou, mais, ni) requires parallelism. If you start a structure one way, you must finish it the same way.

There is ellipsis of preposition in sentence (9) *Il parle de son voyage et sa famille.* Prepositition is "un mot-outil invariable, qui sert à introduire un complément et à exprimer une dependence syntaxique"(Dubois et al, 384). Prepositions, according to Larrivée (2004), "sont des marquers relationnels qui permettent d'indiquer des relations spatiales, temporelles ou logiques entre des éléments"(92). Grevisse and Goosse (2008) also define preposition as "sert à marquer le rapport entre deux mots, généralement entre un verbe et son complément, ou entre deux noms"(147). In French, prepositions like *à, de* and *en* must be repeated before every item in a list to maintain clarity and grammatical correctness. The correct form of the sentence should be "ll parle de son voyage et de sa famille."

In representative excerpt (10) there is an issue of tense inconsistency: *Il est entré et s'assoit.* The sentence starts in the *passé composé* (completed action) and jumps to the *présent* (habitual or current action) without a logical transition. In standard French, the correct sentence should be "Il est entré et s'est assis." (both past) or "Il entre et s'assoit"(both present).

There is an issue of incorrect negation in sentence (11) *Je ne veux pas de pain ni de vin.* Using *pas* and *ni* together is redundant. When using the coordinating conjunction *ni …ni*, the "pas" is dropped. The correct form of the sentence should be "Je ne veux ni pain ni vin."

Subject-Verb Agreement is the issue in sentence (12) *Toi ou moi êtes responsables.*when subjects are joined by *ou* (or) or *ni*, and they are of different persons (2nd person "toi" and 1st person "moi"), the verb defaults to the 1st person plural (nous). Therefore, the correct sentence should be "Toi ou moi sommes responsables." (When subjects differ in person, the verb defaults to the "heavier" person—1st takes priority over 2nd).

There is a logical/ semantic error in terms of incorrect conjunction choice in sentence (13) *Il est riche, car il est triste.* The conjunction *car* (because) implies a cause-and-effect relationship. Being sad does not cause one to be rich. A contrastive conjunction like *mais* (but) or *pourtant* (however) should be used instead of *car*. The correct sentence should be "Il est riche, mais il est triste."

There is an issue of relative clause coordination—relative pronoun error in representative excerpt (14) *C'est un homme que je connais et qui j'aime. Qui* is a subject pronoun. In the second clause, "I" (Je) is the subject and "un homme" (a man) is the direct object. Therefore, "que" must be used. The correct sentence should be "C'est un homme que je connais et que j'aime." (The function of the pronoun must remain consistent).

There is adverbial placement error in sentence (15) *Il travaille rapidement et bon. Rapidement* is an adverb (modifying the verb *travaille)* and *bon* is an adjective. An adverb with an adjective cannot be co-ordinated to describe an action. *Bien* is the adverbial form of *bon*. The correct sentence, therefore, should be "Il travaille rapidement et bien."

There is an issue of missing conjunction "Que" in excerpt (16) *Je crois qu'il pleuvra et le vent soufflera.* In French, the subordinating conjunction *que* must be repeated for every coordinated subordinate clause. It cannot be omitted like the English "that". The correct sentence should be "Je crois qu'il pleuvra et que le vent soufflera."

Conclusion

This essay has demonstrated that errors in co-ordination and subordination within L2 French writing are not random linguistic failures, but systematic indicators of inter-language development. Co-ordination errors are primarily characterized by a lack of structural parallelism. The failure to repeat prepositions (à, de) and conjunctions (que) suggests a strong L1 filter, where learners default to the more economical syntactic patterns of their native language. Subordination errors represent a higher cognitive hurdle. The persistent misuse of the subjunctive mood and the substitution of relative pronouns (for example, using "que" for "dont") indicate that learners often hit a 'syntactic roof'. Even when vocabulary is advanced, the hierarchical placing of ideas remains fragile.

In conclusion, the errors analyzed are more than just grammatical mistakes; they showcase a mind that is actively negotiating two different worldviews: the 'economical' logic of the L1 and the explicit hierarchy of the French language. Inter-language, therefore, is not just a collection of mistakes; it is a dynamic system. As the learner receives more input, these rules will shift closer to the *l'Académie Francçaise* French standard. This study recommends and suggests that French grammar should be taught as a system of architectural balance rather than as a list of rules. Understanding these pitfalls will better equip learners to build sentences that are not just grammatically correct, but rhetorically powerful. The goal is no longer just to speak French, but to think in the complex, interconnected structures that define the language.

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