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SENTENCE STRUCTURE L10.1 – COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

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WHAT ARE COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS?

Coordinating conjunctions combine equal elements with each other: main clauses with main clauses, subordinate clauses with subordinate clauses, words with words, phrases with phrases, and sentence elements with sentence elements.

The coordinating conjunctions are: "denn", "und", "oder", "aber", "doch", and "sondern".

- „Tanja **und** Boris sehen fern.“
- „Fahren wir zu Oma **oder** bleiben wir zu Hause?“

CONNECTING MAIN CLAUSES

When used to combine two main clauses, the conjunction is always in position 0. Therefore, they do not belong to either sentence.

The structures of the clauses remain the same.

	Conjunction	Subject	Verb	
„Das Auto ist schon sehr alt,	aber	es	ist	in einem guten Zustand.“
1. Hauptsatz				2. Hauptsatz
„Wir nehmen den Bus,	denn	es	gibt	keinen Zug.“

If the verbs and/or subjects in both main clauses are the same, you can simply omit them.

Exception: "denn"

- „Ich mache eine Suppe **oder** (ich) (mache) ein Schnitzel.“
- „Ich lerne viel, **denn** morgen **habe ich** eine Prüfung.“
- „Max möchte keinen Kuchen, **sondern** (Max) (möchte) ein Eis.“

CONNECTING SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

"Und" and "oder" can also combine subordinate clauses. All rules of subordinating conjunctions apply for the connected clause as well.

- „Ich bin böse, weil du zu spät gekommen **bist und** (du) dich nicht entschuldigt **hast.**“
- „Er ist glücklich, weil er im Lotto gewonnen **hat und** (er) seine Prüfung bestanden **hat.**“

This also applies here: If the verbs and/or subjects in both main clauses are similar, then you can simply omit them.

CONNECTING WORDS, PHRASES, ELEMENTS

Subordinating conjunctions can connect whole sentences as well as individual words, groups of words, or phrases.

Exception: "denn" can only connect two main clauses, nothing else.

- „Hans und Udo gehen am Wochenende zum Fußball.“
- „Ich bin kein Fan vom FC Bayern, **sondern** von Borussia Dortmund.“
- „Trinkst du Kaffee lieber mit oder ohne Milch?“
- „Mit Zucker, **aber** ohne Milch.“

OVERVIEWS OF MEANINGS

Function		Conjunction	
Limiting / Opposites	Ich mag Tee nicht	, aber	Kaffee sehr.
	Du magst Kaffee	, doch	keinen Tee.
Reason	Ich gehe schlafen	, denn	ich bin müde.
List	Ich kaufe Saft	und	Käse.
Alternatives	Ich kaufe Bier	oder	Wein.
Contradiction / Correction	Ich habe den Laptop nicht benutzt	, sondern	mein Bruder.

SUMMARY

- Coordinating conjunctions connect things of equal range (i.e., main clause and main clause, subordinate clause, and subordinate clause) and have no influence on the sentence structure.
- They are in position 0.
- "Denn", "aber", "doch", "und", "oder" and "sondern" are subordinating conjunctions with different meanings.
- "Denn", "aber", "doch" and "sondern" require a comma. "Und" and "oder" do not require one.

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