# AN ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND GRADE STUDENTS' ABILITY TO USE CONJUNCTIONS AT SMPN 1 BASO KABUPATEN AGAM

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## Abstract

This research was aimed at describing the ability of the second grade students of SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam to use conjunctions. The design of this research was descriptive. The data of this research were the students' scores in grammar test. To take the data, the researcher used grammar test in the form of multiple choice. The researcher focused on the students' ability to use conjunctions. The researcher tried out the test before giving the real test to the sample. The researcher analyzed the data by computing Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD). Then, the researcher counted the percentage of the students who was in high, moderate, and low ability to use conjunctions: coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. From the result of analyzing the data, it showed that the ability of the second grade students of SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam to use conjunctions was moderate. Based on the results of the research, the researcher suggests the teachers to apply various techniques in teaching the conjunction. For students, they are suggested to learn and do more exercises about conjunctions. For the next related researchers, the researcher suggests to do other researches so that we have new knowledge about student's ability at schools.

Key Words: Analysis, Conjunctions, Students' Ability

## Introduction

Grammar is very important in studying English because it is closely related to language skills, they are; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In listening, the students can learn how to understand what they hear in spoken task. The students will get difficulties if they could not understand grammar well. In speaking, the students learn how to speak well and correctly. By studying grammar, they can speak well and other people can understand what they say if their sentences are arranged in a correct order. In reading and writing the students can learn how to read English texts, and they also learn how to write essay, paragraph, and sentences correctly. In conclusion, if we want to master all of them, we must understand the grammar well.

Thornbury (1999:3-4) states that grammar is a process to make the speaker's,

or writer's know about the meaning of incomplete information clearly. There are many aspects that we learn in grammar, one of them is conjunction. According to Dykes (2007:73), conjunction comes from the Latin *con* meaning 'together' and *jungere* meaning 'to join'. So, conjunction joins two or more parts of speech of a similar kind or two or more parts of a sentence. Conjunction has three kinds; they are coordinating conjunction, subordinating conjunction, and correlative conjunction.

Based on informal interview on February 2013, the researcher asked some students of junior high school at SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam about teaching and learning process, especially conjunctions, the students said that they had learned about conjunction in the first semester and the next semester they also learned it, but they were still confused about using conjunctions. Beside that, the researcher also interviewed the second grade English teachers. They taught conjunctions when they taught about functional text. The teachers used examples in those texts, and asked the students to make an example and the teacher also used pictures to make the students understand more about conjunction.

According to Rozakis (2003:7), conjunctions have three types. They are; coordinating conjunction, subordinating and correlative conjunction. Coordinating conjunctions join words, phrases, or independent clauses of a sentence together, such as: *and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so*. Richards and Schmidt (2000:118) say that coordinating conjunction joins linguistic units which are equivalent or of the same rank. Subordinating conjunctions join an independent clause (contains both a subject and a verb and can act as a complete sentence) and a dependent clause (also contains a subject and a verb, but is not a complete sentence), such as: (time and place) *when, whenever, while, before, after, since, until, as long as, where, wherever,* (reason for condition) *if, because, unless, so that,* (contrast) *thought, although, whereas*, etc. It is supported by Disterheft (2004:359) who says that subordinating conjunction connect main (independent) with subordinate (dependent) clauses. Correlative conjunctions join similar concepts in a sentence together, such as: *both/and, not only/but also, either/or,* etc.

There are four types of sentences. They are simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences. Usually, in simple sentences we use *and* in combining words or phrases. According to Hariyono and Carthy (2008:395), simple sentence is a sentence that

consists of a main clause. In compound sentences we use coordinating conjunctions. Rozakis (2003:118) adds that a compound sentence has two or more independent clauses. In complex sentences we use subordinating conjunctions. According to Oshima and Hogue (1999:153), independent clause expresses a complete idea, in a sentence, and makes sense all by itself but dependent clause does not express a complete idea, it is a part of sentence, and does not make sense by itself. Than, in compound - complex sentences we use both of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (correlative conjunctions). Oshima and Hogue (1999:162) say that compound complex sentence is a combination of two or more independent clauses and one (or more) dependent clauses.

There are two research questions to be answered as follows: how is the second grade students' ability to use coordinating conjunctions; *and, but, or,* and *so* in compound sentences and how is the second grade students' ability to us subordinating conjunctions; *because, if, when,* and *after* in complex sentences.

**Research Method**

The design of this research was descriptive research because it describes the students' ability to use coordinating conjunction and subordinating conjunction, in compound

sentences and complex sentences of junior high school students at SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam. Gay (1987:189) states that descriptive research involves collecting the data in order to answer question concerning the current status of subject of the study. It means that the function of this research is to describe the subject of the study. Gay (1987:189) adds that the function of this design is to observe, describe the data, and then classify the data based on the conclusion and make the generalization. In this case, the researcher found the students' ability to use conjunctions.

In this research, the target population was the second grade students at SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam. The total number of them was 174 students and they were distributed into seven classes, namely $VIII._1$, $VIII._2$, $VIII._3$, $VIII._4$, $VIII._5$, $VIII._6$, and $VIII._7$. In this research, the researcher used cluster random sampling technique because the population is divided in groups into classes. All the members of selected groups have similar characteristics; syllabus and material. The instrument that was used to collect the data in this research was grammar test. The researcher took the test from grammar books which discuss about coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences and subordinating conjunctions in complex

form of multiple-choice which consisted of 30 items; they were 15 items for combining sentences by using coordinating conjunctions and 15 items for combining sentences by using; subordinating conjunctions. The researcher gave 45 minutes to do the test because it was their understanding about the sentences and they chose an appropriate conjunction (coordinating and subordinating conjunctions) for the sentences based on its kinds and its functions. Before the students started doing the test, the researcher kinds and its functions. Before the students started doing the test, the researcher gave the instruction of how to do it. For the first, the researcher gave try out to the students to determine item difficulties and item discrimination of the test.

- Item difficulties

$$P = \frac{B}{JS}$$

- Item Discrimination

$$D = \frac{B^A}{J^A} - \frac{B^B}{J^B}$$

After that, the researcher gave real test to the students. To determine the validity of the test, the researcher used the content validity and to see the reliability of the test, the researcher used split-half method. The researcher first found correlation coefficient of the two groups of the test by using Person

sentence. This test was constructed in the Product Moment Formula.

- Person Product Moment Formula

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\}\{N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

Then, in order to know the reliability coefficient of the test, the result was analyzed by using the Spearman Brown Formula.

- Spearman Brown Formula

$$rii = \frac{2r_{xy}}{(1 + r_{xy})}$$

To analyze the data, the researcher used the descriptive analysis. In this technique, there were some steps, they are: calculating mean and standard deviation, classifying the students who got high, moderate and low ability.

- Mean

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

- Standard Deviation

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\sum x}{N}\right)^2}$$

- Classifying

High ability $= > M + SD$

Moderate ability $=$ between $(M - SD) \Rightarrow (M + SD)$

Low ability $= < M - SD$

• Percentage

$$P = \frac{R}{N} \times 100 \ \%$$

**Findings and Discussions**

The researcher presented the findings of this research as follows:

• The Students' Ability to Use Conjunctions.

The lowest score gotten by students to use conjunctions was 10 and the highest score gotten by the students was 25. The researcher presented the raw score from the lowest until the highest. The researcher got 19.19 for mean and 4.29 for standard deviation.

From the result of the data analysis above, it was found that the ability of the second grade students of SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam to use conjunctions was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 5 students (18.52%) got high ability, 18 students (66.67%) got moderate ability, and 4 students calculating the percentage of students (14.81%) got low ability.

Table of The Students' Ability to Use Conjunctions.

| Ability | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| High | 5 | 18.52 % |
| Moderate | 18 | 66.67 % |
| Low | 4 | 14.81% |
| Total | 27 | 100 % |

• The Students' Ability to Use Coordinating Conjunctions in Compound Sentences.

The researcher found that the highest score gotten by students to use coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences was 13 and the lowest score gotten by students was The researcher got 9.67 for mean and 2.44 for standard deviation.

From the result of the data analysis, it was found that the students' ability to use coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 5 students (18.52%) got high ability, 18 students (66.67%) got moderate ability, and 4 students (14.81%) got low ability.

Table of The Students' Ability to Use Coordinating Conjunctions in Compound Sentences.

| Ability | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| High | 5 | 18.52 % |
| Moderate | 18 | 66.67 % |
| Low | 4 | 14.81% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

• The Students' Ability to Use Subordinating Conjunctions in Complex Sentences.

The highest score gotten by students to use subordinating conjunctions in complex sentences was 13 and the lowest score gotten by students was 6. After counting mean and

mean and 2.11 for standard deviation.

From the result of the data analysis, it was found that the ability of the second grade students of SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam to use subordinating conjunctions in complex sentences was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 6 students (22.22%) got high ability, 13 students (48.15%) got moderate ability, and 8 students (29.63%) got low ability.

Table of The Students' Ability to Use Subordinating Conjunctions in Complex Sentences.

| Ability | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| High | 6 | 22.22% |
| Moderate | 13 | 48.15% |
| Low | 8 | 29.63% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

Based on the result of the data analysis, the ability of the second grade students of SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam to use conjunctions was moderate. It was indicated that the majority of the students got moderate ability and only a few of students got high and low ability.

- The ability of second grade students of SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam to use conjunctions was moderate. This statement was supported by the fact that there were 18 students (66.67%). It means that students still did not understand well the using of

standard deviation, the researcher got 9.52 for conjunctions.

- The students' ability to use coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences was moderate. This statement was supported by the fact that there were 18 students (66.67%) had moderate ability. It means that more than fifty percent of students still had problem to use coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences.

- The students' ability to use subordinating conjunctions in complex sentences was moderate. This statement was supported by the fact that there were 13 students (48.15%) who had moderate ability. It means that most of the students who have understood to use subordinating conjunctions and the students were still confused to use subordinating conjunctions in complex sentences.

**Conclusions**

After having discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher made a conclusion of the ability of the second grade students of SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam to use conjunctions was moderate (66.67%) with 18 students. Then, the ability of the second grade students of SMPN 1 Baso Kabupaten Agam to use coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences also moderate. It was proved by there were 18 students (66.67%) and the

Kabupaten Agam to use subordinating conjunctions in complex sentences moderate, too. It was proved by he fact there were 13 students (48.15%).

The researcher would like to give several suggestions as follows:

- The teachers are expected to give more explanation and exercises to use conjunctions, focuses on coordinating in compound sentences and subordinating conjunctions in complex sentences. Besides, they are expected to apply various techniques in teaching conjunctions.
- The students are suggested to learn and do more exercises about conjunctions. Especially to use coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions in compound and complex sentence.
- For the next researcher, it is suggested to do another research so that we have new knowledge about student's ability at schools.

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