

**THE ABILITY OF STUDENTS IN USING ENGLISH CONJUNCTION  
(CASE STUDY AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
SMA NEGERI 5 BANDA ACEH)**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research is about the ability of Students in Using English Conjunction. The aim of this study is to measure the ability of second year students of Senior high school in using English conjunctions. The samples of this research were 57 second semester students of senior high school. The determination of the samples was done randomly. In collecting the data, they were given a set of test in understanding the usage of conjunction. The number of items are 40, they were divided into two parts, the first part (*completed the paragraph in using coordinating and subordinating conjunction*) and the second part (*complete the sentence in using coordinating and subordinating conjunction*). In processing data the writer used the statistical procedure such as, the range score, the interval width, the interval class, the frequency distribution, and arithmetic mean ( $\bar{X}$ ). From the data analysis the mean score of second semester students of senior high school is 60,15. It is considered the criteria of value in this research is not enough. It is recommended to the research which relates to the ability of second semester students of senior high school in using conjunctions or other the same level can be continued by other researchers so that the unbreakable problems can be solved in the future.

**Keywords:** Student's ability, coordinating and subordinating conjunction

## A. Introduction

Basically, English has four skills that should be owned by the students such as, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. According to Frederic Home (1999) "Writing has its relation to reading, speaking has its relation to listening". It can be said that those skills cannot be separated from one another, because, when the students try to compose a simple sentence, they should understand the rules of writing, grammar, reading and also understand how to speak. The students cannot write or speak as the way they please. They should have ability to understand how to put grammar, how to pronounce the simple sentence that they write.

According to Azar (1981:267) "conjunction is a way to connect words or phrases that have the same grammatical pattern in the sentence". One way to connect two simple sentences become a compound sentence is by using conjunction. It can be coordinating or subordinating conjunction. Coordinating conjunction is a group of connective words which connect to the words, phrases, and clauses. Meanwhile the subordinating conjunction is conjunction which is used to connect elements with elements of lesser rank. Those explanations are closely stated by Kelle Weinhold (2000) that "coordinating conjunction connect words, phrases or clauses that are of equal importance or have the same grammatical structure within a sentence". (e.g Mother cooked our breakfast **and** served it). Before discussing about the subordinating conjunction, it is good to recognize the words of coordinating conjunction, *so, but, and, or* and *for*. Another connective word is subordinating conjunction. Still, Kelle Weinhold (2000) "subordinating conjunction introduces dependent clauses to the independent or main clause in a sentence". Subordinate clauses modify the independent clause in some of way or act as parts of speech in relation to the independent clause. While the subordinating conjunction relates to a dependent clause, but it depends on the independent clause for context and meaning, as the simple example of subordinating (Ali come to my home **when** I am taking bath). The writer feels to put the words of subordinating conjunction, *because, since, if, after, before, however, until, although, while, than*. Because there are too many connective words in English the writer will limit the conjunction that will be given to the students in order to have the practical data. These words are going to talk more detail in another page.

## A. Literature Review

### a. The Definition of Conjunction

We often find a conjunction in a sentence. Whether it is in simple sentence or in a compound sentence does not matter for us. We seldom find two conjunctions in a simple sentence, but conjunction often appears in a complex sentence. English has a set of words are also called conjunction that enable us to gracefully transition from one part of a sentence to another part of the sentence. Some of words in the set are inherently conjunctions and the others are words that can function as conjunction. This definition may overlap with that of other parts of speech, so what constitute a

“conjunction” should be defined for each language. It is exactly what Peterson and R. Payne (2002:132) said that “In general, conjunction is an invariable grammatical particle, and it may or may not stand between the items it conjoins. It could be functioned to connect words, phrases, and clauses”.

### **b. Punctuation Coordinating Conjunction**

When a coordinating conjunction joins two words, phrases, or subordinate clause, no comma should be placed before the conjunction. For further clarification we can see the example below:

Word : cookies *and* milk  
 Phrases : at the beach *or* by the lakeside  
 Subordinate clause: what you say *and* you do

If we are referring to the example above the sentences do not require comma, those conjunctions can stand without adding comma in between. But when a coordinating conjunction joining three or more words, phrases, or subordinate clause creates a series and requires comma between the elements as examples below:

Word : peanuts, cookies, *and* milk  
 Phrases : in the mountains, at the beach, *or* by the lakeside  
 Subordinate clause: what you think, what you say, *and* what you do

Again, these examples require a comma to separate one word to others. The comma also influences the way we pronounce those words. But, if coordinating conjunction joining two independent clauses creates a compound sentence and it also requires a comma before the coordinating conjunction attached. For more detail we can see the examples below:

- Tom ate all peanuts, *so* Phil ate the cookies
- I do not care for the beach, *but* I enjoy a good vacation in the mountains

### **c. The Usage of Conjunction**

The usage of conjunction is very important both in writing and oral communication. By using correct conjunction the expressed idea can be tightly and concisely connected. In addition, in oral speech, other parts of speech such as noun, verb, adjective, pronoun, etc. They can be expressed by gesture if we forget or we do not know the words. For example, if we forget the word “come”, we can express the ideas by moving hand down. By this way the absence of the word “come” will not interrupt the communication. On the other way around, conjunction can not be expressed by gesture, it means the absence of conjunction will interrupt the communication.

Wardiman (1986 : 116) has stated “A conjunction is a word which joins words or group of words. There two principal types of conjunction are coordinate and subordinate.”

### **a. Coordinating Conjunction**

Wardiman and Rajahaba et al. (1980:145) stated :

“The principal (Ind. yang utama) coordinate conjunction are : *and, but, or* and *nor*. Conjunctions of this class join together things of equal rank. They connect nouns with nouns, verb with verbs, adjective with adjectives, phrases with phrases, clause with, etc”

The following table shows several examples of the various types of conjunction that are mostly using with some sample sentences using the conjunctions. Since coordinating conjunction is closed sets of words, it is included in the table I below.

**Table I : Coordinating Conjunction Words**

Conjunction	What is Linked	Sample Sentence
and	Noun phrase + noun phrase	We have tickets for the symphony <i>and</i> the opera
but	Sentence+sentence	The orchestra rehearses on Tuesday, <i>but</i> the chorus rehearses on Wednesday
or	Verb + verb	Have you seen <i>or</i> heard the opera by Scott Joplin?
so	Sentence+sentence	I wanted to sit in the front of the balcony, <i>so</i> I ordered my tickets early.
for	sentence+sentence	John thought he had a good chance to get the job, <i>for</i> his father was on the company's board of trustees.

#### **b. Subordinating Conjunction**

The second conjunction is subordinating conjunction. Subordinating conjunction are the largest class of conjunctions which connect subordinate clauses to a main clause. Here the writer explains on the subordinating conjunction *because, since, if, after, before, however, until, although, while, than*. Again, the writer would like to clarify that the writer will limit the common subordinating conjunction. So, the writer will not mention all of subordinating conjunction but the writer only takes some of them.

Heather MacFadyen (2001) said “subordinating conjunction introduces a dependent clause and indicates the nature of relationship among the independent clauses and the dependent clause”. From this quotation we truly understand that a sentence contains a subordinating conjunction or more must have a main clause (independent clause). The dependent clause is where the subordinating clause depends on it. In this case, we can state that a dependent clause can not stand alone, it should be accompanied by independent clause (main clause), but the main clause can stand alone as a sentence. The independent clause that stands alone without any clause is called a simple sentence. If a sentence made up of two (or more) main

clause, it is called a compound sentence. If a sentence is made up of one main clause, and at least one subordinate clause is called a complex sentence.

**Table II : Subordinating Conjunction Words**

Time	Cause+Effect	Opposition	Condition
After before when while since until	Because since as so	Although though whereas	if

Considering, the writer limited the usage of subordinating conjunction so in the column of *cause + effect*, *opposition* and *condition* in the table above the writer doesn't fill the complete subordinating conjunction words

### C. Result and Discussion

The test was tabulated to count out the percentage of the score each student gets from the highest to the lowest. This calculation will also show the students can or can not answer those items correctly.

The writer analyzed the data by using suitable statistical procedures. So the writer did the following main point.

1. The range of scores
2. The interval width
3. The interval class
4. The frequency distribution
5. The arithmetic mean ( $\bar{X}$ )

Clarifying this stage, it is necessary to describe the meaning of those terms. According to Arikunto (1993:374) "the range of scores" is the differences between the highest and the lowest score.

The formula is  $R = X_t - X_r$ . This formula can be elaborated as follows:

$R$  = the range of score

$X_t$  = the highest score

$X_r$  = the lowest score

In order to determine the group frequency distribution of the test result, it is necessary to count a interval with ( $I$ ). It is counted by using the formula.

$$I = 1 + (3,3) \text{ Log } N.$$

In which :  $I$  = The interval width

$N$  = The number of students

The interval class can be found by using the formula:

$$K = \frac{R}{I}$$

$K$  = The interval class

R = The range of score

I = The interval width

In addition, the mean score ( $\bar{X}$ ) is the average score obtained by the students. It is calculated frequency distribution by using the following formula as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where :  $\bar{X}$  = mean

$\sum fx$  = The multiplication of  $f$  and  $x$

$N$  = The total of samples (students)

The test result shows the student's ability in English conjunction can be seen in the following range.

### Result Analysis

Based on the above result, the writer tried to determine five important parts in analyzing the data:

1. The range of scores
2. The interval width
3. The interval class
4. The frequency distribution
5. The arithmetic mean ( $\bar{X}$ )

The range of score is the distance between the highest and the lowest scores.

From the data, the writer classified the student's scores from the highest and the lowest scores. It can be tabulated as follows:

85	85	83	83	83	80
80	78	78	78	75	75
75	73	73	73	70	70
70	68	68	65	65	63
63	60	58	58	55	55
55	53	53	53	50	50
50	50	50	50	50	50
48	48	48	48	48	48
48	45	45	45	43	43
43	43	38			

In English conjunctions, the highest score is 85 and the lowest score is 38. Thus, to find the range, the writer used the formula:

$$\begin{aligned} R &= X_t - X_r \\ &= 85 - 38 \end{aligned}$$

$$R = 47$$

In which:

R = The range of score

$X_t$  = The highest score

$X_r$  = The lowest score

And for interval width, the writer uses the formula:

$$I = 1 + (3,3) \text{ Log } N$$

Where I = The interval width

N= The number of score

$$\begin{aligned} \text{So that, } I &= 1 + (3,3) \text{ Log } N \\ &= I + 3,3 \text{ Log } 57 \\ &= I + (3,3). 1.76 \\ &= 1 + 5,81 = 6,81 \\ &= 7 \end{aligned}$$

After recognizing interval width, that is 7, the interval class is easy to be observed by using the following formula:

$$K = \frac{R}{I}$$

Where K = The interval class

R = The range of score

I = The interval width

And we can put into the formula, the class interval is

$$\begin{aligned} K &= \frac{R}{I} = \frac{47}{7} = 6,71 \\ &= 7 \end{aligned}$$

The writer presented the distribution of scores based on the result of interval class.

**Table VIII : The Frequency Distribution of Score**

No.	Interval Class (i)	F	X	Fx
1.	38-44	5	41	205
2.	45-51	18	48	864
3.	52-58	8	55	440
4.	59-65	5	62	310
5.	66-72	5	69	345
6.	73-79	9	76	684
7.	80-86	7	83	581
	$\Sigma$	57		3429

In which f = frequency

x = median

fx= the multiplication of f and x

From the data in the table above, we can see that the highest score is 85 and the lowest score of the students is 38, the writer uses the formula as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where :  $\bar{X}$  = mean

- $f$  = frequency  
 $x$  = the middle of score (median)  
 $\Sigma fx$  = the multiplication of  $f$  and  $x$   
 $N$  = The number of samples (students)

So, the mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) score is :

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X} &= \frac{\sum fx}{N} \\ &= \frac{3429}{57} \\ \bar{X} &= 60,15\end{aligned}$$

According to the above results, the writer can conclude that the capability of the students, especially Unit A and Unit B in English conjunctions is not enough.

The mean score of the second year students of English department was laid between 55-66 ( $\bar{X} = 60,15$ ), so the student's score of English department Aceh can be confirmed at not enough level.

Based on the statistical analyzing above, the mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) score of the second year students of English department is 60,15. It is considered the criteria of value is not enough (unsatisfied). So, the writer would like to clarify that the second year students of English department eh have lack of ability in using English conjunction

From the data was obtained by the writer, it shows that there was no one or student earned 95-100, five students got the score from 38-44, eighteen students earned score from 45-51 and eight students achieved the score from 52-58 and five students earned the score 59-65 and five students earned the score from 66-72 and nine students obtained the score 73-79 and seven students earned the score from 80-85. So, it can be concluded the highest score was 85 and lowest score was 38.

#### D. CONCLUSION

Conjunction is a word that links words, phrases, or clauses which is a way to connect words or phrases that have the same grammatical pattern in the sentence. Based on the research the writer limits the conjunction and extracted into two types, they are: coordinating conjunction and subordinating conjunction. The use of conjunction can be distinguished among (a) coordinating conjunction, (b) subordinating conjunction (c) Punctuation Coordinating Conjunction (d) subordinating clause dealing with nouns (e) subordinating clause modifies nouns.

Based on the analyzed data, it could be stated that the ability of second year students of of English department is not enough in accordance with criteria of value. It seems that the students did not really understand to place the conjunction into the right paragraphs and sentences. Most of students obtained score between 55-66. If we observe the result of analyzing above, the ability of students in mastering conjunction is not enough (unsatisfied). It was probably caused by less their concern on English grammar so that the writer found the problem in doing the test to the students of of English department. In having clearly clarification on the research result was indicated in formula *the mean* ( $\bar{X}$ ) score 60,15.



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