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### **An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Using Conjunction in Writing Complex Sentences of Eleventh Grade of SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang**

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#### **Abstrak**

*Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kesulitan siswa dalam menggunakan konjungsi dalam menulis kalimat kompleks kelas XI SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang dan masalah yang paling dominan dalam menggunakan konjungsi di kelas XI SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas XI SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang. Sampel penelitian diambil dengan menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Teknik purposive sampling merupakan teknik penentuan sampel dengan pertimbangan tertentu. Sampel penelitiannya adalah XI IPA yang berjumlah 15 siswa yang terdiri dari 9 laki-laki dan 6 perempuan dan XI IPS yang berjumlah 26 siswa yang terdiri dari 10 laki-laki dan 16 perempuan. Kelas-kelas ini mempunyai nilai yang rendah dengan nilai rata-rata 35 pada analisis kesalahan dalam menentukan konjungsi yang benar dalam kalimat kompleks. Jumlah siswa seluruhnya 53 orang, namun tesnya dilakukan oleh 41 siswa. Peneliti melakukan tes untuk mengumpulkan data. Instrumen pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini yaitu tes pilihan ganda. Dalam hal ini siswa diminta memilih konjungsi yang tepat untuk mengisi kalimat rumpang pada kalimat kompleks dan mengalokasikan waktu 90 menit dengan 20 soal. Setelah dilakukan pembagian LKS kepada 41 siswa dan dihitung nilainya, sebagian besar mendapat nilai di bawah  $\leq 50$  yaitu 24 siswa, dan ada pula yang mendapat nilai  $\geq 50$  yaitu 17 siswa. Untuk menentukan nilai keterampilan siswa dilakukan perhitungan dengan menggunakan rumus mean, dan diperoleh nilai mean sebesar 48,2.*

Permasalahan yang paling dominan dalam penggunaan konjungsi dalam menulis kalimat kompleks adalah soal konjungsi koordinatif dengan jumlah jawaban salah sebanyak 151 (18,40%).

**Kata Kunci:** Kesulitan Siswa; Menulis; Konjungsi.

### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this research was to determine students' difficulties in using conjunctions in writing complex sentences of eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang and the most dominant problem in using conjunction in eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang. The population of the research was the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang. The sample of the research was taken by using purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique is a technique to determine a sample with the certain consideration. The sample of research were XI IPA which has 15 students consist of 9 males and 6 females and XI IPS which has 26 students consist of 10 males and 16 females. These classes have a low score with an average value of 35 in error analysis in determining the correct conjunction in a complex sentence. The total number of students was 53, but the test was done by 41 students. The researcher conducted a test to gather data. The instrument for collecting data in this research, the researcher used a multiple-choice test. In this case, students are asked to choose the correct conjunction to fill in the gap sentence in a complex sentence and allocate 90 minutes of time with 20 questions. After distributing the worksheets to 41 students and calculating the score, most of them got scores below  $\leq 50$ , namely 24 students, and some of them got a score of  $\geq 50$ , namely 17 students. To determine the value of student skills, calculations were carried out using the mean formula, and the mean score obtained was 48.2. The most dominant problem in using conjunction in writing complex sentences is the questions of coordinating conjunction in total number 151 wrong answer (18.40%).*

**Keywords:** Students' Difficulties; Writing; Conjunction.

## **INTRODUCTION**

English has been studied and used in the process of instructing and learning. English is a required subject in the educational curriculum. There are components and skills in English language. The skills are speaking, writing, listening, and reading. The components are vocabulary and grammar. According to Monirosadat (2013), one of the essential English language skills to master is writing. Englishlanguage teaching practitioners have recognized the importance of writing. Writing is a crucial component of language.

Writing is a language skill used

for indirect communication, rather than face-to-face interaction. Writing skills, as one of the four language skills, play a crucial role in human life. By writing, someone expresses thoughts or ideas appropriately achieve aims and objectives.

According to Geiser (2002), writing is an important demand for students. In line with Hairstone (1986), that writing helps us make connections and recognize interconnections, which leads to the generation of new ideas. Writing makes it easier for students to think creatively and actively, as well as being able to provide positive reactions to developments in the

environment around them which are always dynamic. Proficiency in writing is essential for both postsecondary education and the workforce. During a freshman year, the most reliable indicator of academic performance is the capacity to write a lengthy text.

One of the most important parts of writing is conjunctions. Conjunctions are words that connect clauses in a sentence. A connecting word is a conjunction. It links single words, word clusters, and sentence fragments (Watson, 2000). Conjunctions also have an important role in forming complex and compound sentences.

In general, conjunctions can be understood as connecting words in sentences to make them coherent. For a writer, the use of conjunctions needs to be carefully considered to be able to create sentences that are clear and easy for readers to understand. Inappropriate use of conjunctions will certainly affect differences in the meaning of the sentences conveyed by the writer. In this case, the writer must understand the types and functions of the conjunctions used so that their use is appropriate.

In preliminary research, researchers found that the majority of class XI students at SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang had difficulty in writing complex sentences. Especially students' difficulties in using appropriate conjunctions in writing complex sentences. According to Hammer (2005) students experience difficulties with vocabulary, grammar,

hand writing, and spelling in written texts. The researcher chose to conduct more in-depth research under the title "An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Using Conjunction in Writing Complex Sentences of Eleventh Grade of SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative research design. The "multimethod" nature of qualitative research entails an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Schreiber & Asner, 2011). This opinion is in line with Scott & Morrison (2005), that the term "qualitative research" has evolved to refer to research methodologies that are predicated on a particular set of beliefs about how society functions. Qualitative research aims to understand participants' perspectives and experiences in their everyday environments. The sample for this study was two classes of eleventh-grade, which were consisted of 15 students from XI IPA and 26 students from XI IPS. A sample is a portion of the quantity and quality that the population possesses (Sugiono, 2010). This sample in this research was the purposive sampling, which the sample was gotten based on certain considerations. These classes are chosen because the students of the class are better in using conjunction in writing than other students of others classes.

To collect the data, the researcher used a test. The research instrument utilized in this study

comprised certain elements that served as markers for the students' challenges with utilizing conjunctions when composing intricate sentences. There were twenty questions. They were in the format of multiple-choice questions, as previously mentioned. It was also created to assist the researcher in making sure that some of the questions aligned with the study's goals.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used some formulas to get each student's score in order to gauge their ability. To get the mean of students' reading score the researcher used the formula  $= \frac{\sum X}{N}$ , to analyze

the qualitative form, the searcher will use the formula percentage  $P = \frac{f}{N}$  (Arikunto, 2010)

In order to find out the category of students' ability in forming passive voice the writer presented the classification of the scores based on SUPM Ladong (2010), as follows:

Table 1. The Scoring Classification of the Students Speaking Skill

Score	Classification
90-100	Very good
70-89	Good
50-69	Fair Poor
30-49	Very poor
$\leq 29$	

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter focused on findings of the research formulations. More specific data tabulation of students' tests in using conjunctions in writing complex sentences will be presented here. The total number of object research was 53, but the test was done by 41 students. Results of Assessment students' skills in using conjunction in writing complex sentences can be seen in the table below:

Table 2. Students' Scores in Using Conjunction in Writing Complex Sentences

Score	Frequency (N)	value ( $\sum X$ )
80	1	80
75	5	375
70	4	280
65	4	260
60	3	180
50	6	300
45	2	90
40	1	40
35	4	140
30	2	60
25	3	75
20	3	60
15	2	30
10	1	10
Total	41	1980

The table shows that out of 41

students, only one student got score

80, five students obtained scores 75, four students obtained scores 70, four students got scores 65, three students got scores 60, six students got scores 50, two students obtained scores 45, another student got score 40, four students got score 35, two students got score 30, three students got scores 25, three students obtained scores 20, two students obtain scores 15, and a student obtained score 10. Thus, the mean score of student's skills in using conjunction in writing complex sentences as follow:

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

$$M = \frac{\sum 1980}{41} = 48,2$$

The assessment scores above showed that students' skills in using conjunction in writing complex sentences are 48,2. The next step, the researcher categorizes the student's ability to using conjunction in writing complex sentences by presenting the classification of the score by SUPM Ladong. Based on the categorization, the researcher could totally classify students' score in using conjunction in writing complex sentences that is shown in the following table:

**Table 3.** Categorization of Students' Score in Using Conjunction in Writing Complex Sentences

No	Respondent (Item)	Score	Category
1	Student 1	80	Good
2	Student 2	75	Good
3	Student 3	75	Good
4	Student 4	70	Good
5	Student 5	50	Fair
6	Student 6	75	Good
7	Student 7	75	Good
8	Student 8	35	Poor
9	Student 9	60	Fair
10	Student 10	75	Good
11	Student 11	70	Good
12	Student 12	25	Very poor
13	Student 13	70	Good
14	Student 14	30	Poor
15	Student 15	40	Poor
16	Student 16	15	Very poor
17	Student 17	65	Fair
18	Student 18	45	Poor
19	Student 19	50	Fair
20	Student 20	30	Poor
21	Student 21	65	Fair
22	Student 22	70	Good
23	Student 23	25	Very poor
24	Student 24	45	Poor

25	Student 25	20	Very poor
26	Student 26	35	Poor
27	Student 27	60	Fair
28	Student 28	50	Fair
29	Student 29	20	Very poor
30	Student 30	35	Poor
31	Student 31	65	Fair
32	Student 32	10	Very poor
33	Student 33	20	Very poor
34	Student 34	50	Fair
35	Student 35	50	Fair
36	Student 36	35	Poor
37	Student 37	65	Fair
38	Student 38	25	Very poor
39	Student 39	60	Fair
40	Student 40	15	Very poor
41	Student 41	50	Fair

Based on the data above, it is clear that students still have difficulty using conjunctions in writing complex sentences. There were 9 students who got a very poor score, 9 students who got a poor score, 13 students who got a fair score, and 10 students who got a good score. Most of them got scores below  $\leq 50$ , namely 24 students, and some of

them got a score of  $\geq 50$ , namely 17 students.

To know students' ability in using conjunction in writing complex sentences, the research elaborated three kinds of conjunction that are used in writing complex sentences test. Below are the findings three kinds conjunction in writing complex sentences.

**Table 4.** Students' Difficulties in Using Subordinating Conjunction

Respondent	F	N	P
1	31	41	75,60%
4	21	41	51,20%
7	28	41	68,30%
10	23	41	56,10%
13	27	41	65,80%
16	18	41	43,90%
19	2	41	4,90%

From the table above, it can be concluded that 31 students can answer the subordinating conjunction question in item 1 as

much as 75.60%, 21 students can answer the subordinating conjunction question in item 4 as much as 51.20%, 28 students can answer the subordinating

conjunction question in item 7 as much as 68.30%, 23 students could answer the subordinating conjunction question in item 10 as much as 56.10%, 27 students could answer the subordinating conjunction question in item 13 as much as 65.80%, 18 students could

answer the subordinating conjunction question in item 16 as much as 43.90%. And 2 students were able to answer the subordinating conjunction question in item 19 as much as 4.90%.

**Table 5.** Students' Difficulties in Using Coordinating Conjunction

Respondent	F	N	P
2	2	41	4,87%
5	34	41	82,92%
8	13	41	31,70%
11	23	41	56,09%
14	28	41	68,29%
17	13	41	31,70%
20	23	41	56,09%

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that 2 students can answer the coordinating conjunction question in item 2 as much as 4.87%, 82.92% of the 34 students can answer the coordinating conjunction question in item 5, out of the 13 students can answer the coordinating conjunction question in item 8 as much as 31.70%, out of 23 students can answer the coordinating conjunction

question in item 11 as much as 56.09%, out of 28 students can answer the coordinating conjunction question in item 14 as much as 68.29%, out of 13 students can answer the coordinating conjunction question on item 17 as much as 31.70%. And 23 students were able to answer the coordinating conjunction question in item 20 as much as 56.09%.

**Table 6.** Students' Difficulties in Using Correlative Conjunction

Respondent	F	N	P
3	17	41	41,46%
6	13	41	31,70%
9	19	41	46,34%
12	20	41	48,78%
15	26	41	63,41%
18	25	41	60,97%



Based on the table above, it can be concluded that 17 students can answer the correlative conjunction question in item 3 as much as 41.46%, 31.70% of the 13 students can answer the correlative conjunction question in item 6, of the 19 students can answer the correlative conjunction question in item 9 as much as 46.34%, out of 20 students can answer the correlative conjunction question in item 12 as much as 48.78%, out of 26 students can answer the correlative conjunction question in item 15 as much as 63.41%.

And 25 students were able to answer the correlative conjunction

question in item 18 as much as 60.97%.

### ***Student's Dominant Problem in Using Conjunction***

Based on the percentage of the first formulation of the problem, it can be seen that there are still many students who make mistakes in using conjunctions in a sentence. Based on the data, it was found that students used dominant conjunctions incorrectly which is shown in the following table:

**Table 6.** Students' Difficulties in Using Correlative Conjunction

No.	Conjunction	Respondent	Wrong Answer	Total	Percentage (100%)
1	Subordinating	1	10	137	16,70%
		4	20		
		7	13		
		10	18		
		13	14		
		16	23		
		19	39		
2	Coordinating	2	39	151	18,40%
		5	7		
		8	28		
		11	18		
		14	13		
		17	28		
		20	18		
3	Correlative	3	24	126	15,40%
		6	28		
		9	22		
		12	21		
		15	15		
		18	16		



Based on the table above, the most dominant problem in using conjunction in writing complex sentences is the questions of coordinating conjunction in total number 151 wrong answer (18.40%). Then, followed by questions of subordinating conjunction in total number 137 wrong answer (16.70%). The last, the questions of correlative conjunction were in total number 126 wrong answer (15.40%). The problems of using conjunction are caused students are not proficient in sentence structure, particularly when writing complex sentences, and they are still having difficulty in determining the correct conjunctions for complex sentences.

## DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine students' difficulties in writing complex sentences. After analyzing the research results, it is necessary to discuss the results. The questions of this research are to know students' difficulties in using conjunctions in writing complex sentences and the most dominant problems in using conjunction in writing complex sentences.

Based on the scores are given on the student worksheets in using conjunction in writing complex sentences, there are 24 students in the poor and very poor category who score 0-49, 17 students in the fair and good category who score 50-80, and there is not student get the very good category. To proof the data of students' difficulties in using

conjunction, the researcher presents the following discussion.

Many errors were found in the worksheets that had been distributed. This indicates that students still have difficulty in using conjunctions in complex sentences.

### Students' Difficulties in Using Subordinating Conjunction

Students' difficulties in using conjunctions can be seen from the errors in answering several questions, such as the error in using subordinating conjunctions made in questions 1,4,7 16, and 19 by the 5 students below.

Respondent 1. Although she comes, I will not talk to her.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'although', this introduces a contrast between two facts but doesn't imply a condition or uncertainty. It would imply that she is coming, but despite that, the speaker will not talk to her. Example: "Although she comes, I will not talk to her" sounds unnatural in this context.

The student should be used is 'even if'. In this case, 'even if' is a subordinating conjunction because it connects a dependent clause ("even if she comes") to an independent clause ("I will not talk to her"). It sets up a condition (her coming) and an outcome (not talking to her).

Respondent 4. If you have told me your name; I will tell you mine.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'if', this introduces a condition that hasn't happened yet, but in this sentence, the action of telling the name has already occurred, so 'if' doesn't fit. This result was in line with research that held by Silalahi (2022), who state that students' faults were most common in subordinate conjunction usage.

The student should be used is 'since'. 'Since' as a subordinating conjunction here means "because" or "as a result of." It indicates that the speaker will tell their name because the other person has already shared theirs.

Respondent 7. When he didn't know what to say, he said nothing.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'when', his introduces a time-related condition, and the sentence is focusing on the reason, not the time when something happened.

And the one that should be used is 'because'. 'Because' is a subordinating conjunction that connects the dependent clause ("Because he didn't know what to say") to the independent clause ("he said nothing"). The dependent clause provides the reason for the action in the independent clause. 'Because' is used to explain the reason or cause for something. In the sentence, it clarifies why he said nothing: it was because he didn't know what to say. This sets up a clear cause (not knowing what to say) and effect (saying nothing).

Example: "Because he didn't know what to say, he said nothing." This tells us that the reason he said nothing was his lack of knowledge about what to say.

Respondent 16. After she watches that movie, she cries.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'after', this indicates a sequence of events rather than a repeated occurrence. "After she watches that movie" would imply that crying happens only after watching the movie, not every time.

And the one that should be used is 'whenever'. 'Whenever' is used to indicate that something happens every time a particular event occurs. In this case, it means that each time she watches the movie, she cries.

### **Students' Difficulties in Using Coordinating Conjunction**

Students' difficulties in using conjunctions can be seen from the errors in answering several questions, such as the error in using coordinating conjunctions made in questions 2,5,8, and 14 below:

Respondent 2. Shy people speak less; so they can speak when triggered.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'so'. 'So' is used to show a result or consequence of something. However, in the given sentence, there is no cause-and-effect

relationship; instead, we are pointing out an exception to the rule.

The student should be used is 'yet'. 'Yet' is used to introduce a contrasting idea, similar to 'but'. This is the best fit here because the sentence contrasts two ideas: shy people usually speak less, but or yet they do speak when triggered.

Respondent 5. Bob looked at those expensive shoes, and he couldn't afford to buy them.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'and'. 'And' would link two related ideas, but in this sentence, the ideas were contrast each other.

The student should be used is 'but'. 'But' is a coordinating conjunction that is typically used to show contrast between two statements. In this case, the contrast is between Bob's desire to look at the shoes and his inability to purchase them.

Respondent 8. Amanda can go to the market; so Sasha might stay home.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'so'. 'So' expresses a cause-and-effect relationship. This doesn't fit here because Sasha staying home is not the result of Amanda going to the market. The student should be used is 'but'.

'But' is used to show contrast between two ideas. In this case, Amanda going to the market contrasts with Sasha staying home. The sentence presents two different or opposing actions.

Respondent 14. His shoes are dirty, so he has not washed them.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'so'. 'So' expresses a cause-and-effect relationship, meaning the second action is the result of the first. But in the sentence, the shoes being dirty is not the reason for not washing them, it's a contrast.

The student that should be used is 'but'. 'But' shows a contrast between two ideas, which is perfect here. The shoes are dirty, but he has not washed them, even though you might expect him to. This expresses the contrast between the condition of the shoes and the lack of action to clean them. Therefore, 'but' is the correct coordinating conjunction for this sentence.

### **Students' Difficulties in Using Correlative Conjunction**

Students' difficulties in using conjunctions can be seen from the errors in answering several questions, such as the error in using correlative conjunctions made in questions 3, 6, 9, and 12 by the 4 students below.

Respondent 3. Both you can wear sandals and shoes to the event.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'both...and'. 'Both...and' shows that two things are included together, without any exclusion. It indicates that both options are valid or true at the same time. For

example, explanation for the given sentence: "Both of you can wear both sandals and shoes" implies that you must wear both items together, which doesn't make sense here. The sentence is about choosing between the two, not wearing both at once.

The student should be used is 'either...or'. In correlative conjunctions, 'either...or' is used when offering a choice between two alternatives. It indicates that one of the two options can be selected, but not both. This structure fits the sentence because the speaker is providing two possibilities (sandals or shoes), and the person must choose one.

Respondent 6. She is not beautiful but talented.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'not...but'. The conjunction 'not...but' is used to contrast two things, where the first part is negated (rejected), and the second part is affirmed. If you used 'not...but', the meaning would change to something like: "She is not beautiful but talented". This would mean she isn't beautiful, but she is talented, which rejects one quality and affirms the other. But that's not what the original sentence is trying to convey.

The student should be used is 'both...and'. 'Both...and' used to connects 2 positive things, such as noun subjects, noun objects, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases, and other words. You must only connect things that are the same. Conjunction 'both...and' is the correct choice because it highlights that she

possesses both qualities (beautiful and talented) without suggesting alternatives, negation, or conditional statements.

Respondent 9. Not only Sarah but also I will be failed because we have learned all the time.

The error in the answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'not only...but also'. 'Not only...but also' suggests a positive addition, which wouldn't fit the context of failing.

The student should be used is 'neither...nor'. When using 'neither...nor', you are indicating that two subjects (in this case, Sarah and you) are not going to experience the action described (being failed). It conveys a sense of exclusion for both subjects. So, the sentence "Neither Sarah nor I will be failed because we have learned all the time" means that both Sarah and you will not fail, emphasizing that the situation applies to both individuals.

Respondent 12. Neither my mother nor my father want me to be a lawyer.

Answer to the data above is using the conjunction 'neither...nor'. This structure is used to say that none of the two options are true or possible. It expresses the absence of both. The student should be used is 'both...and'. This structure is used to combine two related items that are both true or happening. It indicates

that the two things are equally involved.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis data and the discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher draws the conclusions of this study. Firstly, the results of Assessment students' skills in using conjunction in writing complex sentences shows that a student got score 80, five students obtained scores 75, four students obtained scores 70, four students got scores 65, three students got scores 60, six students got scores 50, two students obtained scores 45, another student got score 40, four students got score 35, two students got score 30, three students got scores 25, three students obtained scores 20, two students obtain scores 15, and a student obtained score 10. Thus, the mean score of student's skills in using conjunction in writing complex sentences was 48.2. Secondly, after distributing the worksheets to 41 students and calculating the score, most of them got scores below  $\leq 50$ , namely 24 students, and some of them got a score of  $\geq 50$ , namely 17 students. Then, there are 24 students in the poor and very poor category who score 0-49, 17 students in the fair and good category who score 50-80, and there is not student get the very good category. Lastly, the most dominant problem in using conjunction in writing complex sentences is the questions of coordinating conjunction in total number 151 wrong answer (18.40%). Then, followed by questions of subordinating conjunction in total number 137

wrong answer (16.70%). The last, the questions of correlative conjunction were in total number 126 wrong answer (15.40%).

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