



**AN ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS' ABILITY IN
CONSTRUCTING COMPOUND SENTENCES AT ENGLISH
DEPARTMENT OF UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG**

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Abstract

This descriptive research aimed to find out the second year students' ability and the mistakes often done by the students in constructing compound sentences at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. The sample of this research was 22 NK1-2017 students of 214 second year students at English Department. The sample was taken by using cluster random sampling. The instrument used was a grammar test consisting of 30 items about compound sentences. The students' answers were used as the source of the data analyzed. The data was analyzed based on the theory adapted from LeBlanc (2008) and graded based on *Peraturan Akademik Universitas Negeri Padang* (2015). Based on the findings, it was found that the second year students' ability in constructing compound sentences was fairly good. Moreover, it was found that the most frequent mistake often done by the students was about the tense and conjugation of verbs which occurred 222 times (25.5%) from 872 mistakes found. Based on those findings, it can be concluded that the students quite understand how to construct compound sentences. Moreover, the mistakes related to the tense and conjugation of verbs occurred because the sentence written by the students had clauses containing verbs that were not in the correct tense, inappropriately singular/ plural, and otherwise do not agree with the subject.

Key words: Compound Sentences, Coordinating Conjunction, Conjunctive Adverbs, Grammar

A. INTRODUCTION

Students' ability to articulate the ideas and opinions about something through written words is very crucial. It is important because this ability will determine how well the readers perceive the information. The information stated through written words should be meaningful and effective so that the readers can

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understand it easily. To develop such ability, there are several things that should be considered, one of those is grammar.

As one of the components that should be considered in writing, Fitriwati (2016) states that grammar is a system of rules to form and combine words into sentences. It means that to arrange words into sentences, there are some principles that should be obeyed in order to convey the writer's intentions. The sentences made by the writer can be classified into several types based on the complexity. They are simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence.

The students majoring English at Universitas Negeri Padang have learned the types of sentences in *Advanced Grammar* subject. This subject can help the students to perform well in their writing. Besides, there are so many assignments that are usually collected in the form of written tasks. For example, the students are obliged to write a thesis or paper in English as one of the requirements before graduating. In this case, grammar takes an important role to create a good writing.

Although the students already have the knowledge about the various types of sentences, there are still some difficulties that commonly faced by the students when they apply them on writing such as presenting the ideas, using appropriate conjunction, applying correct capitalization or punctuation, constructing sentences and word order correctly, and describing the tense and conjugation of verbs. In addition, there was a study found about compound sentences. It was conducted by Wulandari (2015) which was about the third year students' ability in writing compound sentences using coordinating conjunction at English Department of Bung Hatta University. The result showed that the students still found it difficult to understand the use of coordinating conjunction. According to her, the students must know not only grammatical structure but also the meaning of the conjunction itself. It is hard for them to differentiate whether the sentence is compound sentence or simple sentence when a conjunction is attached to the sentence.

The fact that there is a limited study conducted in this area interests the researcher to carry out the other research about the students' ability in constructing compound sentences. Compared to previous research, this research not only focused on the students' ability in writing compound sentences but also the mistakes often made by the students in writing compound sentences. Furthermore, this research not only discussed about the use of coordinating conjunction but also the use of conjunctive adverbs in compound sentences.

As explained before, compound sentence is one of sentence types classified based on the complexity. It can be classified into several types based on the connecting word used to connect clauses. According to Greenbaum and Nelson (2002), the connecting word used in compound sentence can be coordinating conjunction (and, but, yet, so, for, nor and or) or a semicolon (;). Strumpf and Douglas (1999) add that coordinating conjunctions are not the only words that can be used to join clauses; conjunctive adverbs also perform the same function as coordinating conjunctions since they fill connecting role in a sentence.

A correct compound sentence can be measured from several aspects contained in the sentence itself. Those aspects were classified into five categories

stated in the scoring rubric proposed by LeBlanc (2008). Those are the presentation of ideas, the use of conjunction, capitalization and punctuation, sentence structure and word order, and the tense and conjugation of verbs. An excellent compound sentence must contain a single concrete thought or idea, an appropriate conjunction, excellent capitalization and punctuation, well-constructed sentence and word order, correct tenses and agree with the subject. Those categories stated in the scoring rubric can be the indicators or descriptions of how well the students construct compound sentences. Thus, the students' ability and the frequency of mistakes done by the students can be achieved at the same time by using the scoring rubric.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was a descriptive qualitative research. It analyzed the ability of the third year students in constructing compound sentences at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. Moreover, it also analyzed the mistakes done by the students in constructing compound sentences. This research was conducted to the second year students in English Department, Universitas Negeri Padang.

The population of this research was 214 students on the second year in academic year of 2017 at English Department of *Universitas Negeri Padang*. The population was selected by concerning that the second year students were the ones who learned *Advanced Grammar* subject in recent semester. There were 5 education classes and 3 non-education classes in this stratum. They were K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, NK1, NK2, and NK3. The sample of this research was the students who were in the NK1 class. The sample was taken by using cluster random sampling. Gravetter (2012) stated that sample can be taken not only by selecting individual participants but also by selecting pre-existing group containing individuals in the population.

The instrument used in this research was a grammar test about compound sentences. The test consisted of thirty items which were arranged into three parts. Part I and Part III were about compound sentences by using coordinating conjunction, and Part II was about compound sentences by using conjunctive adverbs. According to Hughes (2003), a grammar test can be in the form of gap-filling, paraphrase, completion, and multiple choice. As explained in the background, grammar has something to do with writing; grammar ability can be seen in students' writing because the students will use their own grammar knowledge when they construct sentences by themselves. Therefore, the type of the test was completion, specifically, sentence construction. The test was constructed by the researcher herself and validated by a grammar lecturer at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang, Nur Rosita, S.Pd., M.A.

To obtain the data, there were several steps that the researcher did. Firstly, the test was distributed to the second year students in academic year of 2017 to find out their ability in constructing compound sentences. Then, the students answered the questions within 60 minutes by following the instructions given. After that, the answer sheets were collected by the researcher. Finally, the

students' answers were checked and scored. The score was given based on a scoring rubric explained before. The total of score obtained from each number was recorded by the researcher. Then, it was converted to the final scores by using the following formula:

$$N = \frac{Sm}{Si} \times Smax$$

Note:

N : Final Scores

Sm : Total of Score Obtained

Si : Total of Maximum Score

Smax : Scale Used to Classify the Data (100)

After that, the final score of each student was classified into ten categories in the grading system (Table 1) adapted from conversion scale existed in *Peraturan Akademik Universitas Negeri Padang* (2015). After that, to find out the mistakes, it was identified by analyzing each item of the test by referring to the categories of scoring rubric adapted from LeBlanc (2008). The categories that determine whether sentences meet the qualification of compound sentences are the presentation of ideas, the sentence structure and word order, the tense and conjugation of verbs, the use of capitalization and punctuation, and the use of conjunction. Each category has its standardized description that a compound sentence must have. A compound sentence is excellent if the sentence contains two clauses that make sense and each of the clauses has a single concrete thought or idea; there is no error in the choice of words (including plural/ singular form), inappropriate word or word order, and there is no missing word; the two clauses contain verbs (including irregular verbs) that are in the correct tense (past, present, future), appropriately singular/ plural, and otherwise agree with the subject; there are excellent and consistent use of correct capitalization and punctuation, including the appropriate use of commas and period; the conjunction used is placed correctly, and it is appropriate to the context.

After analyzing each sentence based on the description above, the total of each mistake category from all samples was calculated and converted into percentage. The formula that will be used to calculate the percentage of mistake based on the theory by Sudijono (2011) is described below.

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times Smax (100\%)$$

Note:

P : The percentage of the total of mistakes (%)

f : The frequency of the total mistakes found

n : The maximum number of all mistakes

Smax : Scale Used to Classify the Data (100%)

Table 1. *Grading System.*

Final Score Range	Conversion	Description
85-100	A	Exceptional
80-84	A-	Excellent
75-79	B+	Very Good
70-74	B	Good
65-69	B-	Fairly Good
60-64	C+	Satisfactory
55-59	C	Quite Satisfactory
50-54	C-	Poor
40-49	D	Very Poor
≤ 39	E	Extremely Poor/ Fail

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Students' Ability in Constructing Compound Sentences.

The test administered to 22 students consisted of 30 items, so there had to be 660 items that should be analyzed. However, the data collected were only 502 items (Table 3) because the students left 157 items unanswered. The unanswered items were categorized as incorrect/poor quality sentences.

Table 3. *Total of Collected Items*

No	Items	Total questions	Collected items	Unanswered Items
1	Compound sentences by using coordinating conjunction	462	429	33
2	Compound Sentences by using conjunctive adverb	198	73	125
Total		660	502	158

The data collected was analyzed based on the scoring rubric adapted from LeBlanc (2008). A qualified compound sentence is a sentence who meets the standardized description stated in the scoring rubric. The following examples are the compound sentences written by the students that fulfill the criteria of excellent quality on each category.

Datum 63:

“I went to the park, and I found \$1 on my way.”

Datum 63 has an excellent presentation of idea. The sentence contains two clauses that make sense and each clause has single concrete thought or idea. The subject is *I* and the verb is *went* in the first clause; the subject is *I* and the verb is *found* in the second clause. The sentence structure and the word order is also excellent because there is no error in the choice of words (including plural/singular form), inappropriate words and word order, and there is no missing word. Moreover, the verbs in the sentence are conjugated perfectly with the subjects. Both clauses use simple past tense to indicate past events. There is also an excellent and consistent use of correct capitalization and punctuation, where a comma is placed before a conjunction *and*. The use of conjunction *and* is also correct because the second clause '*I found \$1 on my way*' was an event happened after the first clause '*I went to the park*'. Therefore, the conjunction '*and*' in this compound sentence can be classified as directional *and*.

Datum 645:

"Newborn baby has small body than its head; eventually, it will grow larger than its head."

Datum 645 has an excellent presentation of idea. The sentence contains two clauses that make sense and each clause has single concrete thought or idea. The subject is *Newborn baby* and the verb is *has* in the first clause; the subject is *it* and the verb is *will grow* in the second clause. The sentence structure and the word order is also excellent because there is no error in the choice of words (including plural/singular form), inappropriate words and word order, and there is no missing word. Moreover, the verbs in the sentence are conjugated perfectly with the subjects. The verb *has* in the first clause agrees with the singular subject *Newborn baby*. The tenses used are also appropriate. The first clause uses simple present tense, and the second clause uses simple future tense because it seems to show future events that happen after the first clause. In addition, there is also an excellent and consistent use of correct capitalization and punctuation, where a semicolon is placed before the conjunctive adverb *eventually*, and a comma is placed after it. The use of conjunction is also correct because the writer proposed an idea that the body of a baby would finally grow larger than its head by using time sequence; therefore, the conjunctive adverb *eventually* can be used.

After analyzing and scoring all of the students' compound sentences, the final scores that indicates the students' ability level in constructing compound sentences is obtained. The result of each student's final score is described on the table below.

Table 5. *The Score Description of Each Student*

No	Sample	Total Score Obtained	Final Score	Conversion
1	1	543	72.4	B
2	2	278	37.1	E
3	3	565	75.3	B+
4	4	456	60.8	C+
5	5	386	51.5	D
6	6	700	93.3	A
7	7	494	65.9	B-
8	8	481	64.1	B-
9	9	553	73.7	B
10	10	354	47.2	E
11	11	626	83.5	A-
12	12	530	70.7	B
13	13	326	43.5	E
14	14	444	59.2	C+
15	15	449	59.9	C+
16	16	652	86.9	A
17	17	393	52.4	D
18	18	615	82.0	A-
19	19	458	61.1	C+
20	20	502	66.9	B-
21	21	510	68.0	B-
22	22	525	70.0	B
TOTAL			65.7	B-

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the second year students' ability at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang was fairly good. To conclude, the second year students have passed the grammar test about compound sentences by relying on their knowledge obtained from *Advanced Grammar* subject. It is assumed that the students quite understand about compound sentence construction.

2. The Mistakes Done by the Students in Constructing Compound Sentences

The second research question of this thesis was about the mistakes often made by the second year students of English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang in constructing compound sentences. After analyzing each item written by the students, it was found that the most common mistake often made by students was the tense and conjugation of verbs. There were 222 of 872 mistakes found on the students' compound sentences. Table 6 describes the total of mistake found from compound sentences based on the categories stated in scoring rubric.

Table 6. *The Total of Mistakes Found in Students' Answer*

No	Categories	Quality					Total Mistakes	Percentage (%)
		Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor		
1	Presentation of Ideas	354	73	0	60	15	148	17.0%
2	Sentence Structure and Word Order	290	150	51	7	4	212	24.3%
3	Tense and Conjugation of Verbs	280	107	42	49	24	222	25.5%
4	Capitalization and Punctuation	394	72	28	6	2	108	12.4%
5	The Use of Conjunction	320	18	63	30	71	182	20.9%
TOTAL							872	100%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that there were 872 mistakes made by the students which mostly occurred on the third indicator that is the tense and conjugation of verbs (25.5%). It is followed by the second indicator that is the sentence structure and word order (24.3%), the use of conjunction (20.9%), Presentation of ideas (17.0%), and capitalization and punctuation (12.4%).

3. Discussion

This discussion focused on the compound sentences written by the second year students at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. Compound sentences can be classified based on the conjunction used in the sentence. They are compound sentences by using coordinating conjunction and compound sentence by using conjunctive adverbs. Those types of compound sentences were classified because they had different rules of use. There were 429 sentences collected in the first type, and there were 73 sentences collected in the second type. The rest 157 unanswered items were automatically classified as incorrect items (0) because the students were considered unable to construct compound sentences due to the limited understanding.

The first research question aimed to find out the students' ability. The findings that have been obtained from the analysis of compound sentences written by the second year students at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang showed that the second year students' ability in constructing compound sentences were fairly good because the average score of the students was 65.7; moreover, the amount of the students who passed the test exceeded half of the sample. It can be concluded that the second year students who learn *Advanced Grammar* subject are quite good at constructing compound sentences. This finding indicated that most of the sentences written by the students have met the requirement of compound sentences based on LeBlanc (2008).

The second research question aimed to find out the mistakes that the students did in constructing compound sentences. From the findings, it was found that the most frequent mistake made by the second year students at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang was the tense and conjugation of verbs (25.5%). It was because the sentences written by the students had clauses containing verbs that were not in the correct tense, appropriately singular/ plural, and otherwise agree with the subject. This finding was on the contrary to the theory from Altenberg and Vago (2010) who propose that each clause within a compound sentence must have its own subject and verb phrase. Since compound sentence consists of more than one idea, it is important to make the subjects and the verbs within the sentence clear.

Not only the tense and conjugation of verbs but also all other categories performed as the mistakes which the students made while constructing compound sentences. One of them is the use of conjunction. This finding is quite in line with the result of the research conducted by Wulandari (2015) who found that the students do not understand the use of coordinating conjunction. The students often wrongly differentiate between simple sentence and compound sentence. According to Altenberg and Vago (2010) coordinating conjunction can be used to connect words and phrases in a simple sentence, and to connect clauses in a compound sentence. From this theory, it can be concluded that the students were still not able to differentiate the use of conjunction in simple and compound sentences.

In conclusion, the second year students' ability in constructing compound sentences at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang was fairly good.

Moreover, it was also found that the most frequent mistake made by the students was the tense and conjugation of verbs. Overall, these findings indicate that the second year students at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang quite understand about compound sentence construction..

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusion

This research focused on the analysis of the second year students' ability in constructing compound sentences at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. The purposes are to find out the students' ability and the mistakes done by the students in constructing compound sentences. The data were taken by delivering a grammar test consisting of 30 items about compound sentences to 22 students from NK1-2017. Although the total of items was expected to be 660 items, there were only 502 items collected.

Based on 502 items analyzed, it was found that the second year students' ability in constructing compound sentences at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang was fairly good. It was also found that the most frequent mistake was the tense and conjugation of verbs, and it was followed by the sentence structure and word order, the use of conjunction, the presentation of ideas, and the capitalization and punctuation. Those findings indicated that the second year students at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang quite understand about compound sentence construction.

2. Suggestion

Regardless of the findings of this thesis, there are some suggestions offered by the researcher to the following parties: The second year students at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang who are expected to improve their ability in constructing compound sentences by applying the knowledge about compound sentence that they have learned in *Advanced Grammar* subject. The most important aspect that should be learned more is about the tense and conjugation of verbs in compound sentences, and the next researcher. It is expected that the result of this research could be used by the next researchers as a reference to conduct a similar research about compound sentences.

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