AN ANALYSIS OF SECOND-YEAR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING SUBORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS

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Abstract

This research aimed to know the students' ability and their difficulties in using subordinate conjunctions. This research is descriptive quantitative research. The population in this research is second-year students of English Department at UniversitasNegeri Padang. The sample was taken by using simple random sampling. There are at 33 students that become the sample of the research. In this research, the data were collected through the grammar test. Each students were asked to answer all questions by appropriate subordinate conjunctions. The data were scored in general and every part of the test to check the quality of the students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions. The data collected and analyzed were categorized.Then, the researcher calculated the mean score of the students to determine the students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions for overall and each part.To knowing the students' difficulties, the data were calculated the mean score of each part, it can be interpreted by the criteria. In this research, it was found that the second year students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang is fair because the average score of the students is 57,33. The students have good ability in answering question part.It was also found that the students have some difficulties in answering the question in part 1. It is difficult for them to decide what types of subordinate conjunctions that agree with the sentences based on its meaning.

Key words: Subordinate conjunctions, students' ability, students' difficulties, conjunctions, grammar.

A. INTRODUCTION

In English, there are several aspects that should be mastered; one of them is grammar. Grammar is a key concept in the general theory of languages (Pekka, 2015:282). Grammar is very important, if not as "the heart of language", at least as a fairly important aspect of language learning and teaching. The importance of grammar is also strengthened by Kalend O (2006). He states that with good grammar, students will be helpful in delivering their ideas, messages, and feelings to listeners or readers. Language would be disorganized without grammar and

cause some communication problems. As a result, he will be able to speak, read or write a language in a smooth and skillful way. Grammar influences the meaning of words that we want to transfer to other people. Wrong grammar pattern will make the wrong meaning or perception. It means that grammar helps the language learner to avoid misunderstanding in communication. Writing or utterance is difficult to understand if the students do not know the function of the grammar itself in the English language application. So, the students must have a good grammar to master all skills in English.

To know the structure and grammatical forms of the sentences, students should learn about the part of speech since it shows the function of the words in a sentence. Every single word belongs to one of word groups or parts of speech. There are eight parts of speech and one of them is the conjunction. Eastwood (2002:3) says that there are eight main word classes in English: verb, noun, adjective, adverb, preposition, determiner, pronoun, and conjunction.According to Azar (1981:267), the conjunction is a way to link words or phrases with the same grammatical patterns in the sentence.Even though conjunctions have been learned since the basic level, the majority of students still make errors. Treanor (1997:292) states that there are three kinds of conjunctions. One of them is a subordinate conjunction.

According to Marcella Frank (1972: 214), subordinate conjunction joins two clauses or thoughts in a way that makes one grammatically dependent on the other. Subordinate conjunctions are usually used in complex sentences. The second-year students' of English Department at UNP are expected to have a good ability in using subordinate conjunctions because they have already learned it. In fact, based on my personal experiences I found some of them could not use subordinate conjunctions correctly. When the lecturer mentioned some of the examples of subordinate conjunctions, they admitted that they have heard about that, but when the lecture asked them to make some sentences using the subordinate conjunctions mentioned, only a few students that could make sentences by using it.

From the explanations above, most of the researchers discuss the students' ability in using conjunctions in general, not specifically on coordinate conjunctions or subordinate conjunctions. Although there are some researchers discuss the subordinate conjunction, they only focus on students' error in using it, not on students' ability.This research is intended to discuss students' ability and difficulties in using subordinate conjunctions. The researcher wants to know aboutthe second-year English Department students' ability and difficulties in using the subordinate conjunctions at UniversitasNegeri Padang.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is conducted by using descriptive quantitative research. According to Creswell (2012: 13), quantitative research is a type of research that collects numerical data from a large number of people using instruments with predetermined questions and answers. The descriptive research has the main goal to describe the fact systematically and characteristic of object and subject study

accurately.Consequently, the researcher thinks that the method is useful in this research.

Creswell (2012:142) says that a population is a group of people with the same characteristic. The population of this research is the second year students of English Department UniversitasNegeri Padang. They are the students in the academic year 2017. The second-year students have already learned about subordinate conjunction in *Grammar* subject from the first semester. Therefore, the researcher wants to know the students' ability and difficulties after studying the topic for two semesters. There are 8 parallel classes, they are 223 students.

Arikunto (2010:131) points out that the sample is a small percentage of the selected population for observation and analysis. So, in obtaining the sample the researcher uses a simple random sampling technique. According to Creswell (2012:143),random sampling has a procedure of its own. The typical procedure for using random sampling was to give a number of each participant in the population and to select the participants using random numbers.Then, the samples of this research were taken randomly from 223 students of second-year students at English Department of UniversitasNegeri Padang. In this research, 33 students were chosen as the sample.Arikunto (1989: 107) suggests that 10%-15% or 20%-25% or more as the sample when the population is more than 100 is enough. If 15% of 223 populations in total, it means the sample are 33 students.

The instrument will be used in this research is the grammar test. For this research, the grammar test used to find out the students' ability and their difficulties in using subordinate conjunctions.The test consists of 3 parts, which are 30 questions in total. The type ofquestions ofpart one is fill in the blank, part two is to combine the sentences, and part three is matching words. They are asked to answer the questions correctly and combine the pairs of sentences by using subordinate conjunctions. The students do the test for about 45 minutes.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
1. Research Finding (tentative)
1.1 Students' Ability in Using Subordinate Conjunctions

The researcher analyzed the mean score of the students to know how their ability in using subordinate conjunctions. The students' score mean was also determined in order to get the mean score of the students and their abilities.Based on the table above, student number 29 got the highest score. The highest score was 97 with the 29 correct answers. The score was categorized as very good. The student number 19 and 32 got the lowest score. The lowest scoreswere 30 with the 9 correct answers and they were categorized as fail. According to the result, it was also noticed that there were 3 students in the category A (Very Good), 8 students in the category B (Good), 8 students in the category C (Fair), 11 students in the category D (Poor), and 3 students in the category E (Fail). In addition, it was found the mean of the students' score which was 57,33 in the category C (Fair) as shown in the table. Therefore, based on the students' mean score, it can be said that in overall, the students had the fair ability in using subordinate conjunctions.

There were some explanations for each part. First, in part 1, the highest score in this part was 90 with category A (Very Good) and the lowest score was 20 with category E (Fail). There was only one student who got the highest score, and there were 8 students who got the lowest score. According to the result, it was also found that there was 1 student who got A (Very Good), 1 student who got B (Good), 6 students who got C (Fair), 10 students who got D (Poor), and 15 students who got E (Fail).It can be stated that students' ability in part 1 was in the category D (Poor) because the students' mean score was 46,06. It means that students hde the poor ability because they had trouble in filling the blank with the appropriate type of subordinate conjunctions to complete the sentences and also to agree with the context of the sentences.

Second, in part 2, the highest score in this part was 100 with category A (Very Good) and the lowest score was 40 with category D (Poor). There were 3 students who got the highest score, and there was only 1 student who got the lowest score. According to the result, it was also found that there were 20 students who got A (Very Good), 6 students who got B (Good), 4 students who got C (Fair), 3 students who got D (Poor), and no student who got E (Fail).This finding indicated that students' ability in part 2 was in the category B (Good) because the students' mean score was 76,67. It means that students had good ability in combining sentences with subordinate conjunction and in deciding which sentence will be an independent and a dependent clause.

Third, in part 3, the highest score in this part was 100 with category A (Very Good) and the lowest score was 0 with category E (Fail). There were 2 students who got the highest score, and there was only 1 student who got the lowest score. According to the result, it was also found that there were 6 students who got A (Very Good), 4 students who got B (Good), 3 students who got C (Fair), 8 students who got D (Poor), and 12 students who got E (Fail). It can be concluded that students' ability in part 3 was in category D (Poor) because the students' mean score was 47,88. It means that students had the poor ability in deciding appropriate subordinate conjunctions to complete the sentences that agree with the context of the sentences.

Based on the explanation above, it could be seen that the highest mean score was in part 2. The mean score of part 2 was 76,67 with category B (Good). It can be assumed that the students had very good ability in combining sentences with subordinate conjunction and in deciding which sentence will be an independent and a dependent clause. Furthermore, the lowest mean score was part 1. The mean score of part 1 was 46,06 with category D (Poor). It can be said that the students had the fail ability because they had trouble in filling the blank with the appropriate type of subordinate conjunctions to complete the sentences and also to agree with the context of the sentences.

Based on each part, the students were quite good in part 2 in which they were required to combining sentences using subordinate conjunctions. It was different from the other parts which asked them to complete the

sentences by using subordinate conjunctions provided. The most difficult part was part 1 which instructed the students to fill in the blank with the appropriate subordinate conjunctions.

The mean of the student score was used to know the category of the students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions. Based on table 3, the mean of the score was 55,85. Thus, it can be concluded that the second-year English department students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions at UniversitasNegeri Padang was Fair.

1.2 Students' Difficulties in Using Subordinate Conjunctions

In the fill in the blank question, all of the students had most difficulties in identifying the context of sentences to using the comparison category of subordinate conjunctions. In addition, some students still couldnot differentiate which one is subordinate conjunction and coordinate conjunction because some of them answered the question with coordinate conjunctions.

In the combining sentences, some of the students had most difficulties in combining the sentences with *as if* in the manner category of subordinate conjunctions. In addition, some of students do not understand the use of comma and period. They do not put comma before independent clause if they put subordinate conjunction in the front of the sentence. Sometimes, they put comma between subordinate conjunction and dependent clause. Then, some of them put period between two clauses.

In the match question, most of the students had most difficulties in identifying the context of sentences and deciding appropriate subordinate conjunctions in the time and contrast opposition category of subordinate conjunctions.

According to results of scoring from three parts of questions, most of the students had difficulties in part 1 which completes the sentence with appropriate subordinate conjunctions. Mostly, they got low score in this part than the other parts.

From the explanation above, the researcher could analyze kinds of difficulties that students usually face in using subordinate conjunctions. First, most of the students still confused with all categories of subordinate conjunctions. Second,they had less understanding about the functions of subordinate conjunctions themself. Then, there are also some students who do not know how to use it in combining sentences because they do not know what areindependent clause and dependent clause. Besides that, most of them still get difficulty when they are asked to decide appropriate subordinate conjunction in completing the sentence. At last, some of them do not understand about the context of sentences.

2. Discussion

This discussion focused on the students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions at English Department of UniversitasNegeri Padang. To know the students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions, the researcher gave a test to the students which surrounded by part 1, part 2, and part 3. There were 10 questions for each part. Thus, there were 30 questions provided by the

researcher that had been answered by the students. Therefore, there were 990 answers collected from the students.

The first research question aimed to find out the students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions. The findings that have been obtained from the analysis of students' answers in answering the grammar test by second-year students of English Department in UniversitasNegeri Padang was fair because the average score of the students was 57,33. These findings in line with the research conducted bySiswanto (2014) which analyzed students' ability in using conjunctions. The result showsthe students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions was fair because the average score of the students was 69.06.It is supported by Bossone (1977:41), he emphasizedthe learners have to be familiar with adverbial conjunctions.

The second research question aimed to find out the difficulties that the students faced in using subordinate conjunctions. From the findings, it was found that the lowest mean score was gotten by the second year students at English Department of UniversitasNegeri Padang was part 1 (46,04). It can be assumed that the students were not able to decide what category of subordinate conjunctions to use in completing the sentences. Siaganto's (2015) research indicates the similar result. He analyzed students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions in sentence writing that shows the students had difficulties in using the list of subordinate conjunctions and how to arrange it to complete the sentences. It is supported by Mason (2018), he stated that the students were expected to know the exact word or phrase to get the correct answer in the fill in the blank questions. Also, use it to provide the answer based on how many the students can remember about the topic.

In addition, the students have difficulty in differentiate between subordinate conjunctions (adverb clauses) and other class categories. Also, some of them difficult to decide which one are the dependent and the independent clause. It is supported by Kurniati (2017). She stated that there are some difficulties that students have in using subordinate conjunctions, unfamiliar vocabulary, determining the meaning of the word, and applying the subordinate conjunction.

In conclusion, the second year students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions at English Department of UniversitasNegeri Padang was fair. Moreover, it was also found some students that in fail and poor categories, since the students had some difficulties in using subordinate conjunctions.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on 990 items analyzed, it was found that the second year students' ability in using subordinate conjunctions at English Department of UniversitasNegeri Padang is fair because the average score of the students is 57,33.The students have good ability in answering question part 2, which demands the students to combine sentences with existing subordinate conjunctions. In contrast, they have poor ability in part 1 and 3 which demands the students to complete the sentences by using appropriate subordinate conjunctions that agree with the context of sentences.

It was also found that the students have some difficulties in answering the question in part 1. It is difficult for them to decide what types of subordinate conjunctions that agree with the sentences based on its meaning. Besides, it is undecidable for some students which sentence will be a dependent and an independent clause and the use of punctuation in combine sentences.

Based on the findings, the researcher would like to propose some recommendations which would be useful for the students and other researchers. The students should improve their ability in using subordinate conjunctions by comprehending the types of subordinate conjunctions and the use of punctuation. They also must understand the context of sentences to avoid the mistakes in using subordinate conjunctions.Every teacher should give opportunities to the students to be more active in learning because it has the benefit of enhancing the students' ability. Teacher should be creative to motivate the students and develop the teaching method or teaching process.The results of this research are expected to be used by the next researchers as a reference to conduct similar research on subordinate conjunctions. It is recommended for the next researchersto use an interview to obtain specific data on the students' difficulties in using subordinate conjunctions.

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