

Coordinating conjunctions in students' recount texts: A sentence construction analysis

Natalia Anggrarini¹, Indra Yoga Prawiro², Melawati³

English Education Department, Faculty of Teachers Training and Education Science, Universitas
Wiralodra, Indramayu, Indonesia

Corresponding author

Email: natalia.anggrarini@unwir.ac.id

Abstract

This study sought to examine student errors in employing a coordinating conjunction to produce recall text. This study found all errors in 36 recount texts written by senior high school students in Indramayu (district in West Java) using Halliday and Hasan's Taxonomy (1976) and Ong's framework (2011) about the errors in using conjunction: misuse, unnecessary addition, omission, and repetition of conjunction. The results describe the condition of the students: they overgeneralized the use of coordinating; they also lacked understanding in terms of sentence construction due to limited knowledge of particular conjunctions and the function of coordinating conjunctions, which led to the incomplete application of rules in sentences. A comprehensive explanation of conjunction is needed when teaching writing to students. The students should clearly understand each function of conjunction to produce a meaningful text. Some limitations are provided along with suggested directions for future research to get a deeper and wider perspective in a similar context.

Keywords: *Recount text; conjunction; error analysis; sentence construction*

INTRODUCTION

During the last few years, research on teaching writing in the context of secondary schools has attracted teachers' and researchers' attention because writing is a crucial skill, especially in writing essays, scientific papers, etc. as a higher context of writing in students' academic life (Sue, 2019; Putri, 2019; Taufiq, et al 2021). Writing is a way to convey ideas in written language and an indirect communication tool to express what someone thinks and feels. Nunan in Basonggo et al. (2016) stated that writing is the process of finding ideas, thinking about expressing them in good writing and organizing ideas into statements and paragraphs. It means that students are emphasized to be able to write well to express their ideas. Writing is one of the difficult skills for elementary school and high school students (Scott and Ytreberg in Yulianawati, 2018). One of the reasons comes from the students themselves. Harris et al. (2014) stated that students still lack mastery of grammar and vocabulary in writing. It can be said that students' difficulty in writing is due to a lack of knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

Harris in Gultom (2016) stated five components of writing: content, form, grammar, style, and mechanics. Content is the essence of the writing and the ideas depicted. Then, form is the arrangement in writing. After that, grammar is the use of language structure. Next, style is the choice of structure and lexical items. Last, the mechanics are considered in writing applications, such as punctuation and spelling. One component of writing skills that must be mastered is grammar. One part of grammar is conjunctions, which function in connecting words in a sentence. Practically, many students still have difficulty determining the use of correct conjunctions. When these errors lead to misunderstanding of the text. Therefore, based on these issues, students must understand the use of conjunctions in a text.

There are some studies conducted to analyze the conjunction. First, Geraldine (2018) examined the use of conjunction but, and, because, so in students' writing recount text investigated the types of errors that occur most frequently in students' writing, and categorized the causes of errors. Second, Ardanelia and Pasaribu (2019) examined EFL learners' use of conjunctions in writing descriptive texts. Their study analyzed the use of conjunctions in students' descriptive texts and the errors in using conjunctions. Third, Nurbaidah (2019) explained the quality of students' writing and analyzed students' problems using conjunction in writing narrative text. Most recent studies focus on using more specific conjunctions in any kind of genre. In this case, this study focuses on analyzing the use of conjunctions in terms of coordinating conjunctions in the recount text written by the students. In addition, this study aims to find out the students' types of errors in using coordinating conjunctions in writing recount texts by analyzing errors based on the error type theory proposed by Ong (2011).

METHOD

This study used document analysis in which the conjunction errors found in 36 texts produced by students in one senior high school in Indramayu were analyzed. The text consists of several paragraphs about the student's personal experiences. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating printed and electronic documents. This study intended to seek the frequent errors made by the students in the writing recount text context related to the types of errors in the use of coordinating conjunctions.

Respondents

This study uses document analysis in which coordinating conjunctions found in 36 texts are analyzed. These 36 essays are written by class X students in one of the schools in Indramayu.

Data analysis

The 36 texts were analyzed, and the errors were grouped into several types of errors developed by Ong (2011). To analyze students' errors in the use of coordinating conjunction in writing recount text, the writers used Gass and Slinker's (1994) theory, they

identified the errors, classified the errors, quantified the errors, and analysed the source of errors and gave meaning based on the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data, the error analysis was conducted to find the error in the use of conjunction in students' text classified it is four types. They are misuse, unnecessary addition, omission, and repetition.

Misuse

It was found that there were 18 errors of misuse in students' text. This is a type of error in which learners inappropriately use certain conjunctions in clauses or sentences. In the following are examples of the errors made by the students with their possible correction by following the pattern suggested by Ong (2011).

Table 1. Examples of errors of misuse.

No	<i>Incorrectly written sentences</i>	<i>Possible corrections</i>
1	My friends were disappointed with the place we first visited because it was less than satisfactory and slightly different from the photograph. But it's quiet in there.	My friends were disappointed with the place we first visited because it was less than satisfactory and slightly different from the photograph, but it's quiet there.
2	I was so excited in Bali. Especially good food and view there. But I was sick at the time, so we can't go to the beach until I got well.	I was so excited in Bali, especially for the good food and view there but I was sick at the time, so we can't go to the beach until I got well.
3	At that time, when it was late afternoon, my father and I were cleaning the front yard of the house. And that's when I saw two girls about my age heading to the field beside my house.	In the afternoon, my father and I were cleaning the front yard of the house. and then I saw two girls heading to the field beside my house.
4	I went to the bakery at 9 am but the bakery was already close from 2 days ago because something less obvious. So I went to another bakery to buy a cake, which is clearly not better than usual cake that my mother buy. But , my mom is still happy because of the effort I have been looking for cakes in variety of bakery.	I went to the bakery at 9 am, but the bakery was already closed two days ago because of something less obvious, so I went to another bakery to buy a cake. Although not better than a cake my mom usually bought, my mom was still happy because of the effort I had been looking for cakes in various bakeries.
5	A little bit information, my brownie is one of his favorite desserts. So I decide to made something special for his family.	A little bit of information, my brownie is one of his favorite desserts, so I decided to make something special for his family.
7	I was excited to go there with my family. But sadly, I forgot to wear warm cloths.	I was excited to go there with my family, but sadly I forgot to wear warm clothes.

As seen from Table 1, the students at times used the conjunction at the beginning of the sentence. They consider the use of conjunctions can be placed anywhere regardless of the function of the conjunction. About this phenomenon, Seaton and Mew (2007) describe conjunctions as linking words such as and, or, but. A conjunction connects words or sentences and links two or more two words or sentences. It means that conjunctions have a function to connect clauses or sentences, while in this case, students are wrong in placing conjunctions where the conjunctions are placed not according to their function. Using conjunction at the beginning of a sentence is an error. The student failed to put the conjunction in its position. This indicated that the students were lack of understanding in constructing the sentence with the use of a conjunction.

It is similar to the finding described by Geraldine (2018) that the error of misuse is due to the incomplete application of rules. It means that students still do not understand the rules for placing conjunctions in a sentence. The other findings by Ardanellia and Pasaribu (2019) are that error of misuse is the most frequent error found in the students' texts, and most students make mistakes in placing conjunctions, such as placing conjunctions at the beginning of sentences. Both have in common with the findings of the writers where students make errors of misuse in placing conjunctions at the beginning of sentences.

Unnecessary Addition

It was found that there were 19 errors of unnecessary addition in students' text. This is the most common type of error in this study. The error made by students of this type is because some students misplace the conjunction so that the conjunction contained in the sentence is unnecessary. The following are examples of errors made by students with possible corrections by following the pattern suggested by Ong (2011).

Table 2. Error of unnecessary addition.

No	<i>Incorrectly written sentences</i>	<i>Possible corrections</i>
1	My entourage and I had come to the shore of my honest Indrayanti. And My friends were disappointed with the place we first visited because it was less than satisfactory and slightly different from the photograph. But it's quiet in there.	We had come to the Indrayanti beach. My friends were disappointed with the place we first visited because it was less than satisfactory and slightly different from the photograph, but it's quiet there.
2	<i>At that time, I was just trying to take part in the level O2SN competition, I was still in grade 3 and it turned out that, Alhamdulillah, I won first place. But at the time of the inter-provincial competition, it turned out that I lost.</i>	At that time, I was trying to participate in the level O2SN competition. It turned out that I won first place. In the inter-provincial competition, it turned out that I lost.
3	We all prayed and after that had breakfast.	We all played and had breakfast.
4	In the second day, I and my sister went to Braga, Merdeka building, the Asian-African Conference Museum for took many pictures.	On the second day, we went to Braga, the Merdeka building, and the Asian-African Conference for took many pictures.
5	And after that I go to place that become a victim of the eruption of Merapi mountain.	After that, I went to the place that become a victim of the eruption of Merapi mountain.
6	And then after that we looking for a place to take lunch.	After that, we were looking for a place to take lunch.
7	After that, me and my family went to the mall.	After that, we went to the mall.

From Table 2, it can be seen that the most errors found in the texts written by the students were in using conjunctions because some students misplaced the conjunction so that the conjunction contained in the sentence was unnecessary. Some errors occurred because students put the conjunction in the wrong or inappropriate place and other errors of unnecessary additions made by students in using conjunction were the student used two conjunctions to link two clauses. The following example was taken from the students:

“My entourage **and** I had come to the shore of my honest Indrayanti. **And** My friends were disappointed with the place we first visited because it was less than satisfactory and slightly different from the photograph. But it's quiet in there”

The sentence above is an error because the student used two conjunctions to link two clauses. In the first sentence, the conjunction *and* is unnecessary to join a noun phrase

of “my entourage and I” since it had been written previously that the subjects were “my entourage and I” So for the following sentence, it is more efficient to be written with the subject “we”. Hence, it is unnecessary to write conjunction *and*. For the second sentence, conjunction *and* is written at the beginning of the sentence while there is no indication that the conjunction connects the previous clauses to the second clauses, so in this case, the students do not need to put conjunction *and* to connect the first sentence. The use of conjunction *and* in the second sentence does not work to add information to the first sentence. This is a new topic that is written in the next sentence in the paragraph, so the conjunction *and* in the second sentence is an error. Where the conjunction is connecting words or sentences and linking two or more words or sentences. As stated by Keraf (1980), conjunction is a word that connects words, parts of words, or connecting sentences. This indicated that most of the students were lack of understanding of the use of conjunctions for sentence construction, so they inserted conjunctions that did not fit with the sentence structure.

This is different from the findings by Geraldine (2018) in her results, unnecessary additions were the fewest errors made by students. However, she also mentioned why unnecessary addition errors could occur because they are caused by ignorance of limiting rules and over-generalization. Another finding conducted by Ardanellia and Pasaribu (2019) stated that students made errors of unnecessary addition when the students added unnecessary conjunctions to connect two clauses. The two results are similar to the previous findings described by the writers because this error occurred when some students over-generalized the use of conjunction. After all, the students thought that the conjunction could be used in any sentence.

Omission

It was found that there were 12 errors of omission in students' text. This is a type of error where the students do not add certain conjunctions in a clause or sentence. The following are examples of the errors made by the students with their possible correction by following the pattern suggested by Ong (2011).

Table 3. Error of Omission.

No	<i>Incorrectly written sentences</i>	<i>Possible corrections</i>
1	I don't go on vacation, I just spend time at home doing the same activities every day, and playing with friends.	I didn't go on vacation, so I just spent my time at home doing the same daily activities and playing with my friends.
2	The last day, we all stopped at the shop to buy souvenir, I bought a typical Jogja cake, namely bakpia.	On the last day, we all stopped at the shop to buy souvenirs, and I bought a typical Jogja cake, Bakpia.
3	A while time ago, I went to Yogyakarta to take my sister for university business. I stay there for 3 days.	A while ago, I went to Yogyakarta to take my sister to her university business, so I stayed there for three days.
4	With location Yogyakarta, around 413 km from my house. The journey to get there is about 6 hours.	From my house to Yogyakarta was around 413 KM, and we traveled there for about 6 hours.

As seen from Table 3, the writers found out that the error of this type was because the students did not use conjunction to link the phrases in their writing. The error of

omission the writers found the most is a conjunction *and* and *so*. The following example is taken from students:

“I don’t go on vacation, I just spend time at home doing the same activities every day, and playing with friends”

In the sentence above, as we can see the second clause is the result or effect of the cause in the first clause, so in this case, the student actually should put conjunction *so*, but in the text, the student did not put conjunction *so*. Therefore, the sentence requires it to connect the first clause with the second clause, so that the meaning will be complete. It is also supported by Halliday and Hasan (1976) that the conjunction *so* is a causal conjunction, where causal conjunctions are usually referred to as a cause-and-effect relationship. Hence, the use of the conjunction *so* serves to connect two clauses that have a cause-and-effect relationship. At the same time, the conjunction has the function of connecting words, phrases, clauses, or sentences.

Another example error is the omission of “*and*”. The example is taken from students:

“The last day, we all stopped at the shop to buy souvenir, I bought a typical Jogja cake, namely bakpia.” (Extracted from S22)

In the sentence above, the student did not put a conjunction *and*, even though the sentence has two equivalent clauses. In other words, the two clauses have the same sense and do not conflict with the previous clause. It is also supported by Halliday and Hasan (1976) that the conjunction *and* is additive conjunction, where additive conjunctions which aim to link units of semantic similarity. Hence, the use of the conjunction *and* is to connect words that are similar in a sense. Therefore, the student should add conjunction *and* and connect clauses. The following explanation indicates that students lack the understanding of conjunctions, so they cannot arrange sentences correctly. Students only separate sentences using full stop, whereas those sentences could be combined.

It is similar to the findings of Ardanellia and Pasaribu (2019) that the conjunction *and* is most commonly found in students’ writing. They also mentioned that students only separated sentences using a full stop, whereas the sentences could be combined into one and suggested instead of using a full stop, students should use conjunction *and* to connect sentences. Meanwhile, in the findings of Geraldine (2018), the errors of omission were mainly caused by the incomplete application of rules. It had been found that students committed conjunction “*and*” and “*because*”.

Redundant Repetition”

It was found that there were 8 errors of omission in students' text. This is a type of error where students repeat the same conjunction in a clause or sentence. The following are examples of the errors made by the students with their possible correction by following the pattern suggested by Ong (2011).

table 4. Error of redundant repetition.

No	<i>Incorrectly written sentences</i>	<i>Possible corrections</i>
1	and ate together and then after that we returned to the hotel and the last day we went to alun-alun Kota Semarang and we went to Simpang 5 Semarang.	After that, we ate together and then returned to the hotel. On the last day, we went to Alun-Alun Kota Semarang and Simpang 5 Semarang.

2	The food there is so good and the clothes is also really beautiful and all of the shop in Gasibu is really cheap you will get addicted when shopping there.	There, the food was so good, and the clothes were also really beautiful. All of the shops in Gasibu were really cheap, so you will get addicted when shopping there.
3	We left the house at 10.00 by motorbike and blue skies and I felt a light breeze blowing the wave there are suitable for swimming, but unfortunately, my friend and I don't swim.	We left the house at 10.00 by motorbike. The sky was blue, and I felt the breeze blowing the waves. It was suitable for swimming, but unfortunately, we can't swim.
4	Me and my family went back home and took so many pictures.	We went back home and took so many pictures.

From Table 4, the writers found an error in some students. The errors showed because the students used conjunction redundantly or were not appropriate in a sentence. All the errors found in the students' writing were in the use of the conjunction *and*. The following example was taken from the students:

“**And** ate together **and** then after that we returned to the hotel and the last day we went to alun-alun Kota Semarang **and** we went to Simpang 5 Semarang.”

From that sentence, the students redundantly used the conjunction *and* in a sentence. Besides that, the sentence can be rewritten into a simple sentence. Hence, the sentence is meaningful because using the correct conjunctions. The text will be easy to understand and clear when the students use the correct conjunction to connect the words or clauses, so the reader will understand what the student means in his writing. Repetition of conjunctions is an error because conjunctions should only connect two clauses or sentences, but in this case, students add the same conjunctions redundantly. This is confirmed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), redundant repetition describing a cohesive device, in this case, is a conjunction used more than once in a text. Still, in other words can substitute some or all usages. This indicated that the students only know conjunctions that they think are familiar, in this case, students still lack knowledge about conjunctions.

This is the same as the finding of Ardanellia and Pasaribu (2019) that which students use the conjunction *and* more than once within a sentence, and the students did not use a punctuation mark full stop to separate the sentence. Another finding from Geraldine (2018) explains that this error only occurs in the subtype of addition type of error, which is double marking. It means that the students cannot construct sentences correctly and only know familiar conjunctions, they add the same conjunctions in a sentence, and students make this error by adding redundantly additive conjunctions in a sentence.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the types of errors that the students made in the use of coordinating conjunction in their writing recount text based on Ong's (2011) theory were misuse, unnecessary addition, omission, and repetition. The most common errors made by the students were unnecessary addition, followed by misuse, omission, and repetition. Unnecessary addition errors occurred because students put the wrong conjunction where conjunction is not needed, or students put two different conjunctions to connect two sentences. Meanwhile, misuse occurred because students

misplaced conjunctions where the conjunction aims to connect two sentences, but students put the conjunction in front of the sentence. Then, omission errors occurred because the students did not put conjunctions to connect sentences. Last, repetition errors occurred because the students repeated the same conjunction in that sentence, where the conjunction was incorrect.

From these results, the pedagogical implications urge teachers to focus on these types of errors when teaching, teach this aspect better and emphasize the pursuit of conjunctions regarding their function. The teacher also should pay more attention to how to use conjunctions in a text.

Furthermore, this study covers some limitations. This study is still limited to the types of conjunctions, further research can be taken in other areas of conjunctions. In addition, the other genres of text learned at school are possible to investigate. Finally, the present study offers two directions for future research. The first is to investigate the factors underlying the errors made by students. Second, doing the same research related to the type of error but in a different text and higher students. Both of these suggestions lie in the recognition that the students still lack understanding in using conjunction, especially for its function in the context of writing.

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