A Grammatical Analysis of Conjunction Usage in Student Vlog Assignments from the *Mündliche Konversation* Course at Universitas Negeri Malang

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Abstract
This research aims to describe the use of conjunctions by third-semester students of the German Language Education program at Universitas Negeri Malang in their oral communication tasks in the form of vlogs, and to identify the grammatical errors present in their usage. These vlogs are outputs of the course *Mündliche Konversation*, which is designed to train students' speaking skills in a realistic, independent, and communicative context. This study employs a qualitative approach using content analysis methods. Data were collected from the documentation of eight group videos created by students and analyzed based on German grammar theory by Helbig and Buscha (1996). The results show that students used various types of conjunctions, both coordinating and subordinating, with a predominance of subordinating conjunctions such as *dass* and *weil*. Despite attempts to construct complex sentence structures, several errors were found, including errors in verb placement, verb selection, absence of a subject, and the lack of a verb in clauses, indicating the need for further grammatical development.

Keywords: *German Language, Conjunctions, Mündliche Konversation, Speaking Skills, Learning Vlog*

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Introduction

The ability to speak is one of the essential skills in learning a foreign language, playing a significant role in interaction. In the context of language learning, speaking is not merely producing words but serves as a primary medium for effective communication in the language being learned. Speaking skills require mastery of various linguistic elements, including grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and accuracy in conveying ideas. This aligns with Adnan's (2012) assertion that effective speaking ability is a critical element for achieving successful communication, even though listening skills are also a fundamental factor to consider.

Aligned with the importance of speaking skills in foreign language learning, a dedicated learning platform is needed to specifically support the development of these skills. The Mündliche Konversation (Oral Conversation) course plays a vital role in education, particularly in strengthening students' communication abilities. Several studies have revealed that courses focusing on language and communication contribute to character-building in students and boost their confidence in interacting in multicultural environments (Harahap et al., 2024; Khaira, 2022). Additionally, creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment is crucial, allowing students to experiment with their language use.

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without fear of making mistakes. Research has shown that social interaction in learning reduces anxiety and improves students' speaking abilities (Hadiyanto et al., 2020).

In today's digital era, language learning methods have evolved, one of which is through the use of vlogs (video blogs). The interactive and creative nature of vlogging allows students to practice speaking in an enjoyable and less intimidating way (Zakiyah & Rosyidah, 2021). Studies indicate that applying vlogging in a learning context can support students' language acquisition, enhance their confidence, and provide more authentic and practical learning experiences (Anggraeni et al., 2020). Other research has also shown that using vlogs as a learning tool improves various aspects of speaking skills, such as fluency, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary mastery (Nugroho & Anugerahwati, 2019).

In the context of foreign language learning, the use of conjunctions as a grammatical aspect is vital as it connects words, phrases, and clauses within a sentence. This creates a structure for coherent and logical discourse, which determines the clarity and logic of idea delivery (Taopan, 2017). Moreover, studies by Kurniati and Saputry emphasize that organizing ideas through the use of conjunctions not only enhances grammar but also aids in understanding relationships between sentences (Kurniati & Saputry, 2022). Additionally, research by Sari reveals that the use of conjunctions in students' essays contributes positively to text cohesion, which is crucial for clear and coherent idea delivery (Sari, 2019). Integrating conjunction teaching into the curriculum thus improves foreign language communication skills, clarifies sentence structure errors, and strengthens the logic of message delivery.

As a foundation for analysis, this study uses the German grammar theory by Helbig and Buscha (1996), which classifies conjunctions into two main categories: coordinating conjunctions (Nebenordnende Konjunktionen) and subordinating conjunctions (Unterordnende Konjunktionen). According to Helbig and Buscha, conjunctions provide a framework for understanding how they function in a language, particularly in linking linguistic elements such as words, phrases, and sentences. Coordinating conjunctions, like *und*, *aber*, *denn*, and *oder*, connect two equal clauses or elements, while subordinating conjunctions, such as *weil*, *dass*, *wenn*, *damit*, and *obwohl*, link subordinate clauses to main clauses, altering verb positioning in sentence structures.

Previous studies have highlighted the complexity of sentence structure usage in learning German. Research by Diehl et al. (2021) shows that the most common errors among beginners occur in subordinating clause structures, particularly in improper verb positioning. Murad et al. (2021) also found that interference from native languages often leads to incorrect verb placement in subordinate sentence structures. Meanwhile, studies by Mulyani et al. (2024) and Sitanggang et al. (2018) underline the importance of mastering syntactic aspects—including conjunctions and word order—in speaking skills. They conclude that although many students understand the meaning of conjunctions, they often fail to use them accurately in complex sentences, especially when the conjunction affects sentence structure, as in the cases of *weil*, *dass*, and *obwohl*. However, few studies specifically focus on conjunction use in oral communication contexts, such as video assignments or vlogs created by students as part of their learning tasks.

Based on this background, this study aims to describe the use of conjunctions by third-semester students of the German Language Education program at Universitas Negeri Malang in their oral communication video assignments and identify the grammatical errors in their usage. The focus of this research lies in how students use conjunctions in their spoken production and the grammatical deviations that can be observed. The findings are expected

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to provide an overview of students' grammatical competence in speaking contexts and serve as a basis for evaluating and improving teaching strategies for speaking skills in German.

Method

This research employs a qualitative approach using content analysis methods. Data were collected by analyzing vlogs created by students as part of their learning assignments. The steps for data collection included: 1. Selecting and downloading videos from the learning platform, 2. Transcribing students' spoken content, and 3. Identifying and recording all conjunctions appearing in the transcripts. The collected data were analyzed using the German grammar theory by Helbig and Buscha (1996). This analysis aims to provide insights into the students' understanding of causal conjunctions and assist in formulating recommendations for more effective teaching practices in the future.

Results

This study analyzed the use of conjunctions in oral communication video assignments created by third-semester students of the German Language Education program at Universitas Negeri Malang. Based on the transcription of eight group videos, two main types of conjunctions were identified: 28 coordinating conjunctions and 40 subordinating conjunctions, detailed as follows:
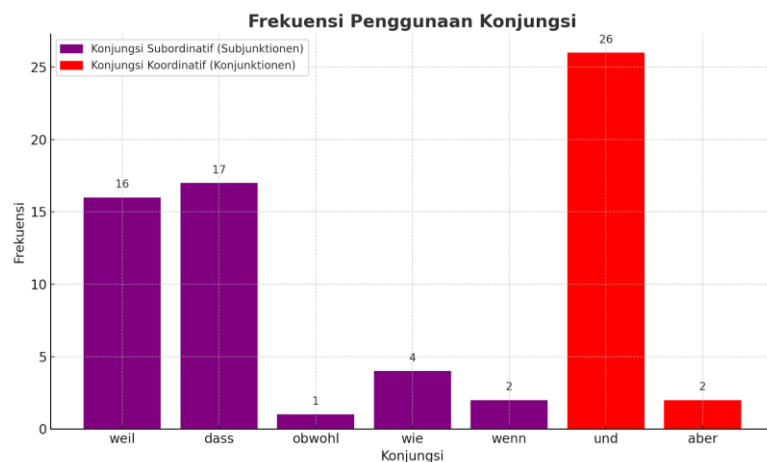

Figure 1. Frequency of Conjunction Usage

The figure above illustrates the frequency of conjunction usage by students in their oral communication video assignments. Subordinating conjunctions were used 40 times, while coordinating conjunctions appeared 28 times. The most frequently used subordinating conjunctions were *dass* (17) and *weil* (16), followed by *wenn* (4), *wie* (2), and *obwohl* (1). Among coordinating conjunctions, *und* dominated with 26 occurrences, and *aber* appeared only twice. These data suggest that students predominantly constructed complex sentences using subordination, although coordination was also employed.

Documentation Results

Table 1. Documentation of Conjunction Errors

Kode kelompok	Kalimat	Jenis Konjungsi
G3	*„Ich bin interessiert, **weil** ich möchte wissen warum das Universum spass ist."*	Subordinatif
G3	*„Ich habe dieses Thema gewählt, **weil** ist es interessant"*	Subordinatif
G4	*„Wir haben uns für dieses Objekt entschieden, **weil** der Tawon Vespa Velutina ein interessantes Beispiel für die Auswirkungen von globalem Handel und Klimawandel"*	Subordinatif
G4	*„Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, **dass** der Tawon Vespa Velutina ein Beispiel für die Herausforderungen sind,...."*	Subordinatif
G5	*„Ich wähle das Objekt, **weil** ist interessant für mich."*	Subordinatif
G5	*„Supernova ist sehr wichtig, **weil** sie eine wichtige Rolle beim im Galaxien."*	Subordinatif
G7	*„Die Existenz dieser prähistorischen Flöten zeigt, **dass** Menschen haben schon vor langer Zeit Musik gemacht."*	Subordinatif
G7	*„Es gibt noch viele Geheimnisse, die wir im Weltraum entdecken können, **denn** das Universum riesig ist."*	Koordinativ

The documentation table records several sentences spoken by students in their vlog assignments. This research focuses on the use and grammatical errors of conjunctions in German, which significantly influence sentence structure, particularly in connecting main clauses (*Hauptsatz*) and subordinate clauses (*Nebensatz*). Each sentence is grouped by team code and analyzed based on the type of conjunction used, whether subordinating or coordinating. Group codes (e.g., G1, G2, G3) were assigned for ease of tracking the analysis.

The table also highlights common errors such as verb placement, incorrect verb usage, missing subjects, and absent verbs in sentences. These errors are categorized into four main types for clarity and further analysis:

- F1: Verb misplacement
- F2: Incorrect verb usage
- F3: Missing subject after conjunction
- F4: Missing verb in the sentence

Table 2. Documentation of Errors and Corrections

No	Kutipan	Kode kesalahan	Keterangan
1.	*„Ich bin interessiert, **weil** ich möchte wissen warum das Universum spass ist."*	F1, F2	● After the conjunction "weil," the main verb must be placed at the end of the clause. ● "Spaß" is not an adjective, so it cannot be used with "ist." ● Use "Spaß macht" to indicate enjoyment.
2.	*„Ich habe dieses Thema gewählt, **weil** ist es interessant"*	F1	● The placement of "ist es" is incorrect, and its order is misplaced.
3.	*„…, **weil** der Tawon Vespa Velutina ein interessantes Beispiel für die Auswirkungen von globalem Handel und Klimawandel"*	F4	● The clause lacks a main verb at the end after "weil."
4.	*„Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, **dass** der Tawon Vespa Velutina ein Beispiel für die Herausforderungen sind,…."*	F2	● In a subordinative clause with "dass," the main verb must be at the end of the clause. ● The verb must match the subject. ● For this context, the singular subject requires "ist," not "sind."
5.	*„Ich wähle das Objekt, **wei**l ist interessant für mich."*	F1,F3	● The verb placement does not follow the rules for the subordinating conjunction "weil," and the subject "es" is missing.
6.	*„Supernova ist sehr wichtig, **weil** sie eine wichtige Rolle beim im Galaxien."*	F4	● The sentence after "weil" is incomplete as it lacks a clear main verb.
7.	*„Die Existenz dieser prähistorischen Flöten zeigt, **dass** Menschen haben schon vor langer Zeit Musik gemacht."*	F1	● The sequence "haben ... gemacht" should be placed at the end of the subordinate clause.
8.	*„Es gibt noch viele Geheimnisse, die wir im Weltraum entdecken*	F1	● "Denn" is a coordinating conjunction.

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*können, **denn** das Universum riesig ist."*	● The clause after "denn" should follow the normal order: subject + verb + object.

Discussion

The documentation results indicate that verb position errors (F1) were the most frequent, occurring five times. These errors commonly appeared in subordinate clauses introduced by conjunctions such as *weil* or *dass*. For instance, the sentence "Ich wähle das Objekt, weil ist interessant für mich" should be corrected to *"weil es interessant für mich ist."* Errors in verb usage (F2) and missing verbs (F4) were each observed twice. An example of F2 is *"…dass der Tawon Vespa Velutina ein Beispiel für die Herausforderungen sind,"* where the correct verb form is *ist*. Meanwhile, F4 occurred in sentences lacking a main verb, such as *"…weil der Tawon Vespa Velutina ein interessantes Beispiel…,"* which requires the addition of *ist*. The absence of a subject (F3) was identified only once, as in "Ich wähle das Objekt, weil ist interessant für mich," where the subject *es* is missing. This analysis suggests that F1 errors require the most attention, followed by F2 and F4, while F3 appears less frequently.

Errors in the use of German conjunctions are often attributed to complex factors, including linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical aspects. One of the main causes is first-language interference, particularly from Indonesian. Students learning German are frequently influenced by the syntactic and structural rules of their native language, which differ significantly from those of German, resulting in difficulties in conjunction usage. Previous research indicates that students tend to use appropriate conjunctions in the context of their mother tongue but make errors when transitioning to German (Kokomaking et al., 2023).

Another important factor is the lack of understanding regarding the function and classification of conjunctions in German. German conjunctions are categorized into coordinating and subordinating types, each requiring specific syntactic structures. Inadequate comprehension of these distinctions often leads to the misuse of conjunctions, such as using a subordinating conjunction when a coordinating one is required, and vice versa. This issue is often compounded by insufficient instruction or ineffective pedagogical strategies for teaching conjunctions (Adhima, 2022). Pedagogical factors also play a critical role in these errors. As noted by Adhima (2022), students often do not receive adequate practice in using conjunctions. Most learners lack sufficient opportunities to apply conjunctions in both written and spoken contexts, which impairs their ability to use them correctly. Additionally, monotonous or non-interactive teaching methods may hinder students' comprehension of the topic (Kharis, 2024).

Furthermore, weaknesses in writing skills and general grammatical knowledge contribute to conjunction errors. Kurniawan (2022) emphasizes that students' writing challenges often stem from a limited understanding of linguistic systems, including the correct placement and selection of conjunctions in sentence structures. Emotional factors and student motivation also influence their success in mastering conjunction usage (Mantasiah et al., 2019).

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that students employed a variety of conjunctions in their *Mündliche Konversation* tasks, including both coordinating conjunctions such as *und* and *aber*, and subordinating conjunctions such as *weil*, *dass*, and *wenn*. The analyzed vlogs were the output of the *Mündliche Konversation* course, which aims to train students'

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speaking skills in a communicative and independent manner. Subordinating conjunctions were used more frequently, reflecting students' efforts to construct grammatically complex sentences. However, the accuracy of their usage varied. While some students applied the structure of subordinate clauses correctly, others were still inconsistent in placing verbs in the appropriate position within the clause. This suggests that their grammatical competence in conjunction usage is still developing and not yet fully mature.

Regarding grammatical errors, four main categories were identified: incorrect verb placement (F1), incorrect verb form or selection (F2), absence of a subject in the clause (F3), and absence of a verb in the clause (F4). The most dominant error type was related to verb placement in subordinate clauses. The factors contributing to these errors include first language interference, limited practice in constructing complex sentences, and a lack of explicit instruction on conjunction usage in spoken communication contexts. Therefore, more contextual, exploratory, and reflective teaching strategies are necessary to enhance students' grammatical competence in German speaking skills.

Acknowledgements or Notes

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