

# An Analysis of Students' Ability of Degree of Comparison in Writing Simple Sentences at Eighth Grade

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## ABSTRACT

This study uses a descriptive design in describing the abilities of students in grade VIII of Junior High School. The ability studied is the ability of students' comparative level in writing simple sentences using English. The ability tested is the degree of comparison of adjectives by giving students a writing test. The data was processed from taking convenience sampling of 20 students who were active in class. The test site was grade VIII students at the State Islamic Junior High School (MTsN) 5 Tebo. The researcher classified students' abilities based on the Madrasah Working Group (KKM) with a standard value of 75 (seventy-five). Students who have a score below 75 (seventy-five), are declared to have low abilities and those who have higher scores are declared to have high abilities. The test results are students with high abilities amounting to 15% who can write simple sentences using degrees of comparison in adjectives. Students with low abilities are 85% who cannot write simple sentences using degrees of comparison in adjectives. So, this study can be a reference in providing lessons on the ability to write simple sentences using adjectives to students in grade VIII of Junior High School.

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif dalam mendeskripsikan kemampuan siswa kelas VIII Sekolah Tingkat Menengah Pertama. Kemampuan yang diteliti adalah kemampuan tingkat perbandingan siswa dalam menulis kalimat sederhana menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Kemampuan yang diuji adalah derajat perbandingan kata sifat dengan memberikan tes menulis kepada siswa. Data diolah dari pengambilan sampel *convenience sampling* terhadap 20 siswa yang aktif dikelas. Tempat pengujian adalah siswa kelas VIII pada Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri MTsN) 5 Tebo. Peneliti mengklasifikasikan kemampuan siswa berdasarkan Kelompok Kerja Madrasah (KKM) dengan nilai standar adalah 75 (tujuh puluh lima). Siswa yang memiliki skor di bawah 75 (tujuh puluh lima), maka dinyatakan memiliki kemampuan rendah dan yang memiliki nilai lebih dinyatakan dengan memiliki kemampuan tinggi. Hasil tes adalah siswa dengan kemampuan tinggi berjumlah 15% dapat menulis kalimat sederhana menggunakan derajat perbandingan pada kata sifat. Siswa dengan kemampuan rendah adalah 85% dengan tidak dapat menulis kalimat sederhana dengan menggunakan tingkat perbandingan dalam kata sifat. Sehingga penelitian ini dapat menjadikan rujukan dalam memberikan pelajaran kemampuan menulis kalimat sederhana menggunakan kata sifat terhadap siswa-siswa kelas VIII Sekolah Tingkat Menengah Pertama.

## 1. Introduction

In studying English, English grammar occupies a central position because it is one of the elements of the language which should be mastered [1]. Mastering the grammar of language will affect the mastery of language skills [2]. Moreover, grammar is beneficial for English learners because incorrect use or lack of understanding of grammar might hinder communication either in speaking, writing, listening, or reading [3]. Thus, grammar has an important role in learning English to enhance students become effective speakers.

Therefore, grammar ability is essential for students because it will support the mastery of writing skills [4].

Writing ability is one of the important aspects of language ability [5]. In this era of information technology, as an educated nation, of course, people feel less satisfied if they can only obtain information or ideas sourced from other nations by using their reading ability. They also want to convey information or ideas useful to other nations or mankind in writing. In this case, the ability to write becomes very important [6].

As productive skills, writing is not like speaking skills or other receptive skills. Writing has many rules when the writer showed the meaning of something [7]. It's different from speaking, writing needs a good sentence [8]. The complex sentence also includes grammar and it was not easy, the speaker needs understood the rule of grammar [9].

In this research, one grammar had degrees of comparison material. Nevertheless, the students have to understand the language to communicate. So, the students have to study grammar, because grammar is useful in constructing sentences to avoid ambiguity [10]. Many aspects are discussed in English grammar; one of them is the degrees of comparison of an adjective or adverb describing the different levels of quality, quantity, or relation [11]. But this study is only focused on the adjective.

Degree is one of the forms used in the comparison of adjectives and adverbs [12]. Comparison is the modification or inflection of an adjective or adverb to denote the three degrees (positive, comparison, and superlative). A comparison degree is a comparison between two words that are differently used for animals or nouns. Comparison degree is degrees or stages or levels of comparing something or someone with something or someone else. Among the kinds of English grammar, a comparison degree is one of the aspects that should be mastered well. Comparison degrees have a function to compare two or more things in life so it is important for students to learn this. The comparison is signaled in English by the suffix-er or by a word of comparative (bad, good, far, little, many, and old) and the conjunction- or preposition- like the word as or than.

Comparison is a name that is given to grammar by using to compare two, animals, nouns, etc. Comparison is the second degree of comparison of adjectives from

an adverb. The irregular form of the comparative degree has definite words. There is some adjective that has irregular form. For example, comparative degree in irregular adjectives. Bad - Worse- Worst, Far-Further-Furthest, Good- Better- Best, Little-Less-Least, Many, Much, Some-More-Most. As we can see above the comparison degree in irregular have a different form from the positive form, different from the comparison degree in a regular form that we only need to put the suffix er, and est or more and the most to make the comparative and the superlative degree.

An adjective is a word that expresses the attribute of substance (good, young, easy, loud hard, wooden, flaxen) [13]. Adjectives are used to describe or modify nouns and pronouns [14]. Based on the statement above it can be concluded that an adjective performs the function of an attribute (an adjunct) and a predicative. Adjectives have the forms of degrees of comparison. The forms of degrees of comparison of adjectives are not simply described. Their forms are also divided into the forms of degrees of comparison of regular adjectives and the forms of degrees of comparison of irregular adjectives.

Degrees of comparison of adjectives regularly have transformations by adding inflections -er than and more ... than for comparative and the ... - est and the most ... for superlative. The rules for constructing the comparative and superlative degrees of comparison of adjectives, based on Frank, can be seen Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Adjectives of One and Three Syllables [15]

	Comparative Degree	Superlative Degree
Adjective of <i>one syllable</i>	Add <b>-er</b> to the adjective. Add <b>that</b> after the adjective. (tall) <b>-er than</b>	Add <b>-est</b> to the adjective. Add <b>the</b> before the adjective. <b>The (tall) -est</b>
Adjective of <i>three or more syllables</i>	Add <b>more</b> before the adjective Add <b>that</b> after the adjective <b>More (beautiful) than</b>	Add <b>the most</b> before the adjective <b>The most (beautiful)</b>

A researcher mentions some explanations and examples about the degrees of comparison of irregular adjectives in which can be seen Table 2.

Table 2. Explanations and Examples about The Degrees of Comparison [16]

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Good	Better	Best
Bad	Worse	Worst
Far	Farther	Farthest
Little	Less	Least
Much/Many	More	Most

Furthermore, Indonesian learners find much difficulty in learning grammar. The writer has observed and asked the students of MTSN 5 Tebo what difficulties they find in learning grammar. First, they say that they feel so difficult to understand and remember the lesson, they said that English is a foreign language in their minds. Second, they feel so dizzy and afraid. Dizzy for

doing many questions that must agree with some formulas, and afraid to make some mistakes when speaking or writing the texts. The last, they feel lazy. Lazy for studying grammar, because of the less enough motivation from their teacher. As a result, the less knowledge about the usability of grammar in their real life, make them feel low in a score and useless in learning grammar.

Besides, they said that they feel confused to comparing something and someone. They cannot compare nouns in their size and have difficulties remembering some adjectives. Some students' examples of the problems in the degree of comparison are difficult to remember some words included in adjectives. These words are small, strong, big, and others. Other than that, they are confusing to compare someone and something. This is because there are two kinds of comparison, among them comparative and superlative. To make a

comparative and superlative sentence, students must use addition by adding -er or -more and -est or most in adjective. For example, I am younger than Hasan Hasan is older than me (comparative) and Sinta is the most beautiful in the class (superlative). Because of these additions, students feel confused, dizzy, and bored with learning. Based on the interview above, the researcher found difficulties in learning the Degree of comparison.

## 2. Research Method

This research was descriptive design because it described the ability of the eighth-grade students of the State Islamic Junior High School (MTsN) 5 Tebo to write simple sentences using a degree of comparison. Descriptive research involves collecting data to answer the question concerning the current status of the subject of the study [17]. The researcher conducted the research to investigate the students' ability to write the degree of comparison in a simple sentence. the researcher will take the whole students of the first semester of the eighth grade of MTSN 5 Tebo 2020/2021 academic year. There are 72 students divided into three classes for the eighth grade of MTSN 5 Tebo. In this research, the researcher took 8A classes as a population of 24 students.

The researcher uses convenience sampling as a sampling technique. Convenience sampling is an accidental sampling technique. It is based on the availability of the sample. Convenience sampling involves drawing samples that are both easily accessible and willing to participate in a study [17]. In other words, this sampling method involves getting participants wherever you can find them and typically wherever is convenient. In inconvenience sampling, no inclusion criteria were identified before the selection of

subjects. All subjects were invited to participate. Convenience sampling is a type of sampling where the first available primary data source is used for the research without additional requirements. The writer took 20 students from 24 students because the rest of them were absent. The instrument used in this research was a grammar test in the form of writing sentences. The researcher asked the students to use degrees of comparison to write simple sentences, they were 10 items for comparative degrees and 10 items for the superlative degree. It can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Item Specification of Test

No	Aspects	Sentences
1.	The Adjective	5
2.	The Degree of Comparison of Adjective	5
3.	The Degree of Comparison of Regular Adjective	5
4.	The Degree of Comparison of Irregular Adjectives	5
Total		20

The data of this research are students' scores on writing simple sentences using degrees of comparison. To collect the data the researcher used some steps as follows:

- The researcher administered the test.
- The researcher collected the students' answer sheets.
- The researcher copied all of the answer sheets. The original ones were for the first scorer and the other ones were for the second scorer.
- The first and second scorers analyzed the student's answers.
- The first and second scorers gave scorers based on the criteria can be seen Table 4.

Table 4. Criteria for giving the score

No	Component	Subcomponent	Criteria for scoring each item	Score
1.	Idea	There are subject and predicate agreement	There are subject and predicate agreements with each other	1
2.	Degrees of Comparison	There are correct comparative degrees or superlative degrees	a. There is a correct comparative degree of the adjective b. There is a correct superlative degree of the adjective	1
3.	Grammar	Tenses	The use of tenses is correct	1
4.	Mechanics	Capitalization, punctuation, and spelling	The use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is correct	1
Total Score				4

To analyze the data, the researcher classified the result of student test according to idea, degree of comparison, grammar and mechanic who used by the students. The criteria to analysis the result is:

- There are subject and predicate agreements with each other
- There is a correct comparative degree of the adjective
- There is correct superlative degree of the adjective
- The use of tenses is correct

- The use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is correct.

## 3. Result and Discussion

This research uses descriptive design to describe the ability of the eighth-grade students of MTSN 5 Tebo to write simple sentences using a degree of comparison. In general, the purpose of this study was to describe the student's ability to write simple sentences using a degree of comparison. The researcher gave a writing test to the students to take a score on student ability to write simple sentences using a degree of comparison of adjectives. The researcher uses convenience sampling

as a sampling technique and took 20 students from 24 can be seen Table 5. students because the rest of them were absent. The data

Table 5. Test Result

No	Students' initial	Students' sentences	Analysis
1	UK	a. Taller b. Biger c. Longer d. Smaller e. Shorter	The student should write the complete simple sentence based on the example.
2	RP	a. Dewi is taller than Suci b. Kenzo is bigger than Kenzi c. My hair is longer than... d. Desi is smaller than Kiki e. You is shorter than me	There is a correct comparative degree with one syllable of adjective. The student should write in the point e, "You are". The use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is correct.
3	RPN	a. Tia is tall than Dina b. Tia is bigger than Putra c. - d. - e. -	There isn't a correct comparative degree with one syllable of adjective. The student should write in the point a <b>"taller"</b> not <b>"tall"</b> . And in the point b, the student should write <b>"bigger"</b> not <b>"biger"</b> . The use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling isn't correct.
4	FF	a. Lisa is taller than ana b. Lisa is bigger than ana c. - d. - e. -	There is a correct comparative degree with one syllable of adjective. The student should write a simple sentence until point e. The use of the speeling isn't correct
5	FF	a. Aan is taller than marley b. desta is bigger than rahmat c. - d. - e. -	There is a correct comparative degree with one syllable of adjective. The student should write a simple sentence until point e. The use of the speeling is correct
6	FA	a. Kiko is taller than me b. My body is bigger than Fren c. My hair is Longer than your HAIR d. My Book is SMALLER ThAN Your Book e. Ica Have shorter HAIR thAN ME	There is a correct comparative degree with one syllable of adjective. The student should write in the point b <b>"bigger"</b> not <b>"biger"</b> . The use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling isn't correct
7	AN	a. Kevin is taller than me b. My bag is bigger than your bag c. My hair is longer than your hair d. My class is smaller than your class e. She is shorter than me	There is a correct comparative degree with one syllable of adjective. The student should write in the point b <b>"bigger"</b> not <b>"biger"</b> . The use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is correct
8	EP	a. Eka is taller than tia b. Riki is bigger than rahman c. My foot is longer than your foot d. My class is smaller than other class e. My hand is shorter than your hand	There is a correct comparative degree with one syllable of adjective. The student should write in the point b <b>"bigger"</b> not <b>"biger"</b> . The use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling isn't correct
9	KP	a. Jack is taller than Cian b. My bag is bigger than your bag c. My hair is longer than your hair d. My class is smaller than your class e. She is shorten than me	There is a correct comparative degree with one syllable of adjective. The student should write in the point b <b>"bigger"</b> not <b>"biger"</b> . The use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is correct
10	NN	a. Fadil is taller than kevin b. My cat is bigger than your cat c. My hair is longer than sisi d. My book is smaller than your book e. Dina is shorter than me	There is a correct comparative degree with one syllable of adjective. The use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling is correct

Based on the finding of students' ability to write simple one syllable, the average student or respondent in this sentences using comparative degree of adjective with study was not able to write simple sentences on the test

sheet given by the researcher. This is illustrated by the number of students who do not write simple sentences based on examples. In addition, based on the ideas that have been given examples, students have not been able to develop words into simple sentences using the comparative degree of adjective. Most of the students are also not able to compose sentences with proper grammar. Most of students also have errors in punctuation and spelling.

The researcher would like to discuss the finding of the research. According to data analysis, it can be known that the student who had a low ability to write simple sentences using a degree of comparison in adjectives is 85%. This is in line with another research that found the from 12 students of first grade at Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah Aimas got score, to comparative degree in worse = 69%, better = 62%, farther = 85%, less = 69%, more = 96%, elder = 7,7% [12]. Commonly, their ability can be seen based on the score of the test, in which they got their mean score of tests was 47%. The writer can explain that the students of the first grade at Madrasah Aliyah Muhammadiyah Aimas yet understand about the comparative degree, their ability was still included in the bad category, and superlative degree specifically on worst = 65%, best = 50%, farthest = 23%, least = 8%, most = 31%, Eldest = 89%. In overall, can be seen their mean score of superlative degree = 32%. It means that their ability in a superlative degree was very bad. By this result, the writer found that the student's understanding of superlative degree was still very minus.

Other research found the result of the test shows that students have different abilities in mastery comparison degrees [18]. The result of the data can be concluded that students' mastery of comparison degree is the percentage of students' mastery of comparison degree that was excellent, there were 3 persons. So, the percentage is 30%. There was 1 person categorized well. So, the percentage is 10%. The percentage of students' mastery of comparison degree that was fair, there were 6 persons. So, the percentage is 60%.

The last research found that the result of the data analysis of students' mastery in using degrees of comparison of the tenth-grade students of SMK PGRI 4 Bandar Lampung was that the student's mastery in degrees of comparison that had fair level was 12 students or 40% the students' mastery [19]. In comparison, that had poor level were 7 students or 23,33% the students' mastery. In comparison, that had good level was 6 students or 20%, the student's mastery in degrees of comparison that had very poor level were 3 students or 10%, and the student's mastery in degrees of comparison that had excellent level were 2 students or 6,67%. According to the other research above, it can be concluded that there are similarities between the results of this study and previous studies, where the

ability of students to write simple sentences in the degree of comparison of adjectives is still very low.

#### 4. Conclusion

The researcher findings show that the students' ability to write simple sentences using comparative degree of adjective for MTSN 5 Tebo is very low. It means that, almost all of the student ability in very low category. Some suggestions can be given to teachers when teaching their students especially in teaching degrees of comparison to make their students not have the difficulty anymore. First, they should be well prepared, which means that before entering the classroom they should prepare the material that is going to be taught to the students and it is also necessary for them to find another source to make their teaching better. Second, they should give detailed and clear explanations to their students about how to make the form of comparative and superlative degree, such as the function of being, then, and then, adding adjectives only with -r (for comparative) and -st (for superlative), forming the adjective that ends in -y, forming the adjectives that have a double consonant, how to use comparative with the prefix -er (for comparative), and -est (for superlative) and also suffix more (for comparative) and most (for superlative). Third, they should give a real and interesting example by comparing the two students or things to make the students understand the materials or to give the motivation to make them pay attention to the teacher's explanation. Fourth, they need to improve their method of teaching. The last, they should order the students to practice making the comparative and superlative degrees either oral or written to make them get into the habit of making the sentences of comparative and superlative degrees

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