

A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF SMA PGRI PEKANBARU IN USING COMPARATIVE DEGREE

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Abstract

The general objective of this study was to find out the ability of the second year students in using comparative degree. This research was conducted at SMA PGRI Pekanbaru on July 2012 in the Academic year of 2012/2013. The sample of the research was 36 students of class XI IA-2. The data was collected by using completion test. The writer conducted a try out in another class before the test was given. Based on the calculation, there were 12 items were rejected. There were 4 items being revised because their facility value scores were lower than 0,30 (difficult), and 8 items being revised because their facility value scores were higher than 0,70 (easy). The result of this study showed that the ability of the second year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru in using comparative degree was at Good level with the mean score 62.56. Furthermore, based on the percentage of the students' ability in using comparative degree of each classification of the comparative degree formation, it can be inferred that the comparative adverb was considered as the most difficult one for the students, with the percentage of 46.12 %. The next was the comparative with nouns, with the percentage of 64.78%, while comparative adjectives was considered as the easiest one for the second year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru, with the percentage of 71.78%.

Keywords: Descriptive Research, Ability, Comparative Degree

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is one of the important elements in English that should be learned. Without grammar, people will not be able to communicate and understand each other. **Nasr (1985)** states: "Grammar is a part of any language. Just as there is no language without sounds, so there is no language without grammar".

In learning English, the learners should know and understand structure. Structure belongs to language components; grammar, vocabulary, and sounds that support language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, part of speech are noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, article, preposition, and interjection. By understanding the structural points, the learners can understand the language system and understand how the language is naturally constructed and used.

In KTSP (2006), the first year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru learned about comparative degree; positive, comparative, and superlative in comprehending descriptive text. In this study, the writer would analyze the second year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru in using comparative degree because they have background knowledge about comparative degree.

Comparative degree is the form of an adjective or adverb that denotes the degree or grade by which a person, thing, or other entity has a property or quality greater or less in extent than that of another. **Swan (1995)** states that comparatives are used to compare one person, thing, action event or group with another person, thing, action, event, group, etc. It focuses on three kinds of comparison degree; comparative adjective, comparative adverb, and comparative noun. **Aggarwal, J. C (1985, 70)** divides the comparison into three degrees: positive degree, comparative degree, and superlative degree. In forming positive degree, we add *as.....as* like Tina is *as old as* Sam is. For comparative degree we usually add *-er* (1 syllable) like Mr. John is *older than* Mr. James and *more* (2 or more syllable) like Santi is *more beautiful than* Tina. In addition, for Superlative Degree we add *-est* (1 syllable) like The book is *the cheapest of* all of the books in the library and *most* (2 or more syllable) like Sarah is *the most beautiful of* her friends.

Unfortunately, the students often face some difficulties when the teacher asks them to write English. Most students find difficulty in writing a simple sentence especially in using degree of comparison; positive, comparative, and superlative because before learning comparative degree, the students should have some previous knowledge; comparison, adjective, and adverb. It is proven that the language is so difficult because before learning comparative degree, the students should have previous knowledge such as comparison, adjective, and adverb. Therefore, the writer is interested in conducting the research entitled "A Study on the Ability of the Second Year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru in Using Comparative Degree".

The writer expects this study can be useful especially for the writer and the students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru. For the writer, this study can improve her knowledge especially in solving her students' problem in using comparative degree. For the students, particularly the students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru, this study can enlarge their knowledge in using good comparative degree forms.

METHODOLOGY

The study is a descriptive research. It means that this research just supports the existing theory by using the theory itself. According to **Gay (1987)**, a descriptive research involves collecting data to test a hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. It is conducted to find out the students' ability in using comparative degree.

The study was conducted at SMA PGRI Pekanbaru in July 2012 to November 2012. The population is the second year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru since they have learned about comparative degree. The total population of this study is 236 students. They are divided into seven classes: XI IA 1, XI IA 2, XI IA 3, XI IS 1, XI IS 2, XI IS 3, and XI IS 4. In this case, the writer used cluster sampling technique to take the sample. According to **Gay and Peter (2000)**, cluster sampling means that the sampling in which groups, not individuals, is randomly selected. All the members of selected groups have similar characteristics. In taking the sample, the writer provides seven pieces of paper into a box, in which one of them is written the word "sample" while on the others, are not. Then, the writer asks the chairman of each class to take the folded paper from the box. The chairman which took the paper written "sample" in it is selected as the sample of the research. The result determines that the sample of this research is XI IA- 2 consisting of 36 students.

In collecting the required data, the writer used a test as an instrument. The test is a completion test which are adopted from some grammar books and internet. The number of the test items is 40. In this case, the writer gave 90 minutes to the students in doing the test. The writer calculated the try out by using some formula:

Facility Value:

$$F.V = \frac{R}{N}$$

Where: F.V : facility value

R : the number of the correct answer

N : the number of students taking the test.

(Heaton: 1975)

The Discrimination Index:

$$D = \frac{\text{CorrectU} - \text{CorrectL}}{n}$$

In which:

D : Discrimination Index

n : Number of students in one group

U : Upper group correct answers

L : Lower group correct answers

(Heaton: 1975)

Mean Score:

$$m = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where: m = mean/ average score

$\sum fx$ = Total score of the students in forming comparative degree

N = number of the students

(Hatch & Farhady: 1982)

Standard Deviation:

$$s.d = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N}}$$

Where: s.d = standard deviation

$\sum d^2$ = mean of deviation

N = the number of students

(Hatch & Farhady: 1982)

Reliability Test:

$$r_{ii} = \frac{N}{N-1} \left[1 - \frac{m(N-m)}{Nx^2} \right]$$

where: rii = the reliability

N = the number of the items in the test

m = the mean scores of the items

x = the standard deviation of the test score

(Heaton: 1975)

According to Tinambunan (1988: 45), the classification of the reliability of the test is as follows:

Table 1. The Classification of the Reliability of the Test

Reliability	Classification
0.71 – 1.00	Very high
0.41 – 0.70	High
0.21 – 0.40	Sufficient
0 - 0.20	Low

To classify scores obtained by the students, the writer establishes some categories. The classification is as follows:

Table 2. The classification of the Students' Scores

Score	Ability
81 – 100	A = Excellent
61 – 80	B = Good
41 – 60	C = Mediocre
21 - 40	D = Poor
0 – 20	E = Very poor

(Harris:1969)

The students' result in doing test given is analyzed using Harris (1969: 79) formula. The students' score that based on the number of their correct answers divided by number of the items, then, multiplied by 100. The formula is drawn as follow:

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

M : Individual score

$\sum X$: The number of correct answers

N : The number of items

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before the real test is given to the students, the writer did try out to thirty-six students of second year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru in using comparative degree. To find out the difficulty item, the writer calculated the discrimination index. Some items are rejected because the facility value is lower than 0.3 and higher than 0.7. The items number 12, 16, 20, and 28 were rejected because these items were categorized as too difficult (F.V below 0.30). The items number 9, 13, 17, 21, 23, 25, 26, and 27 were also rejected because these items were categorized as too easy (F.V higher than 0, 70). The writer had revised all the items. Then, to find out the reliability of the test, the writer calculated mean score (21.42) and standard deviation (4.1) was 0.42 (considered *high*).

The ability of second year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru in using comparative degree can be seen in the table 3:

Table 3. The Students' Individual Scores and Classification

Students	Number of Items	Correct Answer	Scores	Classification
1	40	28	70	Good
2	40	27	67.5	Good
3	40	25	62.5	Good
4	40	22	55	Mediocre
5	40	18	45	Mediocre
6	40	28	70	Good
7	40	23	57.5	Mediocre
8	40	39	97.5	Excellent
9	40	30	75	Good
10	40	27	67.5	Good
11	40	27	67.5	Good
12	40	30	75	Good
13	40	39	97.5	Excellent
14	40	27	67.5	Good
15	40	29	72.5	Good
16	40	36	90	Excellent
17	40	32	80	Good
18	40	35	87.5	Excellent
19	40	31	77.5	Good
20	40	26	65	Good
21	40	22	55	Mediocre
22	40	24	60	Mediocre
23	40	30	57.5	Mediocre
24	40	39	97.5	Excellent
25	40	38	95	Excellent
26	40	23	57.5	Mediocre
27	40	23	57.5	Mediocre
28	40	30	75	Good
29	40	31	77.5	Good
30	40	23	57.5	Mediocre
31	40	28	70	Good
32	40	31	77.5	Good
33	40	27	67.5	Good
34	40	22	55	Mediocre
35	40	21	52.5	Mediocre
36	40	17	42.5	Poor
Total		1009	2502.5	Level of Ability: Good
Average		25.225	62.5625	

The table shows that the mean score of the second year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru in using comparative degree is **62.56**. It can be concluded that their ability in using comparative degree is at **Good** level. Table 1 shows that the highest score obtained by the students is **97.5** while the lowest score is **42.5**.

Based on the results, the ability of second year students in SMA PGRI Pekanbaru in using comparative degree can be classified into five categories are presented in table 4:

Table 4. The classification of the Students' Scores

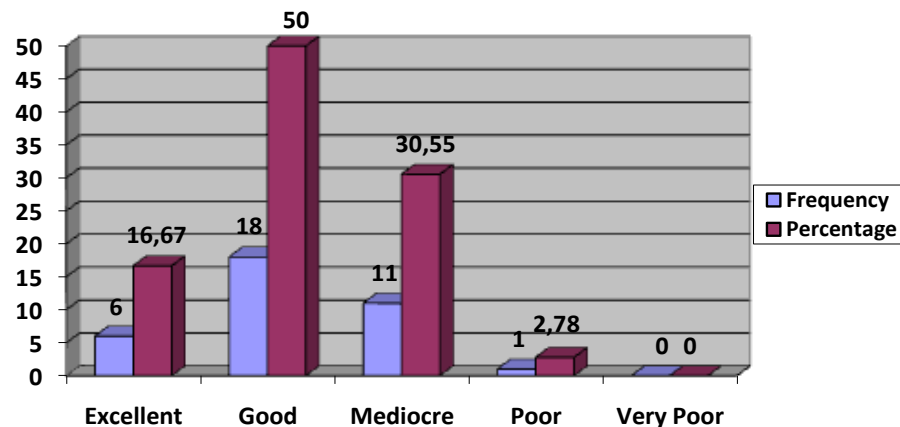
No.	Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Ability
1	81 – 100	6	16.67 %	Excellent
2	61 – 80	18	50 %	Good
3	41 – 60	11	30.55 %	Mediocre
4	21 – 40	1	2.78 %	Poor
5	0 – 20	0	0 %	Very poor

Table 4 shows that out of 36 students taking the test, 6 students or 16.67% of the students are at *excellent* level, 18 students or 50% of the students are at *good* level, 11 students or 30.55% of the students are at *mediocre* level, and 1 student or 2.78% of the students is at *poor* level.

The percentage of the students' score classification above can also be presented in a graph, as follows:

Graph 1

The Classification of the Students' Ability in Using Comparative Degree



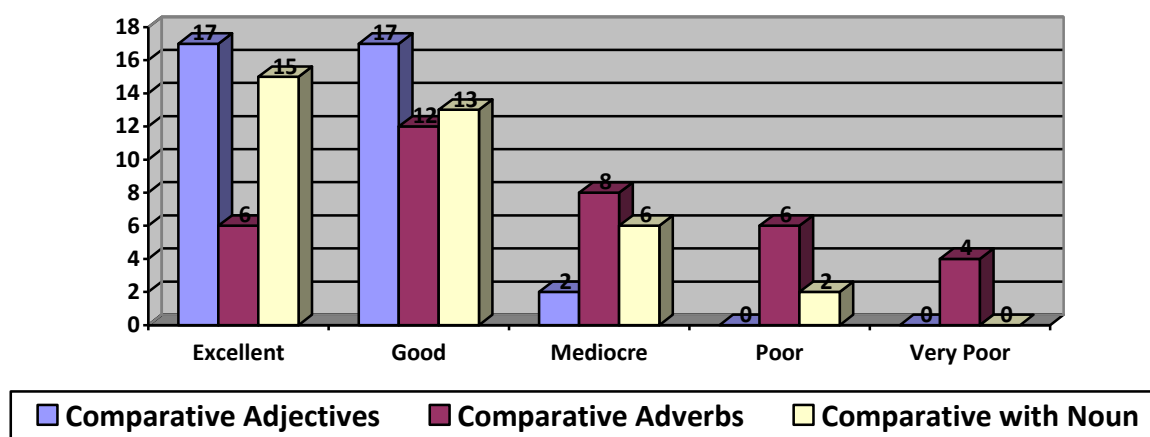
The percentage of the students' ability in using comparative degree of each classification of the comparative degree formation; comparative adjectives, comparative adverbs, and comparative with noun can be seen below:

Table 5. The Classification of the Students' Ability in Using Comparative Adjectives

No.	Score	Ability	Comparative Degree					
			Comparative Adjectives		Comparative Adverbs		Comparative with Noun	
			F	%	F	%	F	%
1	81 – 100	Excellent	17	47.2%	6	16.7%	15	41.7%
2	61 – 80	Good	17	47.2%	12	33.3%	13	36.1%
3	41 – 60	Mediocre	2	5.6%	8	22.2%	6	16.7%
4	21 – 40	Poor	0	0%	6	16.7%	2	5.5%
5	0 – 20	Very poor	0	0%	4	11.1%	-	-
Average			71.78		46.12		64.78	

Based on the table above, most of students can complete the sentences in “comparative adjectives” and it is considered as the easiest one for the students, with the mean score is 71.78. The next is “comparative with nouns”, with the mean score is 64.78, while “comparative adverbs” is considered as the most difficult for the students because most of students still find difficulties in completing the sentences, with the mean score is 46.12.

The data on the table above can be illustrated by the following graph:



CONCLUSIONS

After finding the result and analyzing it, the writer comes to the conclusions that the ability of the second year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru in using comparative degree is at **Good** level with the mean score **62.56**. Based on the KKM for the second year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru; 73, the students' ability in using comparative degrees was below the KKM but in **Good** level classification. From the analyses, out of 36 students taking test, 6 students (16.67%) are at *excellent* level, 18 students (50%) are at *good* level, 11 students (30.55%) are at *mediocre* level, and 1 student (2.78%) is at *poor* level.

Among the three classifications of the comparative degree formation, the comparative adverbs is considered as the most difficult one for the students, with the percentage of 46.12 %. The next is the comparative with nouns, with the percentage of 64.78%, while comparative adjectives is considered as the easiest one for the second year students of SMA PGRI Pekanbaru, with the percentage of 71.78%.

SUGGESTIONS

Looking at the result of the research, the writer would like to give some suggestions. First, it is suggested that in teaching comparative degree, teacher should work hard in giving more explanation about the rules, form of comparative degree and so on to the students. Therefore, students can complete good sentences. Second, it is also suggested to the students should study more about comparative degree in order to have more knowledge so that students were not confused which adjectives or adverbs use –er form, more form, irregular form and either –er form or more form. Beside that, the students should do more exercises about using comparative degree in sentences in order to have good ability.

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