

A STUDY OF EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI 4 KOTA BENGKULU: STUDENTS' MASTERY IN DEGREES OF COMPARISON

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KEYWORDS

Adjective, Degrees of Comparison, Grammar, Mastery.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the ability of students in grade VIII of SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu in mastering the degrees of comparison material. This research is case study and using a quantitative descriptive method. The subjects in this study were 64 students of class VIII which were divided into 2 classes, namely class 86 which amounted to 33 students, and class 87 which amounted to 31 students. The instruments used in this research are test which are the main instrument and interview as an additional instrument. The test given to students was 30 items with 3 different types of questions. In analyzing the data, researcher used several formulas. The results showed that students of grade VIII SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu in the academic year 2022/2023 were able to use degrees of comparison with a percentage of ability of 68.2%, and the level of student ability was categorized into fair. The problems faced by students of grade VIII SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu in the academic year 2022/2023 are in the material of degrees of comparison, namely their lack of understanding in using more or most and -er or -est on adjectives and irregular adjective.

APA 7th Citation:

Please do not write anything here. It will be filled by the editorial team after the acceptance.

Name, N. (Year). Title. *Wacana: Jurnal Penelitian Bahasa, Sastra dan Pengajaran*, Vol (Issue), page-page

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33369/jwacana>

INTRODUCTION

Chang (2011) stated, grammar—which is also the system of language rules—is at the heart of language teaching and learning. Moreover, Hirai (2010) stated grammar is a method to arrange sentences and produce good language. Some rules must be carried out in forming a sentence and these are studied in the components of grammar, this helps students to make grammatically correct sentences. Sentences that are arranged correctly according to grammatical rules will be more easily understood by the interlocutor and this also affects formal interests. According to Crystal (2004), grammar is the best method to express our feelings through the language's structural form. Harmer (2001) also revealed grammar is the description of how words can take on different forms and be used to make sentences in a language.

The researchers found many problems that were faced by the students in learning grammar in SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu. Lack of vocabulary mastery is one of the causes. There students whose vocabulary knowledge was good but lacking in the preparation of words into correct sentences and there was also the opposite, could compose sentences correctly but lacked vocabulary knowledge. The teacher revealed that there were still students who still did not understand about verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Some of students didn't know how to differentiate the form of comparative degree and the form of superlative degree even though the teacher has explained the material about comparison degree before.

Comparison degree, as defined by Tumijo (2011), is the process of comparing things, people, or places based on levels of quality or relationships, and it is created by adjectives and adverbs. Herring (2016) revealed a degree comparison of adjectives is used to compare objects, people, or locations based on their level of quality or adjectives. According to Kardimin (2011), there are three types of comparatives: positive, comparatives, and superlatives degrees. Riyanto (2010) revealed positive degree is used to compare two things or people, although there is no difference. Comparatives are defined as adjectives or adverbs ending in -er, such as larger, richer, or faster, while superlatives are defined as adjectives or adverbs ending in -est, e.g biggest, richest, fastest (Parrott 2004).

To make sure further, the researchers finally asked the English teacher who taught at the school about the obstacles she faced when teaching English. Therefore, the researcher wanted to know the ability of students in class VIII of SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu on the degrees of comparison material they had previously learned because students' lack of knowledge about the differences in degrees of comparison, namely the comparative degree and superlative degree.

Regarding several studies related to this topic, the first research was by Saputra (2018). The researcher conducted research on comparison degrees and found that the fourth semester students of English department of STKIP YPM Bangko have the highest ability among all students in terms of positive degree; they scored in the good category, then scored in the lower range in the comparative degree and in the form of superlative degree which belonged to the group of very low ability. The second previous study was published by Kurniawan & Oktalia (2017) and the results of the data analysis of students' mastery in using Degrees of comparison of the 10th grade students of SMK PGRI 4 Bandar Lampung showed that the students' mastery had fair level.

Based on what has been revealed in the research background, the researchers formulate the problem, that is how is the ability of VIII grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu in academic year 2022/2023 in mastering degrees of comparison material? The objective of this research was to find out the ability of VIII grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu in academic year 2022/2023 in mastering degrees of comparison material.

METHODS

Research Design

The type of this research was descriptive research that was carried out in a quantitative method. According to Arikunto (2010), descriptive research aims to

accurately characterize situations, conditions, and others, the findings are then presented in a research report. The descriptive research is good at presenting facts about the issues that will be discussed in this research. Quantitative involves the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and writing the result (Creswell 2009). It means the researcher had to count the students' score from the test to find out their achievements.

Instruments

This research used two instruments. The main instrument used in this research was a test and the researchers decided to use three types of tasks in this test for the research instrument: multiple choice, fill in the blank (completion), and true or false in degrees of comparison. Test is one of the measurement techniques in the form of writing which consists of a number of questions in the form of questions that must be done by learners (Sukendra & Atmaja, 2020). The additional instrument used in this research was the interview. An interview is a conversation conducted by two or more people that aims to get the information needed. According to Ulfatin (2014) Conversations are conducted by both parties, namely the researcher as the interviewer and the research subject as the informant. The interview conducted in this study was to find out the statements of the students whether they had difficulties in learning English and it could strengthen the results of the students' scores.

Data Analysis Procedures

The last step of this research was to analyze the data. After the data were obtained, the data were analyzed using quantitative descriptive techniques to find out how the VIII grade students mastered the comparison degree material from the test results by calculating the average student score in the form of a percentage by using the following formula (Marsalina, 2022). Furthermore, all scores were summed up and divided by the total number of students to calculate the average value of the test given. Thus, the formula for getting the mean or average score was as follows (Nurgiyantoro, Gunawan & Marzuki, 2012). After calculating the average student score, the values of student scores were calculated into percentage form, with the following formula (Dullay 1982) and then the researchers used the Arikunto form (2010), which is to classify the level of student mastery of the comparison material.

FINDINGS

Table 1 The Result of Students' Mastery in Degrees of Comparison

NO	Students' Score	Student's Categories	Frequency	Number of Scores
1	80 - 100	Excellent	22 students	1932
2	70 - 79	Good	14 students	1045
3	60 - 69	Fair	9 students	570
4	0 - 59	Poor	19 students	816
Total score				4363

Mean score	64 students	68.2
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After calculating the scores on the student test results, the researchers obtained the highest score of students is 97 with the correct answers are 29, the score by the school's standard of minimum completeness is 80 with the correct answers are 24 and, the lowest score is 13 with the correct answers are 4. The percentage of all students' scores and the percentage of student's ability in SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu was 68.2%. Then, the researcher concluded that 22 out of 64 students were able to use degrees of comparison and were able to fulfill the standard of minimum completeness meanwhile 28 other students still get low scores in mastering degrees of comparison.

Table 2 The Percentage of Students' Scores

NO	Students' Score	Student's Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	80 - 100	Excellent	22 students	34.4%
2	70 - 79	Good	14 students	21.9%
3	60 - 69	Fair	9 students	14%
4	0 - 59	Poor	19 students	29.7%
Total			64 students	100%

The Students' Mean Scores and Percentage in Each Degree

Table 3 The Mean Scores of Each Degree

Degrees of Comparison	Total Score	Mean Score
Positive Degree	5480	85.6
Comparative Degree	3600	56.3
Superlative Degree	4010	62.7

From the table above, it can be seen that at each degree, the researchers calculates all student scores and then calculates the mean score using the formula from by Nurgiyantoro, et. al (2012). Then the results obtained at the positive degree with a total score of 5480, the mean score is 85.6, at the comparative degree the total score is 3600 with a mean score of 56.3, and at the superlative degree the total score is 4010 with a mean score of 62.7.

The Students' Mean Scores and Percentage in Each Type of Tests

Table 4 The Mean Scores of Each Type in Both Class

Degrees of Comparison	Total Score	Mean Score
Type A (Multiple-choice)	4440	69.4
Type B (Fill the Blank)	4170	65.2
Type C (True of False)	4450	69.5

From the table above, it can be seen that at each type, the researchers calculate all student scores and then calculates the mean score with the same formula used previously. Then the results obtained at the type A question with a total score of 4440, the mean score is 69.4, at the type B question the total score is 4170 with a mean score of 65.2 and at the type C question the total score is 4450 with a mean score of 69.5.

The Students' Mean score and Percentage in Class 8.6

By using the same formula, it is found the mean of all the scores that students got in class 8.6 is 60.5. Then, the percentage of all students' scores obtained is 60.5%. Then, the researchers concluded that 4 out of 33 students in class 8.6 SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu were able to use degrees of comparison and were able to fulfill the standard of minimum completeness meanwhile, 29 other students still get low scores in mastering degrees of comparison.

The Students' Mean score and Percentage in Class 8.7

By using the same formula as above, it is found the mean of all the scores that students got in class 8.7 is 76.3. Then, the percentage of all students' scores obtained is 76.35%. Then, the researchers concluded that 18 out of 31 students in class 8.7 SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu were able to use degrees of comparison and were able to fulfill the standard of minimum completeness meanwhile, 13 other students still get low scores in mastering degrees of comparison.

The Results of Students' Interviews

Based on the answers of these students, it can be seen that learning English is difficult. The difficulties were the material and the vocabulary in English that they do not understand. Furthermore, the degrees of comparison material is quite difficult for them, especially in the comparative and superlative degree. However, they enjoy and understand when the teacher teaches because the teacher was fun, it's just that sometimes they can't hear the teacher's explanation because the teacher's voice is small. For extra lessons outside of the school itself, 4 out of 6 students took it, including for English. The four students were also the ones who get high scores on the test on degrees of comparison material that they have done, while the other 2 students get the lowest score on the test.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results, the researchers found several things. First, the mean of all students' scores on the degrees of comparison test was 68.2, while in class 8.6 it was 60.5 and in class 8.7 it was 76.3. It can be seen that class 8.7 has a greater mean than class 8.6. It can also be seen from the student's test results, that class 8.7 students have the highest test results compared to class 8.6.

Based on the interviews, the researchers found that students who got the highest score as well as those who exceed the minimum standard of completeness attended the extra English lesson outside of school, while those who got the lowest scores did not attend any extra English lesson. Moreover, students also revealed that they did not have serious problems with the way the teacher taught in class, because the teacher was kind

and fun when teaching, but the teacher's voice was quite lower which resulted in sometimes students not understanding what the teacher was explaining.

Based on the discussions above, some of the results of previous studies with this research have some similarities and some differences as well. In the results section, this research also found that students' mastery of degrees of comparison degree was at fair category, namely 68.2%. In addition, some previous studies show that the positive degree gets the highest percentage of other degrees. Some studies such as those conducted by Sakilah (2020), Kurniawan & Oktalia (2017), Adifatri, Rasyidah & Eripuddin (2015), and Daharni (2010) both get results in the fair category. Meanwhile, research conducted by Saputra (2018) produces data that shows students still have difficulty in using degrees of comparison

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the discussion above, the ability of class VIII students of SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu in the 2022/2023 academic year in mastering degrees of comparison material is in the fair category, namely 68.2%. With the minimum standard of completeness of English lessons, 22 students were able to use degrees of comparison and were able to fulfill this criterion. For class 86, students' ability in mastering degrees of comparison material is in the fair category, namely 60.5%. For class 87, students' ability in mastering the material degrees of comparison is in a good category, namely 76.3%. The researchers also found that students' mastery of the superlative degree was better than the comparative degree seen from the mean score of the students. In addition, students revealed that learning English is difficult, not to mention degrees of comparison which was also quite difficult for them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher would like to extend my utmost gratitude and sincere appreciation to Zahrida, S.S., M.Hum., as the main supervisor and Ildi Kurniawan, M.Pd., as the co-supervisor who has helped and guided the researchers in completing this thesis and Mei Hardiah, S.S., M.Hum., as the examiner I and Dr. Eni Sukesu, M.Pd., as the examiner II who have taken the time to assess this thesis and provide ideas and suggestions for the development of this thesis.

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