

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING A
COMPOUND SENTENCE THAT USES DEGREES OF COMPARISON
AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY**

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Abstract

This research was attempted to describe the first year students' difficulties in writing a compound sentence that used degrees of comparison at English Department of Bung Hatta University. The design of this research was descriptive. The number of population of this research were 63. The researcher used cluster random sampling in taking the sample since the students were distributed into classes and all members of population were homogeneous. The researcher took 50% of the population as the sample. It means there were 31 students as the sample. In collecting the data, the researcher used writing test. Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that some of the first year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that used degrees of comparison. In relation to the findings and conclusion, the lecturers are suggested to ask some of students who had no difficulties to always practice the degree of comparison in comparing adjectives and make a compound sentence to make them more fluently in writing compound sentences that use degrees of comparison. The lecturers are also expected to always use the degrees of comparison and compound sentence when communicate in the class. Since some other students still had difficulties in writing compound sentences that used degrees of comparison, the lecturers also are expected to improve students skills in writing compound sentences that use degrees of comparison by giving more exercises to the students that can minimize students' difficulties in writing compound sentences that use positive degree of adjectives, comparative degree of adjectives and superlative degree of adjectives.

Key words: Difficulties, Compound Sentence, Degrees of Comparison.

A. Introduction

English is one of the international languages. In teaching and learning

English, the students are other in the world. One of these languages is English. In teaching and learning English, the

students are expected to master four English language skills, namely; listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Cynthia, 2013:1-2).

In addition, besides English language skills, they also should master language components. English components include pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Therefore, the students have to master both English language skills and language components.

Nordquist (2014:1) says that grammar is important because it is one of components of the language that make it possible for us to talk about language. Grammar name the types of words and word groups that make up sentences not only in English but also in any language.

One of the grammar aspects that have to be understood is degrees of comparison. The degrees of comparison have three forms, namely: positive degree, comparative degree, and superlative degree.

Based on the researcher's interview at February to some of English students in Bung Hatta University, They still had difficulties in using degrees of comparison in English correctly. Besides, the students do not understand about the grammar of English, they get problems in language skills. The researcher aimed to discuss the

students difficulties in grammar, to be specific, they face difficulties in writing a compound sentence that used degrees of comparison.

In order to make sure about this phenomenon scientifically, the researcher was interested in doing the research entitled An Analysis of the First Year Students' Difficulties in Writing a Compound Sentence That Uses Degrees of Comparison at English Department of Bung Hatta University.

In general, the purpose of this study was to describe the students' difficulties in using degrees of comparison. Specifically, the purposes of this study were as follows:

1. To find out the first year students' difficulties at English Department of Bung Hatta University in writing compound sentences in affirmative forms that use positive degree of adjectives.
2. To find out the first year students' difficulties at English Department of Bung Hatta University in writing compound sentences in affirmative forms that use comparative degree of adjectives.
3. To find out the first year students' difficulties at English Department of Bung Hatta University in writing compound sentences in affirmative

forms that use superlative degree of adjectives.

B. Research Method

This research is descriptive in nature. It was done to find out the students' difficulties in writing compound sentences that use degrees of comparison. Gay (1987: 189) states that descriptive research determines and describes the way things are. She adds that it involves collecting data in order to answer question concerning the current status of the subject of the study. This research described the students' difficulties in writing compound sentences that use degrees of comparison at English Department of Bung Hatta University.

In this research, the target population was the first year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University in academic year 2013/2014. The total number of the students were 63 and they were distributed into two classes, as shown in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 The Table of Population

| No | Class | Number of Students |
|-------|-------|--------------------|
| 1 | A | 31 |
| 2 | B | 32 |
| Total | | 63 |

Source: Administration of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Bung Hatta University.

One of the two classes became the sample for this research. The researcher took one class of the population as sample. It means the sample was 50% of the population.

The researcher used cluster random sampling technique to select the sample because the population was grouped in some classes and they were homogenous; they had similar syllabus, the same materials, the same time allocation. Gay (1987:100) stated that cluster random sampling is a sampling technique in which the sample in group and not individual is randomly selected and all members of the selected group have similar characteristics.

To select the sample, the resesarcher wrote the names of classes on two pieces of paper. Then the researcher closed her eyes and took one of the paper to get the sample. The class taken was class A as the sample of the resesarch. There were 31 students in class A.

In this research, the researcher used picture-cued test and grammatical transformation test. In this test, the researcher used 10 questions and each question consist of 3 items, each item consisted of positive degree, comparative degree, and superlative degree. These tests were used because the researcher wanted to know the students' difficulties in writing compound sentences that use

degrees of comparison, whether it was positive degree, comparative degree and superlative degree. The researcher gave 60 minutes for students to do the test.

A good test must be valid and reliable. To determine the validity of the test, the researcher used content validity. A test is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure (Anderson *et.al* in Arikunto,2009:65). The test that the researcher gave to the students was based on the syllabus and teaching materials that has been taught by the teacher.

The researcher used split-half method to analyze the reliability of the test. The questions were divided into the first half and the second half. The researcher used 30 items for the test, they were 10 items for positive degree, 10 items for comparative degree, and 10 items for superlative degree.

Table 3.2 Item Specification of Test

| no | Degrees of Comparison | Total number of item | Item specification |
|----|-----------------------|----------------------|--|
| 1 | Positive degree | 10 | 2a,3a,4a, 5a,6a,7a,8a, 9a,10a,11a |
| 2 | Comparative degree | 10 | 2b,3b,4b, 5b,6b,7b,8b, 9b, 10b,11b |
| 3 | Superlative degree | 10 | 2c,3c,4c,5c, 6c,7c,8c,9c, 10c,11c |

To calculate the coefficient of correlation of the test, the researcher used

the Pearson Product Moment Formula (Arikunto,2009:72) :

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where:

r_{xy} : the correlation of coefficient variable x and y

N : the number of students who followed the test

x : the first half score

y : the second half score

$\sum xy$: the total cross product of x and y

Furthermore, to determine the total reliability of the test, the result was analyzed by using Spearman Brown formula :

$$r_{total\ test} = \frac{2r_{xy}}{1 + r_{xy}}$$

Where:

$r_{total\ test}$ = the reliability coefficient for the total test

r_{xy} = the correlation of coefficient two halves of the test

The degree of correlation of coefficient of the test can be categorized as follows (Arikunto,2009:72):

.81 – 1.00 = very high

.61 – .80 = high

.41 – .60 = enough

.21 – .40 = low

.00 – .20 = very low (no correlation)

As the result of the test the researcher got that the degree of coefficient correlation of the test was .90 and the reliability coefficient for total test .95. It means that the degree of coefficient correlation of the test was very high and the test was reliable.

C. Findings and Discussion

Findings

After analyzing the data, this research found that some of the first year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had no difficulties. It was indicated by the fact that 16 of the first year students (52%) at English Department of Bung Hatta University had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that used degrees of comparison (had grades ranging from C to A), while 15 of the first year students (48%) at English Department of Bung Hatta University had difficulties in writing compound sentences that used degrees of comparison. Specifically, 17 students (55%) had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that used positive degree of adjectives, 16 students (52%) had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that used comparative degree

of adjectives, and 14 students (45%) had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that used superlative degree of adjectives.

Discussions

Based on the result of data analysis, in general the result of finding showed that 48% of the first year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had difficulties in writing compound sentences that used degrees of comparison. It means that some of the first year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University have understood in writing compound sentence that used degrees of comparison, and some others have not understood in writing compound sentence that used degrees of comparison. The students who had difficulties were difficult to use the degrees of comparison and made a compound sentence.

Students' difficulties in writing compound sentences that used positive degree of adjectives.

After doing research, the researcher found some students had difficulties in writing compound sentences that used degrees of comparison. It was proved by the result of data analysis that showed 14 of 31

students (45%) had difficulties in writing compound sentences that used positive degree of adjectives. It means more than 50% students answered correctly. The students who had difficulties were difficult to make a compound sentence and used positive degree of adjectives.

Students' difficulties in writing compound sentences that use comparative degree of adjectives.

Another finding of this research was that 15 of 31 students (48%) had difficulties in writing compound sentences that used degrees of comparison. It means that they could not make a compound sentence and used degrees of comparison correctly. The students who had difficulties were difficult to make a compound sentence, used comparative degree of adjectives, and used of be

Students' difficulties in writing compound sentences that used superlative degree of adjectives.

The result showed that 55% students had difficulties in writing compound sentences that used superlative degree of adjectives. The data showed that 17 of 31 students had difficulties in writing compound sentences that used superlative degree of adjectives. It means that less than

50% students answered correctly. The students who had difficulties were difficult to make a compound sentence and used superlative degree of adjectives.

D. Conclusions and Suggestions

Conclusions

After interpreting the result of data analysis, it can be concluded as follows:

1. In general, the some first year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that used degrees of comparison. It was proved by the fact that only 48% students had difficulties, or 52% students had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that used degrees of comparison focusing on positive degree, comparative degree, and superlative degree.
2. Most of the first year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that used positive degree . It was proved by the fact 55% students had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that used positive degree of adjectives.

3. The first year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that comparative degree of adjectives. It was proved by the fact 52% students had no difficulties in writing compound sentences that used comparative degree of adjectives.
4. The first year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had difficulties in writing compound sentences that superlative degree of adjectives. It was proved by the fact 55% students had difficulties in writing compound sentences that used superlative degree of adjectives.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher proposed some suggestions as follows:

1. The lecturers are suggested to improve students skills in writing compound sentences by giving more exercises to the students that can minimize students' difficulties in writing compound sentences that use positive degree, comparative degree and superlative degree. Besides, she also suggests some

students who had no difficulties to always practice the degree of comparison in comparing adjectives and make a compound sentence to make them more fluently in writing compound sentences that use degrees of comparison. The lecturers are also expected to always use the degrees of comparison and compound sentence when communicate with the students in the class.

2. The students who had difficulties are expected to do more exercises in writing compound sentences that use degrees of comparison. The students who had no difficulties in writing compound sentence that used degrees of comparison are expected to always practice the degree of comparison in comparing adjectives and make a compound sentence to make them more fluently in writing compound sentences that use degrees of comparison.
3. The next researchers can do research in other aspects continually.

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