AN ANALYSIS OF THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS' ABILITY OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY IN USING COMPARATIVE DEGREE AND SUPERLATIVE DEGREE OF ADJECTIVE IN COMPOUND SENTENCES

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to describe the ability of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University in using comparative and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences. The design of this research was descriptive. The population of this research was the third year students of English Department at Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Bung Hatta University. The researcher used cluster random sampling technique to take the sample. The population was 96 students. The researcher took 40 students as the sample. The instrument used to get the data was grammar test in the form of multiple choices. The researcher tried out the test to the population out of the sample before giving it to the sample. The researcher found the reliability of the test by using split half method. The test was valid in terms of content validity. The result of this study showed that in general the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University had moderate ability in using comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences. The researcher also suggests the students to learn more about comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective. The lecturers should pay attention more to the topic of comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences and give more explanations related to the use of comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences to the students.

Key words: Comparative and Superlative Degree of Adjective, Compound Sentence.

A. Introduction

English is regularly described as a truly global language which is spoken by more people around the world than any other languages (Seargeant, 2013). Nowadays, English is very useful for people to communicate in social interaction, and also English can connect us with everyone in other countries.

English is also important in education. In learning English, learners should master four skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills cannot stand alone without English language components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. By mastering all of them, the learners will be more successful in learning English.

One of the language components is grammar. It plays an important role in the use of language. Using grammar, words can be arranged to form some acceptable English sentence. Harmer (2001:12) also states that the grammar of a language is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language. Therefore, it can be easier for the students to create good sentences and develop the four language skills when they master grammar.

There are several topics in learning grammar. One of them that has to be considered is degrees of comparison which consists of three forms, namely: (1) positive degree, (2) comparative degree, and (3) superlative degree. Warner and Church (1985:77) state that positive degree is to compare two equal things, comparative degree is to tell the difference between two things, and superlative degree is to express the difference between two or more things. They also state that positive degree uses the patterns "as...as". The comparative degree uses the patterns "–er or more", and usually followed by "than". Then, superlative degree uses the patterns "the...est" for one syllable word and "the most" for more than two syllables.

The comparative degree and superlative degree had been taught to the first year student of English Department of Bung Hatta University. These topics had been learned by the English students in the simple sentence. However, there is also comparative and superlative degree in the compound sentence and also the English students have learned compound sentence in the fifth semester. The comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective sometimes can be in compound sentences. For examples: (1) I was feeling tired last night, so I went to bed earlier than usual. (2) John's test score was the best in our class, and he got the first rank.

The researcher did an informal interview on April 16th, 2014 to the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University about degree of comparison, especially comparative and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentence. Then, based on the result of the interview, the researcher found that the students did not understand well about the usage and spelling rules of comparative and superlative degree of adjective. It could be proven that they got confused about comparing two or more than two things, and they got confused to use appropriate spelling rules for the comparative and superlative form of adjectives.

Based on the problem above, the researcher was interested in conducting a research about the students' ability in using comparative and superlative degree of adjectives in compound sentences.

In general, the purpose of this study is to identify the students' ability in using comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences. Specifically, the purposes of this study are to find out:

1. The students' ability in using comparative degree of adjective in compound sentences.

2. The students' ability in using superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences.

B. Research Method

The design of this research is descriptive in nature. According to Gay (1987:189), descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to answer question concerning the current status of the subject of the study. In this research, the researcher described the students' ability in using comparative and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences.

The population was the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the result of the study to be generalizable (Gay, 1987:102). The population was the third year students of English Department of FKIP Bung Hatta University in academic year 2013/2014. The total number of the population was 96 students. The researcher took two classes, the selected classes were class A for tryout test and class B was the sample. The sample was 40 students and it was 41.67% of the population.

The instrument used to collect the data in this research was grammar test in the form of multiple choices. The researcher prepared 60 items in try out test: they were 30 items for comparative degree of adjective and 30 items for

superlative degree of adjective. The students were given 60 minutes to do the test. This observation was on June 19th 2014.

To select good items in the try-out test, the researcher analyzed the item difficulties and items discrimination of the test. The researcher used the following formulas which were suggested by Arikunto (2013, 223-232):

Item difficulties

1. To find out item difficulties, the researcher used the following formula:

$$P = \frac{B}{JS}$$

Where:

P = item difficulties

B = total number of students who answered correctly

JS = total number of students who followed the test

The item difficulties range between, .00 – 1.00 and it is symbolized as P which refers to "proportion" in the evaluation term. The classification of the item difficulties is as follows (Arikunto, 2013:225):

P   .00 – .30 difficult

P > .30 – .70 moderate

P > .71 – 1.00 easy

According to Brown & Abeywickrama (2010:71), the appropriate

test items will generally have item difficulties that range between .15 and .85.

2. Item discrimination

To get item discrimination, the researcher used the following formula stated by Arikunto (2013:228):

$$D = \frac{BA}{JA} - \frac{BB}{JB}$$

Where:

D   = Item discrimination

JA = Sum of students in the high group

JB = Sum of students in the low group

BA = Sum of the students in the high group who answered the item correctly

BB = Sum of the students in the low group who answered the item correctly

In the evaluation term, item discrimination is symbolized as D which refers to "discrimination". The result of the item discrimination is classified into the following classification (Arikunto, 2013:232):

D   .00 – .20 poor

D > .21 – .40 satisfactory

D > .41 – .70 good

D > .71 – 1.00 excellent

According to Brown & Abeywickrama (2010:71), practical use for item discrimination indices is to select items from a test bank that includes more items than you need. The researcher used the item difficulties and item discrimination between the range P .15 -

.85 and D >.21 − 1.00, but based on the result of item difficulties and item discrimination the researcher revised 11 test items because the range of difficulties and discrimination were not enough. It was done to complete the total number of items that were needed. After the researcher counted item difficulties and item discrimination of tried out test, she found that there were 11 items that should be revised (1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 20, 22, 23, 26, 30, 57) and there were 10 items that should be discarded from the test (11, 12, 16, 17, 24, 31, 43, 51, 56, 60). She revised 11 items to complete the total number of the test items that were needed for the real test. She discarded 10 items because they had poor item discrimination and easy item difficulty which can not be accepted to this test. Then the researcher got 50 items for the real test.

To know the validity of the test, the researcher used content validity in which the test materials were constructed based on the curriculum and syllabus.

In addition, the test should be reliable. According to Gay (1987:135), reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it measures. To find out the reliability of grammar test, the researcher used split half method by using Pearson Product Moment Formula as suggested by Arikunto (2013:87) as follows:

$$r_{XY} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{\{N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2\}\{N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2\}}}$$

Where:

$r_{xy} =$ the coefficient of correlation of two variables of the test (even and odd items)

N   = the number of the students

$\sum x$ = the sum of scores of the odd number test items

$\sum y$ = the sum of scores of the even number test items

$\sum xy$ = the total cross product of xy

According to Gay (1987:139), to know the coefficient of correlation of the test, the result was analyzed by using Spearman Brown Formula:

$$r_{ii} = \frac{2r_{xy}}{1 + r_{xy}}$$

Where:

r_{ii} = the reliability coefficient for total test

r_{xy} = the coefficient of correlation between odd and even item

The degree of correlation coefficient of the test can be categorized as follows (Arikunto: 2013:89):

.81− 1.00 very high

.61 − .80 high

.41 − .60 enough

.21 − .40 low

.00 − .20 very low

As the result of tried out test the researcher got the degree of coefficient correlation of the test was .86 and the reliability coefficient for total test was .93. It means that the degree of coefficient of correlation of the test was very high and the test was reliable.

To find out the third year students' ability in using comparative and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences, the researcher used test as instrument and the procedures of collecting data as follows:

a. The researcher gave the test to the students.

b. The researcher collected the test.

c. The students' answer was evaluated to get the test result and the researcher gave the score 1 for correct answer and 0 for wrong answer.

d. The researcher gave the score. The score became the data to be analyzed in this research.

The researcher used descriptive technique in analyzing the data. First, the researcher counted the raw scores of each sample. Then, she calculated the average score (M) and standard deviation (SD) by using the following formulas:

1. Mean $= \frac{\Sigma X}{N}$

Where:

M = Mean

ΣX = Total score of the students

N = Number of students

2. $SD = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma x^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\Sigma x}{N}\right)^2}$

Where:

SD = Standard deviation

Σx = Total of scores (x)

Σx^2 = The total of x^2

N = Total number of students

Then the researcher classified the students' ability into high, moderate, or low ability based on the criteria below:

High ability $= > M + SD$

Moderate ability = between (M − SD) and (M + SD)

Low ability $= < M − SD$

To find the percentage of the students who got high, moderate, or low ability used the following formula (Arikunto, 2012:298)

$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$

Where:

P = Percentage of the students who have high, moderate, or low ability

R = The sum of the students who have high, moderate, or low ability.

T = Total sum of total students

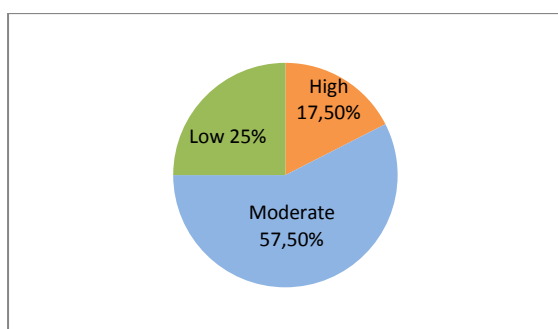Finally, the researcher got the percentage of the students' ability.

C. Findings and Discussion

Findings

The ability of the third year students of Bung Hatta University in using comparative degree and superlative degree

of adjective in compound sentences was moderate. It was indicated by the fact that a small number of students (25%) had low ability, the majority of the students (57.5%) had moderate ability, and only a few of students (17.5%) had high ability. The result could be seen in the Table below.

The Percentage of Students' Ability in Using Comparative Degree and Superlative Degree of Adjective in Compound Sentences

Discussion

Based on the result of the data analysis, the ability of the third year students of Bung Hatta University in using comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences was moderate. It was indicated by the fact that a small number of students (25%) had low ability, the majority of the students (57.5%) had moderate ability, and only a few of students (17.5%) had high ability.

The result of the test given to the students can be discussed as follows:

a. Most of the students still didn't understand well about the use of comparative degree of adjective in compound sentences. It seemed that they did not know the spelling rule of comparative degree of adjective yet. It can be seen in the examples below:

1. Comparative degree

Bright stars filled the night sky, but only one star was *more bright* than the others.

The correct answer is:

Bright stars filled the night sky, but only one star was *brighter* than the others.

The ability of the students of Bung Hatta University in using superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences was moderate. It was indicated by the fact that a small amount of the students (22.5%) had low ability, the majority of the students (55%) had moderate ability and only small amount of the students (22.5%) had high ability. The result of the test given to the students can be discussed as follows:

b. Most of the students still didn't understand well about the use of superlative degree. It seemed that they did not know the spelling rule of comparative degree of adjective yet. It can be seen in the examples below:

1. Superlative degree

Rendang is *the popularest* food in my hometown, and the taste is also delicious.

The correct answer is:

Rendang is *the most popular* food in my hometown, and the taste is also delicious.

D. Conclusions and Suggestins
Conclusions

Based on the data analysis in chapter IV, the researcher concludes that, in general, the ability of the third year students of English department of Bung Hatta University in using comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences was moderate. The clearly conclusions as follow:

1. The ability of the third year students of English department of Bung Hatta University in using comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences was moderate. The data were divided into 3 categories; the first, there were 7 (17.5%) students who got high ability, the second, there were 23 (57%) who got moderate ability, and the last there were 10 (25%) who got low ability.

2. The ability of the third year students of English department of Bung Hatta University in using comparative degree of adjective in compound sentences was moderate. The data were divided into 3 categories; the first, there were 8 (20%) students who high ability, the second, there were 28 (70%) who got moderate ability, and the last there were 4 (10%) who got low ability.

3. The ability of the third year students of English department of Bung Hatta University in using superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences was moderate. The data were divided into 3 categories; the first, there were 9 (22.5%) students who high ability, the second, there were 22 (55%) students who got moderate ability, and the last there were 9 (22.5%) who got low ability.

Suggestions

Referring to the findings in this research, the researcher suggests the following point:

1. The lecturers are expected to review the lesson and give more exercises related to existance the use of comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences to the students.

2. The students are suggested to learn more about comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective, they are expected to understand well the spelling rules in using comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective, and also they are expected to do more excercises well about comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective.

3. For the next related resarchers, the researcher suggests to do another study for example: The difficulties faced by the students in using comparative degree and superlative degree of adjective in compound sentences.

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