#### **COMPARISON DEGREE OF ADJECTIVES**

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#### ABSTRACT

There are many topics and materials of English which can be taught at school to university. One of the most interesting materials is about comparison. Comparison is the process for comparing thing, person or places through the level of quantity, quality or relation. In comparison degree, there are some rules that must be followed in changing the adjectives form. The discussions of this study are focused on the definition and the form of degree of comparison, and also the students' understanding in the form of degree of comparison. The data in this study were taken from twelve students of eighth grade students by giving them two worksheets about comparison degree. The technique which is used in analyzing the data is qualitative. The data will be analyzed based on theory of comparison degree especially about the form of comparative and superlative degree to know the students' understanding about comparison degree. Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that the eighth grade students had known about the comparison, but they must be more aware in changing the basic form of adjectives into the comparative and superlative form. Therefore, the students need to study more about the rule of changing the basic form of adjective into the comparative and superlative form.

Key words: Adjective, comparison degree, comparative degree, superlative degree

#### ABSTRAK

Terdapat berbagai macam topik dan materi bahasa Inggris yang bisa dipelajari di sekolah sampai tingkat universitas. Salah satu materi yang paling menarik adalah tentang perbandingan. Perbandingan adalah sebuah proses membandingkan sesuatu, orang ataupun tempat dalam hal kualitas, kuantitas ataupun tingkat hubungan. Dalam perbandingan, ada beberapa aturan yang harus diperhatikan dalam mengubah bentuk kata sifat sesuai dengan tingkat perbandingannya. Pembahasan dalam tulisna ini menitikberatkan pada definisi dan bentuk – bentuk perbandingan serta pemahaman siswa terhadap bentuk – bentuk yang ada dalam perbandingan. Data dalam tulisan ini diambil dari 12 orang siswa SMP yang duduk di kelas delapan. Teknik yang digunakan dalam analisa data adalah teknik kualitatif. Data yang diperoleh akan dianalisa berdasarkan teori tingkat perbandingan terutama tentang perubahan bentuk dasar kata sifat menjadi bentuk komparatif dan superlatif untuk mengetahui kemampuan siswa dalam tingkat perbandingan. Berdasarkan hasil analisa, dapat disimpulkan bahwa siswa kelas delapan telah mengetahui tentang materi perbandingan, akan tetapi siswa harus lebih berhati-hati dalam mengubah kata sifat dalam tingkat perbandingan komparatif dan superlatif. Oleh sebab itu, siswa harus lebih banyak mempelajari aturan-aturan dalam mengubah kata sifat dalam perbandingan.

Kata kunci: Kata sifat, perbandingan, perbandingan komparatif, perbandingan superlatif.

## I. INTRODUCTION 1.1 Background of Study

English is an International language that can be used by many people in many do communication. countries to Thev communicate to each other in order to convey their meaning to others. Generally, to have interaction to each other from different countries, people all around the world mostly speak in English in their daily activities. Therefore, learning English is very important. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language that can be learnt from kindergarten to university. There are many topics and materials of English which can be learnt at school to university. One of the is interesting materials about most comparison.

Comparison is the process for comparing thing, person or places through the level of quantity, quality or relation. When we start to learn about comparison, we have to know about adjective and adjective is used to adverb. In grammar, modify a noun or pronoun, in order to give information about the noun or more pronoun's referent such as its material, color, dimensions, position, state and other characteristics both permanent and temporary. Its position is before the noun modifies, but it also fills other positions (1972: 109). Besides that, Paul Roberts says that adjective is a word that modifies a noun or pronoun (1954: 91). Many words in English function as both adjectives and adverbs. The best way to tell whether a particular word is an adjective or an adverb in a given sentence is to determine what its function in the sentence. In this case we have to remember the fundamental distinction between an adjective and an adjectives modify noun adverb: and pronoun: adverbs modify everything else.

There are some rules that we have to follow when we want to compare the level of quantity, quality or relation of thing, person or place. Therefore, it will be very interesting to discuss comparison to give more infomation about the definition of comparison and the form of comparison to help students in understanding the comparison.

## 1.2 Statements of Problem

Based on the background of the study, statement of problem can be formulated as follows:

1. What is degree of comparison?

2. What are the form of degree of comparison?

3. How are the students' understanding in the form of degree of comparison?

# 1.3 Objective of Study

The objectives of study are presented as follows:

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to find out the students understanding in the comparison degree of adjective.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To explain about degree of comparison.

- 2. To explain about the form of degree of comparison.
- 4. To find out the students' understanding in the form of degree of comparison.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 2.1 Adjectives

Sargeant, explain that adjectives describe nouns and pronouns. They give you more information about people, places, and things (2007: 32). In addition, Eastwood said that adjectives are words like *short*, *old*, *cheap*, *happy*, *nice*, *electric*. Most adjectives

express quality; they tell us what something is like.

## 2.2 Comparison Degree of Adjectives

Comparison degree of adjective can be divided into three forms. The three forms known under the heading of degrees of comparison: (1) the basic form (positive degree), this form having no features of comparison or it does not indicate any comparison; (2) the comparative degree form, this form is having the feature of restricted superiority (which compare two elements (comparing three or more things); (3) the superlative degree form, it is having feature of unrestricted superiority the (comparing three or more things). Howard Sargeant says that to compare two people or things, use the comparative form of an adjective. The comparative form is usually made by adding er and more to the adjective. Meanwhile, to compare three or more people or things, use the superlative form of an adjective. The superlative form is usually made by adding est and most to the adjective (2007: 39-41). The form of comparison degree of adjectives can be changed regularly (regular comparison) and irregularly (irregular comparison).

## **III. DISCUSSION**

## 3.1 Comparison Degree of Adjectives

Eugene Ehrlich says that adjectives have three compartive forms: absolute, comparative, superlative to indicate greater and lesser degrees of quality described. The comparative form of the great majority of adjectives can be achieved in two ways by adding *-er* to the absolute or by adding the adverb *more*. Similarly, the superlative can be achieved in two ways: by adding *-est* to the absolute or by adding the adverb *most*. Some adjectives change forms radically to express comparison: *good, better, best, bad, worse, worst* (1991: 99). In addition, the comparive form is used to discuss two items or individuals and superlative form is used to compare more than three items or individuals. Eastwood (2002: 280) states that a comparative or superlative adjective can come in the same position as other adjectives.

Attributive: a softer metal the most specialized services

Predicative: Gold is softer. Which building is tallest?

We usually put *the* before a superlative adjective.

Jupiter is **the** biggest planet.

Jupiter is (the) biggest.

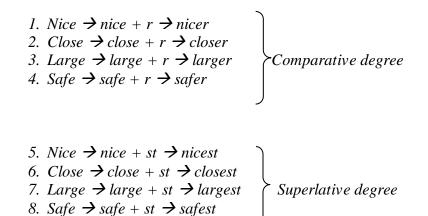
In general, short adjectives which are used in comparison should take *er/est* while long ones take *more/most*. Onesyllable adjectives count as short and three-syllable adjectives count as long. Most two-syllable adjectives count as long but not all of them.

# 3.2 The Form of Comparison Degree3.2.1 Regular Comparison

Generally, regular comparison means that basic form of adjective regularly the changed by adding -er and more for comparative degree and -est and most for superlative degree. Monosyllable adjectives –er (comparative) will use and -est (superlative). Meanwhile, two or more syllables adjective will be added by more (comparative) and most (superlative), but not all of them. Therefore, there are several rules that must be followed:

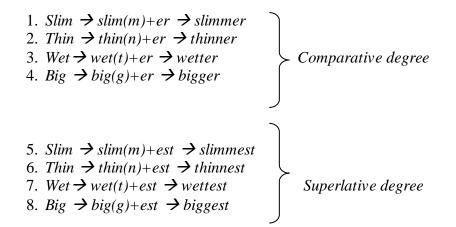
a) The basic form of one syllable adjective ends with 'e' regularly changed by adding -r for comparative degree and adding -st for superlative degree. This form can be seen as follow:

*Wide* is an adjective which has one syllable and ends with 'e', the form will be wide+r (*wider*) for the comparative and wide+st (*widest*) for the superlative. Other examples of this form can be seen below:



b. The basic form of one syllable adjective ends with a single consonant preceded by a single vowel, the final consonant is double before *-er* for comparative form and *-est* for superlative form.

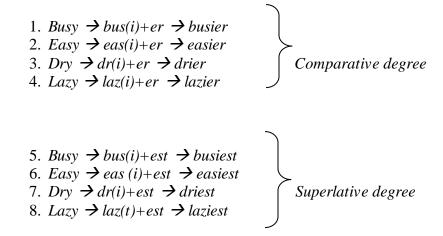
Sad is an adjective which has one syllable and ends with single consonant preceded by a single vowel. Therefore, the final consonant must be double before *-er* for comparative form and *-est* for superlative form. The form will be sad(d)+er (sadder) for the comparative and sad(d)+est (saddest) for the superlative. Other examples are:



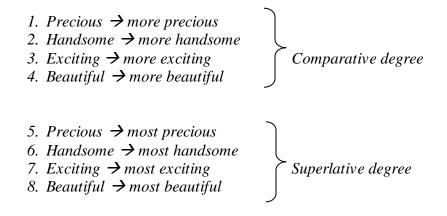
Exception for those which ended by 'ow'

9. 
$$Low \rightarrow low+er \rightarrow lower$$
  
10.  $Slow \rightarrow slow+er \rightarrow slower$    
Comparative degree

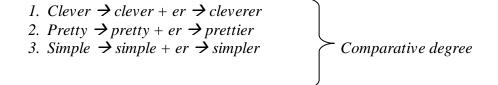
- 11. Low  $\rightarrow low+est \rightarrow lowest$
- 12.  $Slow \rightarrow slow+est \rightarrow slowest$  Superlative degree
- c. The basic form of one or two syllables adjective ends with 'y' preceded by a consonant, 'y' is change into 'i' before adding the suffix *-er* and *-est*.
- d. *Happy* is an adjective which has two syllables and ends with 'y'. Therefore, 'y' must be changed into 'i' before adding *-er* for comparative form and *-est* for superlative form. The form will be happy(i)+er (happier) for the comparative and happy(i)+est (happiest) for the superlative. Other examples are:



e. Use more and most to compare most other two-syllable adjectives.



f. Two syllables adjective ending in ER, Y, LE, OW and those with the stress on the second syllable usually add er and est their comparative and superlative:

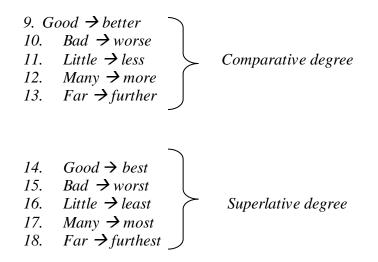


4. Narrow  $\rightarrow$  narrow + er  $\rightarrow$  narrower

5. Clever → clever + est → cleverest
6. Pretty → pretty + est → prettiest
7. Simple → simple + est → simplest
8. Narrow → narrow + est → narrowest

#### 3.2.2 Irregular Comparison

A few adjectives don't form their comparative and superlative forms in any of the usual ways. The comparative and superlative forms of these adjectives are different words, they called irregular forms. They have their own form. The form can be seen below:



Those are the form of degree of comparison which can be divided into regular and irregular form of comparison. The regular form must be based on the short and long syllable of adjectives in which short adjectives take *er/est* while mostly long ones take *more/most*. One syllable adjectives count as short and three-syllable adjectives count as long. Most two-syllable adjectives count as long but not all of them.

# 3.3 The Student's Understanding in The Form of Degree of Comparison

This research will discuss about students' understanding about the form of Therefore. comparative and superlative. will some students be distributed а knowledge questioner about their of comparison. If they have knowledge about comparison, then they have to answer worksheets about degree of comparison. The worksheets then will be analyzed to know what errors made by the students.

In this section, the data will be presented to know the answers of the students. There are sixteen questions about comparative and sixteen questions about superlative which are taken from ESL library.com.

The first worksheet is about comparative:

a.In Canada, January is than March. Students' answer: colder

The answer is correct. The students change the word *cold* into *colder*, since *cold* has one syllable which only need to add -er to make the comparative.

b.I think that good health is \_\_\_\_\_\_ than money.

Students' answer: more important

- The answer is correct. The students add *more* to the word *important*. Since *important* has more than one syllable, in which use *more* to compare most other two-syllable adjectives for the comparative.
- c.I can't carry my suitcase. It's much than yours.

Students' answer: more heavy

- The answer is incorrect. The students add *more* to the adjective *heavy*. *Heavy* has two syllables, but the basic form of two syllables adjective ends with 'y' preceded by a consonant, 'y' is changed into 'i' before adding the suffix *-er* for the comparative. Therefore, the correct answer is *heavier*.
- d.I can afford to buy a new bike but not a new car. A car is \_\_\_\_\_\_than a bike.

Students' answer: more expensive

- The answer is correct. The students add *more* to the adjective *expensive*. Since *expensive* has three syllables, in which three syllbles adjectives needs to use *more* for the comparative.
- e.You look \_\_\_\_\_\_ than the last time I saw you. Have you lost weight?

Students' answer: thinner, thiner

Thinner is correct and thiner is incorrect.

- The basic form of one syllable adjective ends with a single consonant preceded by a single vowel, the final consonant is doubled before *-er* for comparative form. Therefore, the final consonant in adjective *thin* must be doubled, and the correct answer is *thinner*.
- f. I couldn't get a seat in the restaurant. It was \_\_\_\_\_ than usual.

Students' answer: more crowded

- The answer is correct. The students add *more* to the word *crowded*. Since *crowded* has more than one syllable, in which use *more* to compare most other two-syllable adjectives for the comparative.
- g. Mountains are \_\_\_\_\_ than hills.

Students' answer: higher

- The answer is correct. Adjective high has one syllable and monosyllable adjectives will use -er for comparative.
- h.He got a very good mark on his exam. The exam was \_\_\_\_\_\_ than he had expected.

Students' answer: more easy

- The answer is incorrect. Adjective easy has two syllables and ends with 'y' preceded by a consonant. Therefore, its comparative form don't use *more* but by adding suffix *-er* in which 'y' is changed into 'i' before adding*-er*.
- i. You should go to the doctor. Your cold is \_\_\_\_\_\_ than it was a few days ago.

Students' answer: bader

The answer is incorrect. A few adjectives don't form their comparative form in any of the usual ways. The comparative of these adjectives are different words, they called irregular forms. They have their own form. In this case, adjective *bad* become *worse* for the comparative.

j. There is a lot of crime in the big cities. They are \_\_\_\_\_\_ than the small town where I live.

Students' answer: more dangerous

The answer is correct. The students add *more* to the adjective *dangerous*. Since *dangerous* has more than one syllable, in which use *more* to compare most other two-syllable adjectives for the comparative.

k.I don't understand this lesson. It is \_\_\_\_\_\_ than the last one we did.

Students' answer: more difficult

The answer is correct. The students add *more* to the adjective *difficult*. Since *difficult* has three syllables, in which use *more* to compare most other two-syllable adjectives for the comparative.

1. I can't study in this room. It's too noisy. I'm going to have a \_\_\_\_\_ place. Students' answer: more quiet

- The answer is incorrect. Monosyllable adjectives will use -er for comparative not more. Therefore, the comparative of quiet is quiter.
- m. Our apartment is far from everything. We want to move to a \_\_\_\_\_\_location.

Students' answer: more convenient

The answer is correct. The students add *more* to the adjective *convenient*. Since *convenient* has more than one syllable, in which use *more* to compare most other two-syllable adjectives for the comparative.

n.Orange juice is \_\_\_\_\_\_ than coke. Students' answer: more healthy

- The answer is incorrect. The basic form of two syllables adjective ends with 'y' preceded by a consonant, 'y' is change into 'i' before adding the suffix *-er*. Therefore, *healthy* becomes *healthier* instead of *more healthy* in comparative form.
- o.The store is having a great sale today. Most televisions are 25% \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ than they were yesterday.

Students' answer: cheaper

The answer is correct. Monosyllable adjective *cheap* will use -er for comparative.

p.The doctor told me that I can go back to work if I feel\_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow. Students' answer: gooder, better

The answer gooder is incorrect. Meanwhile, better is correct. A few adjectives don't form their comparative form in any of the usual ways. Its comparative are different words, they called irregular forms. They have their own form. In this case, *good* will change into *better* for the comparative.

The second worksheet is about superlative:

1.Yesterday was \_\_\_\_\_day of the year. I almost froze to death walking home from school.

Students' answer: the coldest

The answer is correct. Cold is monosyllable adjective and it will use -est for superlative.

2. That was \_\_\_\_\_ movie I've ever seen. I almost walk out in the middle. Students' answer: the badest

The answer is incorrect. A few adjectives don't form their superlative forms in any of the usual ways. The superlative forms of these adjectives are different words, they called irregular forms. They have their own form. In this case, adjective *bad* will change into *worst* for the superlative.

3.Please give me your recipe. That is cake I've ever eaten.

Students' answer: the most delicious

- The answer is correct. The students add *the most* to the adjective *delicious*. Since *delicious* has more than one syllable, in which *the most* is used to compare most other two-syllable adjectives for the superlative.
- 4.Jerry is \_\_\_\_\_\_ student in our class. He gets the top grades in every course.

Students' answer: the smartest

- The answer is correct. Adjective *smart* has one syllable and one syllable adjective will use -est for superlative.
- 5.Bob told \_\_\_\_\_ story last night. I couldn't stop laughing.

Students' answer: the most funny

- The answer is incorrect. Adjective *funny* has two syllables but it ends with 'y'. The basic form of two syllables adjective ends with 'y' preceded by a consonant, 'y' is change into 'i' before adding the suffix *est* for the superlative form. The form is not *the most funny* but *the funniest*.
- 6.Whales are \_\_\_\_\_\_ animals in the world.

Students' answer: the largest

- The answer is correct. The basic form of one syllable adjective ends with 'e' regularly changed by adding -st for superlative degree.
- 7.The Nile is \_\_\_\_\_\_ river in the world.
- Students' answer: the longest
- The answer is correct. Adjective *long* is monosyllable adjectives, therefore it will use -est for superlative.

8.Marie is \_\_\_\_\_ person I know. She has won the lottery four times!

Students' answer: the most lucky

- The answer is incorrect. The basic form of two syllables adjective ends with 'y' preceded by a consonant, 'y' is change into 'i' before adding the suffix *-est* for the superlative form. In this case, *lucky* has two syllables adjectives ends with 'y' preceded by a consonant, therefore, *lucky* will change into *the luckiest* instead of *the most lucky*.
- 9.He is \_\_\_\_\_\_ speaker I have ever heard. Half the audience fell asleep during his speech.

Students' answer: the most boring

The answer is correct. The students add *the most* to the word *boring*. Since *boring* has two syllables, *the most* is used to compare most other two-syllable adjectives for the superlative.

10. Mount Everest is \_\_\_\_\_\_

Students' answer: the highest

The answer is correct. Monosyllable adjectives will use *-est* for superlative.

11. That is \_\_\_\_\_\_ painting in the art gallery. It's worth a million dollars.

Students' answer: the most valuable

- The answer is correct. For adjective which has more than one syllable, *the most* is used to compare most other two-syllable adjectives for the superlative.
- 12. Bill Gates is one of \_\_\_\_\_ men in the world.

Students' answer: the richest

The answer is correct. Rich is monosyllable adjectives which use -est for superlative form.

13. I finished the exercise in five minutes. It was

homework the teacher has ever give us. Students' answer: the most easy

- The answer is incorrect. The basic form of two syllables adjective ends with 'y' preceded by a consonant, 'y' is changed into 'i' before adding the suffix *-er*. Therefore, *easy* becomes *the easiest* instead of *the most easy* in superlative form.
- 14. Arthur hates to clean. He has apartment I've ever seen.

Students' answer: the most dirty

- The answer is incorrect. Adjective *dirty* has two syllables and it ends with 'y' preceded by a consonant. In this case 'y' is changed into 'i' then it must be added by the suffix *-est* for the superlative form instead of adding *the most*.
- 15. My dinner only cost \$6.00. That must be \_\_\_\_\_\_ restaurant in town.

Students' answer: the cheapest

- The answer is correct. Monosyllable adjectives will use -est for superlative.
- 16. I was afraid to turn off the lights last night. That was \_\_\_\_\_\_ show.

Students' answer: the most scary

The answer is incorrect. The basic form of two syllables adjective ends with 'y' preceded by a consonant, 'y' is change into 'i' before adding the suffix *-er*.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded that adjectives have three comparative forms: absolute, comparative, superlative to indicate greater and lesser degrees of quality described. The comparative form of the great majority of adjectives can be achieved in two ways by adding *-er* to the absolute or by adding the adverb *more*. Similarly, the superlative can be achieved in two ways: by adding *-est* to the absolute or by adding the adverb *most*. It's called regular form of comparison. Meanwhile irregular form of comparison has its own form such as: (Good - better - best), (Bad - worse - worst), (Little - less - least), (Many - more - most), (Far - further - furthest).

From this discussion can be seen also that the eighth grade students had known about the comparison, but the students must be more aware in changing the basic form of adjectives into the comparative and superlative form. Most of the students are able to: change monosyllable adjectives which only need to add -er or -est to make the comparative and superlative form, change the basic form of one syllable adjective ends with 'e' which are regularly changed by adding -r or -st for comparative superlative degree and change and adjectives which have more than one syllable, in which use more and most to compare most other two-syllable adjectives.

In the analysis, the errors made by the students are in term of the changing of the adjective which has two syllables ends with 'v' preceded by a consonant. The students prefer to add more and most instead of change 'y' into 'i' then adding the suffix -eror -est. Beside that, the errors are also in changing the basic form of one syllable adjective ends with a single consonant preceded by a single vowel. In this case, the final consonant must be doubled before -er or -est. But, there were not double consonant on the students' answer. The errors were also found in the irregular form of adjective. As we know that a few adjectives don't form their comparative and superlative form in any of the usual ways. Its comparative and superlative are different words, they called irregular forms. They have their own form.

But, the students add -er and -est for its comparison degree.

Therefore, the students need to study more about the rule of changing the basic form of adjective into the comparative and superlative form.

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