

**CHAPTER I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

**A. Rationale**

Human beings are social creatures that cannot live alone, people need to interact with people around. The interaction is usually done through communication, where human can share or exchange his thoughts, feelings, and ideas as defined in *Oxford Dictionary* that “language is a system of sounds or words that is used by human to express their thought and feeling.”<sup>1</sup> They need a language when they want to interact with the others or tell some information or message and to express their feeling, thought and ideas to the others.

There are many various tribes and nations in the world with their own languages that they use as a mean of communication between them. So, to communicate easily with the other, it is very important to learn the other languages in order to make the same understanding. It is related to the Holy Qur’an surah ar-Ruum: 22 as follows:



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<sup>1</sup> A.S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 662

From the verse above, we know that Allah created various languages in order to be learned. From a lot of languages that belong to separate of nations. English is the one of word language that is very important to be learned.

In this development era of science and technology, people do not only have to master their native language but also another language, especially English. It is because English is an international language that has the widest use. The fact is that English has the largest users from all over the world. Mostly in international and in regional events, English often plays its important role as the official language. English is not only viewed as the style of intercourse in daily communication today, but also almost needed for conversing, bargaining, trading, and education or studying.

English is a foreign language in Indonesia. Because the importance of English, the government has made it as a component of national education that implicate to be an obligated subject either in Islamic Senior High School or University. Moreover, today English is one of the subject that becomes the requirement for students' graduation in Islamic Junior High School and Islamic Senior High School.

In learning English, it means that we have to learn all the skills and the components. One important component of English is grammar. It is a component that cannot be ignored. Without learning grammar, they cannot master English perfectly.

Therefore, mastering grammar will influence the students' ability in English. With a good grammar, the language is easy to be understood.

Freeman states that “frequency of structure introduction has a high relation to ability of students. They find the more a student listens or sees a structure (pattern); they will be faster to master that ability.”<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, students are taught to master four skills in English such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students’ competency in the four skills can be gained on their ability in some subject matters such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and spelling. The matters help students decode and encode English fluently and accurately as the intended goal.

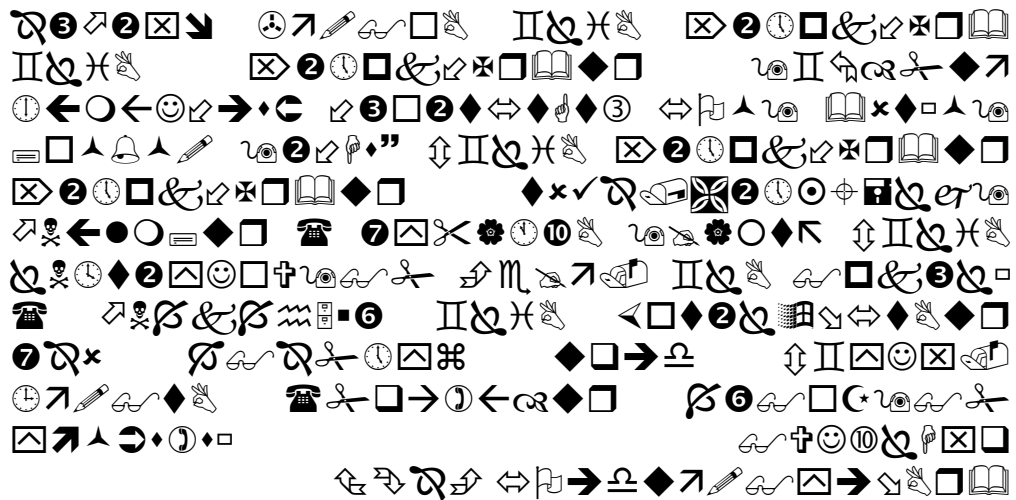
Related to development of those four English skills, usage of good and accurate grammar is one of important factors to communicate and understand literature in English. It is also one important subject matter that should be mastered. It helps students’ construct a grammatically correct utterance and writing. Grammatical sentence is easily understood by interlocutors rather than ungrammatical one. Moreover in written language, the writing has to be constructed in grammatical accepted form.

The degree of comparison is one aspect of grammar. That is form of adjective and adverb which denotes the degree of grade by which a person, things, or other entity has a properly or quality greater or less in extent than another. It is a part of English grammar that is very important. Allah the Almighty said in the Holy Qur'an (Muhammad:15) as follows:

﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلشُّرَاطِئِ فَذُو الْعَدُوِّ أُوَّٰلَىٰٓ اَلْبُغْضِ ۗ اَللّٰهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝١٥﴾

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<sup>2</sup> Diane Larsen Freeman, *Technique and Principle in Language Teaching*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 45



Based on the verse above can be known that there is a comparison between people who get bliss and joy in Paradise and people who get torture in Hell. Moreover, in our daily life we often compare something to another or someone to someone else.

Comparison degree has three parts, they are: positive degree, comparative degree, and superlative degree. This thesis will focus on superlative degree which is regularly used in comparing more than two things. It is one of important parts that belong to components of English grammar and students should master it, thus superlative degree is one of important aspects in teaching-learning English.

Based on the writer's observation, actually grammar especially superlative degree cannot be understood by the eleventh grade students at MAN 5 Martapura. There are some of them still do not understand how to make superlative degree. So, it causes some errors in making superlative degree. That is way the writer wants to know further about their mastery in making superlative degree.

English is a subject at school requires at students to be able to communicate in oral and written using appropriate language from fluently and accurately.<sup>3</sup>

Based on the problem above, the writer is interested in observing and conducting a research in writing a thesis entitled **“The Eleventh Grade Students’ Mastery of Superlative Degree at MAN 5 Martapura Academic Year 2009-2010”**.

To avoid misinterpretation to the title above, the writer needs to explain some terms in the title as follows:

1. Mastery is to gain complete knowledge of or skill competing. To gain control of something; to overcome something, able to control other; laminating, very skillful, great skill.<sup>4</sup>
2. Superlative Degree is objectives or adverbs that express the highest or a very high degree, example: best, worst, slowest, the most difficult.<sup>5</sup>

Based on the title, superlative degree here is one of grammar study that students learn. Superlative degree is one of components which has to be mastered by students.

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<sup>3</sup> Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, *Pembangunan Silabus dan Sistem Penilaian Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris*, (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2004), p. 5

<sup>4</sup> Alan Evison, *Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 721

<sup>5</sup> A.S. Hornby, *Op. cit.*, p. 1199

## **B. Problem Formulation**

Based on the topic, the problems of this research are formulated as follows:

1. How is the eleventh grade students' mastery of superlative degree at MAN 5 Martapura academic year 2009-2010?
2. What are the factors that influence the eleventh grade students' mastery of superlative degree at MAN 5 Martapura academic year 2009-2010?

## **C. Reason for Choosing the Title**

There are some reasons that encourage the writer to conduct the title, they are:

1. English grammar is very important to be learned because without mastering English grammar, we cannot master English well.
2. Superlative degree is one of the skills in grammar that very important to make English writing.
2. None of students of English Department make a research at academic year 2009-2010.

## **D. Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this research are as follows:

1. To know the eleventh grade students' mastery of superlative degree at MAN 5 Martapura academic year 2009-2010.

2. To know the factors that influence eleventh grade students' mastery of superlative degree at MAN 5 Martapura academic year 2009-2010.

#### **E. Significance of Research**

The significances of this research are as follows:

1. As an input for students if studying superlative degree is very important thing.
2. As information and input for educators generally and English lecturers of Islamic English Department IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.
3. To add treasure of Islamic education faculty and IAIN Antasari library.
4. As information for other researchers who want to do the same research but different point of view.

#### **F. Organization of Writing**

This research consists of five chapters; they are systematically arranged in this writing as follows:

The first chapter contains introduction; which is consists of rationale, problem formulation, reasons for choosing the title, research purpose, significance of research, and organization of writing.

The second chapter contains the degree of comparison and superlative degree.

The third chapter contains research method; which is consists of subject and object, data and source of data, technique of data collecting,

technique of data processing and analyzing, design of measurement, and research procedure.

The fourth chapter contains report of research result; which is consists of the description of research location, data presentation and data analysis.

The fifth chapter contains of closure; which is consists of conclusion and suggestion.