

CHAPTER I

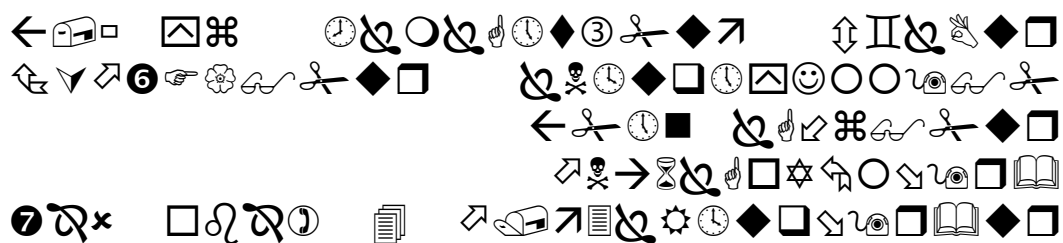
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Humans are social creatures. As social creatures, humans cannot live alone in the world because they cannot fulfill all of their needs by themselves. That is why humans need to interact with other humans. One of ways to interact with the others is by communicating with them.

According to Alwasilah (1985, p. 9), “Communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, sign or behavior”. It means communication is the way to convey ideas, needs, desires, and feelings to other people through a system of symbols, sign or behavior. In order to convey them, an individual needs a means of communication that can be received and understood by other people so that what the individual conveys can get appropriate feedback from the interlocutors. Knowing the importance of communication, humans need a means of communication that is acceptable in their social community.

In the holy *Qur'an* in Ar-rum verse 22, Allah explains as follow:



recognized as an international language, most of countries study English in their social life.

In Indonesia, English becomes a compulsory subject at junior high school, senior high school, even university. It cannot be separated from English function itself in international community. The government knows the importance of English learned by Indonesian people so that they cannot only communicate with other people from other countries but also to compete with them in all aspects of life in international world.

Grammar becomes one of the core materials that must be learnt by learners, especially for beginner. Huddleston and Pullum (2005, p.1) defines “grammar as a rule which deals with the form of sentences and smaller units: clauses, phrases and words”. Lock (1996, p. 4) gives addition about the function of grammar itself. He says that “grammar includes two aspects: (1) the arrangement of words and (2) the internal structure of the words”. It can be said that grammar is how words in a language must be structured into a good order which has an understandable meaning. So English grammar is how we have to arrange English words into a good order based on the English grammatical rules.

Most of the students at Junior High School do not like studying English grammar. There are some common reasons why they dislike studying English grammar. One of them is caused by many patterns and rules in making sentences that have to be known and understood by the students. Then, they become more unconfident and more afraid to study grammar since they do not attain many

vocabularies in English. It becomes causations why they dislike studying grammar.

However, grammar mastery is needed very much in English communication. The meaning of the sentence or utterance can be misunderstood if we are mistaken in word order. Some of word orders will be changed their meaning if we do not arrange them based on the grammatical rules. It is very dangerous because it deals with a meaning. We use a language to convey the meaning of our utterance or sentence. If we cannot arrange the words well, it will be difficult to communicate well with the interlocutors.

One of materials in English grammar which has to be studied by the students of junior high school is degree of comparison. It is a line with the objective of English subject for the students since they have to achieve communicative competence and practice it in their daily life. Degree of comparison is important to study in order to state the existence of a level comparison between two things or more. Although it is including a basic material of English grammar, the writer believes that many students are still confused to create degree of comparison in different levels because there are some changes of word forms and word orders in arranging comparison sentences. Other problems probably can occur in this case, such as Murcia and Larsen's statements.

According to Murcia and Larsen (1999, p.719), there are some common errors made by the second learners with comparison, they are:

1. Omission of the comparative inflection and perhaps also the copula:

- John (**is**) tall than Mary.

2. Substitution of some other function for *than* (a) or inappropriate use of *than* (b):
 - a. John is **tall (er) from** Mary.
 - b. Paul is **as tall than** John.
3. Use of *more* where –er is required or vice versa:
 - a. John is **tall more/more tall** than Mary.
 - b. Mary is **beatifuller than** Mary.
4. Use regular pattern where an irregular form is required.
 - His handwriting is **badder** than mine.
5. Double making of comparative.
 - a. Jim runs **more faster** than Paul.
 - b. This car is **more better** than that one.

Based on the explanation above, it can be predicted that the students of MTs Nipa Rakha and MTs Nipi Rakha will do some errors in learning degree of comparison. It is due to some rules that must be used to change the word forms in degree of comparison, such as why ‘lazy’ must be changed to be ‘*lazier*’ in comparative degree and ‘*the laziest*’ in superlative degree, whereas ‘good’ must be changed to be ‘better’ in comparative degree and ‘the best’ in superlative degree, and etc. The students may still be confused to choose which one is the positive, comparative and superlative degree. The other example is the positive degree “*bad*”, they change into “*badder*” in comparative degree, and they change into “*the baddest*” in superlative degree. The error, such as double making

comparative, can also occur in this situation. For example: My house is *more bigger* than his house.

The writer groups the respondents into two groups: male and female. It is based on Arnold (2002, p. 139) who says that “the factor of sex differences cannot be ignored in learning language, because it can affect students’ achievement and proficiency in learning”. Furthermore, Xin Xiong (2010, p. 309) in *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* says that,

Many people ignored the gender differences in the teaching process and didn’t make systematic analysis and research of the differences between the schoolgirl and the schoolboy, so we didn’t fully understand the differences between them in language learning psychology and the language learning ability etc.

However, there are some researchers who have been interested in observing the case of the difference between male and female. Some previous studies have been conducted not only in Indonesia but also beyond that. Xin Xiong in 2010 observed the difference between male and female students in China which is entitled “*A comparative study of boys’ and girls’ English study difference*”. The aim of this study is to find out many factors which are directly or indirectly affecting the students’ English acquirement in English learning. The result showed that there are quite a lot of differences between schoolgirls and schoolboys no matter in personality, psychology or physiological psychology. Girls’ internal motivation is stronger than boys’ in the foreign language studying and most of the girls aim at gaining English knowledge. The process of English learning itself can make them contented and basically they will not be interrupted by the external factors.

In Addition, the researcher from Indonesia in 2010, Halimah, also conducted a research about comparative study between male and female entitled “*Male and Female Students’ Speaking Ability (A Comparative Study at the Third Semester of English Department of IAIN Walisongo in 2009/2010 academic year)*”. This study focused on comparing male and female students’ speaking ability. The result showed that the female students reach higher points in speaking ability rather than the male students and the different between male and female is significant. Most of female students have higher score in the proficiencies than male students, including their pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Yet, in their use of grammar in their speaking is same.

Furthermore, other researchers who also observed the difference between male and female found that there were different findings in their studies between male’s ability and female’s ability in their studies. As quoted from Obadaki and Omowumi’s journal article (2013, p. 179), it is stated that male is more superior rather than female in tasks measuring spatial ability. An accepted truism has been dominated by many authors such as Fennema (1974), Stumpf and Klieme (1989), Hyde et al. (1990), and Voyer et al. (1995). However, as quoted in Xin Xiong’s journal article (2010, p. 309), McCormick and Jacqueline figured in *The Psychology of the Gender Difference*: “Girls have better language ability than boys which is the chief aspect in the obvious gender difference of boys and girls.” Moreover, Halimah (2010, p. 2) cited Pappalia and Olds’ statement that from adolescence throughout adulthood, female outperformed male in reading,

speaking, spelling and grammar. They started to talk earlier and did better on vocabulary.

In accordance with the case of degree of comparison itself, Fatmawati (2010) conducted a research entitled *the analysis on students' difficulties in learning degrees of comparison*. Based on her title, she would like to identify the students' difficulties in learning degrees of comparison. Her research was designed as the qualitative research since it was aimed at observing and analyzing the teaching and learning process in the classroom that conducted by the English teacher and the students' difficulties in learning degrees of comparison. The result showed that there are 76.11% students who had the difficulties in the item of the comparative form, 65% in the form of superlative degree, and 87.77% in the item of usage of both comparative and superlative degree. It means that the most students had the difficulties in distinguishing the usage of comparative and superlative forms. However, the writer's study is different among them. Here, the researcher focused on finding out the differences between male and female students' mastery in grammar, especially degree of comparison.

The writer chose MTs Nipa and Nipi Rakha Amuntai since those schools had specific students. All of MTs Nipa Rakha students are males whereas all of MTs Nipi Rakha students are females. That is main reason why the writer did the comparative study at those schools in order not to disturb the teaching and learning process by dividing the students into two groups, male and female. This reason was also supported by many people who believe that female students of

MTs Nipi Rakha are better than male students of MTs Nipa Rakha by looking at the alumni.

Based on the explanation above, the writer wanted to know whether or not there is any significant difference in mastering degree of comparison between male students of MTs Nipa Rakha and female students of MTs Nipi Rakha. In line with those reasons, the writer was interested in conducting this research entitled “**THE COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS IN MASTERING DEGREE OF COMPARISON OF THE EIGHTH GRADE AT MTs NIPA AND NIPi RAKHA IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2015/2016**”. The writer focused on comparing male and female students’ score in mastering degree of comparison by giving a test to them. Further, their score of degree of comparison test would be analyzed in order to identify the students’ mastery.

B. Statement of Problem

The writer looks this phenomenon is very interesting to observe. Concerning with the topic, the problem that is discussed in this study comes up from these questions:

1. How is the mastery of the eighth grade male students of MTs Nipa Rakha in degree of comparison?
2. How is the mastery of the eighth grade female students of MTs Nipi Rakha in degree of comparison?

3. Is there any significant difference in mastering degree of comparison between male students of MTs Nipa Rakha and female students of MTs Nipi Rakha?

C. Reasons for Choosing The Title

There were some reasons why the writer was interested in choosing the title. They were as follows:

1. Grammar was chosen because grammar is very important part in a language. Each language has different rules depend on the culture of language itself.
2. Degree of comparison was taken because this material was very challenging for the students. It was based on the preliminary observation which showed that most of students at MTs Nipa and Nipi Rakha had difficulty studying this material.
3. Comparative study was chosen since this study would like to find out the comparison between male and female students in grammar ability, exactly degree of comparison.
4. Male and female students were chosen since many people ignored the differences of learning styles between male and female students in learning language. However, many people believed that female students were better than male students. In this case, this study would like to disclose the significant difference between male and female students in mastering degree of comparison.

D. Objective of Study

In line with the research question, this study has purpose as follows:

1. To know the mastery of the eighth grade male students of MTs Nipa Rakha in degree of comparison.
2. To know the mastery of the eighth grade female students of MTs Nipi Rakha in degree of comparison.
3. To find out whether or not there is any significant difference in mastering degree of comparison between male students of MTs Nipa Rakha and female students of MTs Nipi Rakha.

E. Significance of Study

The results of this study are required to accept both theoretical and practical significance.

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected:

- a. To give information and insight to the existing theories and empirical evidences of the knowledge and principles of gender difference in study English.
- b. To give information and insight to the existing theories and empirical evidences of the working knowledge and principles of degrees of comparison.
- c. To be able to be used as additional reference for next researchers who conduct study in similar area.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, the findings of this study can be used as follows:

- a. This study enables the writer to enrich the writer's knowledge in scientific research especially in comparing between male and female students in mastering degree of comparison.
- b. This study enables the teachers and other educationists to know the comparison between the grammar mastery of male students of MTs Nipa Rakha and the grammar mastery of female students of MTs Nipi Rakha.
- c. This study can give contribution to the teacher and curriculum designers to select the most appropriate teaching strategy of grammar and method to certain categories of students in teaching English as a foreign language.
- d. This study is expected to give contribution to the improvement and development of English teaching and learning at MTs Nipa and Nipi Rakha Amuntai.

F. Limitation of Study

In this research, the writer limits the problem only about the mastery of the eighth grade male students of MTs Nipa Rakha and Nipi Rakha in degree of comparison in the academic year 2015/2016. The degree of comparison consists of positive degree form, comparative degree form, and superlative degree form. The degree of comparison which can be observed only covers a comparison in adjectives.

G. Assumption

In this research, the writer assumes that:

1. Each sex has different strengths and proficiency in learning grammar materials, exactly degree of comparison.
2. There are many factors which influence the male and female students' proficiency in English.

H. Hypotheses

There are two kinds of hypotheses which are to be tested in this study as follow:

a. Alternative hypothesis (Ha)

There is difference in mastering degree of comparison between the eighth grade male students of MTs Nipa Rakha and the eighth grade female students of MTs Nipi Rakha.

b. Null Hypothesis (Ho)

There is no difference in mastering degree of comparison between the eighth grade male students of MTs Nipa Rakha and the eighth grade female students of MTs Nipi Rakha.

I. Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation in reading this study, the writer needs to describe the key terms concerning the title as follows:

1. Comparative Study

Comparative is connected with studying things to find out how similar or different they are. (*Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary*, 2011: 85) Comparative study means a study in comparing two different things or more. Comparative study in this thesis is study of a systematic comparison of two sexes on their grammar mastery in degree of comparison. They are between male students of MTs Nipa Rakha and female students of MTs Nipi Rakha.

2. Male and Female

According to an online dictionary, *dictionary reference*, male is a person bearing an X and Y chromosome pair in the cell nuclei and normally having a penis, scrotum, and testicles, and developing hair on the face at adolescence a boy or man. It relates to a man or a boy in which refers to someone who cannot bear a baby. In this study, male refers to the eighth grade students of MTs Nipa Rakha in the academic year 2015/2016.

Female is a person bearing two X chromosomes in the cell nuclei and normally having a vagina, a uterus and ovaries, and developing at puberty a relatively rounded body and enlarged breasts, and retaining a beardless face; a girl or woman. It refers to someone who can bear a baby. Here, female refers to the eighth grade students of MTs Nipi Rakha in the academic year 2015/2016.

3. Mastering

The root of “mastering” word is master. According to Macmillan, master means to learn something thoroughly so that you know it or can do it very well. (Macmillan, 2002, p.879) In this case, mastering means the

students' mastery regarding the degree of comparison test by identifying the types of degree of comparisons which are positive, comparative and superlative degree.

4. Degree of Comparison

The core of comparison degree is comparison itself. According to *Oxford Dictionary*, comparison is process of comparing somebody or something. Furthermore, it can be defined as an occasion when two or more people or things are compared. (*Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary*, 2011: 85) In the degree of comparison here, actually it compares an adjective or an adverb that describes or belongs to someone or something with another one in another clause of a sentence. Further, it has three types (1) positive degree (equal comparison), (2) comparative degree (unequal comparison), and (3) superlative degree (super comparison), that is suitable with the syllabus of MTs NIPA and NIPi Rakha Amuntai.

There are many words which can be compared in a sentence. Even, we can also compare between two clauses in a sentence. However, in this research, the writer only focuses on the comparison of adjective words. There are three types: positive, comparative and superlative.

5. MTs Nipa and Nipi Rakha

MTs Nipa Rakha (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah Normal Islam Putra*) is an Islamic junior high school for males and MTs Nipi Rakha (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah Normal Islam Putri*) is an Islamic junior high school for females.

They are two schools which are led by two different headmasters. However, both of them are coped in one foundation. They are under the control of Rakha Foundation. Rakha is an Islamic boarding school which is located in Amuntai, North Hulu Sungai regency, exactly on Jalan Rakha Po Box 102.