

## Abstract 39

# The Implication of Syllabication on the Use of Comparative and Superlative Adjectives in Essay Writing

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Using appropriate adjectives for comparison plays an immense role in writing. The two forms, the comparative and the superlative are formed based on the word syllable. Depending on the syllables, the form differs. Therefore, using the adjectives in writing is a challenge for many ESL students. This paper investigates the incorrect forms in comparative essays written by business management students during the first year English course. The study attempts to identify the reason of the ESL learners to have difficulties in using the correct forms, despite the fact that they have learnt and known the relevant rules for years. The objective of the study is to pay attention to the use of the comparative and the superlative forms of the adjectives correctly, which could influence the learners to improve their writing. Fifty undergraduates from the first year Bachelor of Business Management Programme were selected as the sample for this study, in which convenience sampling method was used. The students were given the compare and contrast topic essay as the assignment. The aim of the writing assignment was to test their ability in the use of comparative and superlative adjectives while focusing on the content of the essay. The word-limit was 250 words. The compositions were collected within 30 minutes. Further, the data were collected through direct classroom observations, interviews and structured questionnaires administered to 50 students. The collected data was subjected to an error analysis and the erroneous sentences were put into a table. The SPSS package was used to come up with results regarding the students' errors and the performance in general. The findings show that the mean value (3.94) of the errors indicates that the students did not master the comparative and superlative adjectives. The performance of the mean value is (2.86). Further, analysis of the questionnaires show that the 36 students are not aware or not clear of the demarcation of the syllabic forms such as mono-, di- and poly-syllabic because the forms of adjectives vary based on the number of the syllables. However, only ten students responded positively to the forms of adjectives.

**Key words:** Comparative and Superlative Adjectives, Compare and Contrast Essay, Suffix, Syllable