Comparative Forms of Adjectives: the Semantic Classes and Syntactic Functions

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Abstract

The aim of the research is to identify the real-life distribution of the comparative forms of adjectives. This paper is a corpus-based analysis which discusses comparative forms of adjectives from the linguistics perspectives. British National Corpus (BNC) is used to collect the data due to the generality of the corpora. BNC contains the collection of both spoken and written language in various text types, thus, it represents language variety as a whole. The analysis is done using semantic and syntax approach. Downing's and Locke's (2006) theory on semantic classes and Quirk's and Greenbaum's (1973) theory on syntactic functions were applied. The analysis was done in cycles, and stopped at the third cycle due to the similar findings between cycles. Ninety out of two hundred sentences containing comparative adjectives were analyzed. The analysis results in several findings. First, both semantic classes, descriptors and classifiers, appear in the analysis of comparative adjectives. Yet, the most frequent occurrence is in the semantic class of descriptors. Second, there are four syntactic functions in which comparative adjectives occur and most of them function as pre-modifier of a noun phrase. This paper presents the initial step for further research on comparative adjectives based on the research of semantics and syntax. Further researches on how semantic classes influence syntactic functions is encouraged.

Keywords: *comparative adjectives, semantic classes, syntactic functions*

Introduction

Most English adjectives occur attributively, that is they can either modify the nouns they precede or become the head of the noun phrase itself. However, certain adjectives only appear after linking verbs, not immediately before the nouns they are describing, such as *afraid* in

(1) The cat looks *afraid*.
(2) The **afraid* cat is hiding under the desk.

These types of adjectives are defined as predicate adjectives. These adjectives modifies the subject of the sentence when the *Subject* and *Verb* construction fails to give a complete meaning. Predicate adjectives can only appear after copular or perception verbs. The majority of English predicate adjectives begin with the letter *a,* as in *ablaze, abreast, afloat, afire, afraid, aghast, aglow, alert, alike, alive, alone, aloof, ashamed, asleep, awake,* and *aware.*

In example (1), the predicate adjective *afraid* is correctly used right after the linking verb *looks* in order to describe the cat as the subject of the sentence. However, in example (2) the predicate adjective *afraid* is incorrectly used because *afraid* can only occur after a linking verb, not before the noun it describes. In this case, the adjective *frightened* should be used in order to make the sentence become

(3) The *frightened* cat is hiding under the desk.

Instead of using the predicate adjective *afraid,* the sentence uses the attribute adjective *frightened.*

With the understanding that adjectives can take comparative forms, the explanation above should also be applicable to the comparative form of adjectives. Hence sentences such as

(4) The black cat looks *more afraid* than the white cat.
(5) The *more frightened* cat is hiding under the desk.

are considered grammatically correct, whereas

(6) The **more afraid* cat is hiding under the desk.

is considered grammatically incorrect.

Adjectives are interesting to study due to their variations. Therefore, studying adjectives in general will be overwhelming. For the research of adjectives allows many researches, a limitation should be made. In order to make it more contributive it should be more focused. Hence, this research sets its limitation only to comparative form of adjectives.

Numerous comparative adjectives are used in real-life communication, which gives more factual usage of these forms. This research analyzes the comparative adjectives found in the written corpus. For this particular study, the analysis will be limited to the comparative adjectives collected from the *British National Corpus* (BNC). BNC is chosen because it systematically collects both spoken and written real-life texts. The corpus has contents which follow sampling principles and is aimed for research purposes. As a reference corpora, it lists texts from various discourses, thus, resembling real-life communication. Furthermore, BNC contains the collection of both spoken and written language in various text types, thus, it represents language variety as a whole.

The goal of this research is to identify the distribution of comparative adjectives' semantic classes based on their syntactic functions, thus this particular study focuses on two objectives. The first objective is to find the semantic classes of the comparative adjectives. By finding the semantic classes, it is expected that a pattern of the most common class of comparative adjectives is revealed. The second objective is to find the syntactic functions of the comparative adjectives. It is expected that the most common function of the comparative adjectives as modifier of noun will be the most frequent finding in this research.

This research shall benefit those who are interested in the research of semantics by putting the focus on the semantic classes in which the comparative adjectives mostly occur. Moreover, this research provides the distribution of syntactic functions. This research will be more specific and rewarding by only focusing to analyze those who occur most or why they do not occur in certain functions.

Theoretical Review

This section focuses on three basic theories which are relevant in achieving the goal of this research. The first theory is on the comparative forms of adjectives. The second theory is about the semantic roles of adjectives. The third theory is on the syntactic functions of the adjectives.

1. Comparative Adjectives

English adjectives can be divided into three degrees of comparison. Quirk & Greenbaum (1973: 130) present three comparison degrees of adjectives namely absolute, comparative, and superlative. The absolute degree concerns with basic form of adjectives such as *old* and *beautiful.* The comparative degree concerns with the comparative form of adjectives such as *older* and *more beautiful.* The superlative degree concerns with the superlative form of adjectives such as *oldest* and *most beautiful.* Since this research focuses only on the comparative adjectives, thus the absolute and superlative degrees shall be disregarded.

According to Quirk & Greenbaum (1973: 131) there are three expressions of comparative forms of adjectives. The first form of comparatives is the inflected forms in which there is an addition of the suffix *–er* into the adjectives as what happens in *older*

and *younger.* The second form is what Quirk & Greenbaum address as "their periphrastic equivalents" (131). This comparative form involves the use of *more* as in *more beautiful* and *more expensive.* The third form is the lesser degree which uses *less* as the comparative form as in *less helpful* and *less capable.*

Downing and Locke (2006: 485) give a clearer explanation on the comparative adjectives. There are two types of comparative adjectives namely comparative superiority and comparative inferiority. Concerning the comparative superiority, they state that there are two general forms of comparative degrees and one form consisting of the exceptions. The two general forms of comparative adjectives are the inflected forms and the analytic forms. The forms for the exceptions are the suppletive forms. Regarding the comparative inferiority, there is only one form which is the analytic forms which involve the addition of *less.*

The inflected forms of comparative adjectives involve the addition of the suffix –*er.* These inflected forms are applicable for short adjectives consisting only one syllable – with the exception of *right, wrong,* and *real* – and two-syllable adjectives end in –*y* as in *happier.* Inflection can also be applied in disyllabic adjectives ending in –*ow,* like in *narrower,* and short adjectives ending in weak syllable such as –*le* as in *simpler.*

The analytic forms involve the addition of the adverbial *more.* This formation is applicable to two types of adjectives. The first type is the adjectives consisting of two syllables or more, as in *more expensive* and *more diligent.* The second type is those which are already inflected as in *more complicated* and *more lovable.*

The last form of comparative degree is the suppletive forms. There are limited numbers of adjectives which have the suppletive forms of comparatives. The adjectives which have the suppletive forms are *good, bad, far,* and *old.*

Generally, comparative adjectives are used to compare between two things. However, Quirk & Greenbaum (1973: 131) state that some forms of comparative adjectives have other uses which have nothing to do with comparison whatsoever. Below are two examples to illustrate the statement.

(7) I am *more than happy* about your promotion.
(8) The painting is *more good than bad.*

In sentence (7), *more than happy* does not have a comparative meaning. The sentence portrays a certain kind of feeling that is "not adequately expressed by the word *happy*" (Quirk & Greenbaum 1973: 131). Furthermore, sentence (8) indicates that the quality of the painting is leaning more towards good than towards bad.

These theories will be used as the foundation in analyzing the comparative adjectives. By referring to the theory of adjectives, the validity comparative adjectives found from the data collection shall be analyzed. This shall be useful in eliminating the sentences which contain comparative forms, yet do not carry comparative meanings.

2. Semantic Classes

Downing and Locke (2006) present the theory of semantic classes of adjectives. According to them, adjectives can be classified into two semantic classes namely descriptors and classifiers. Descriptors are adjectives "that describe the referent" (480) and classifiers are adjectives which sub-classify the referent.

The descriptors express seven types of meaning. The first type of meaning is the one concerning size, weight, or extent such as *huge/tiny, heavy/light,* and *wide/narrow.* The second type of meaning is the one related to color. The examples of the adjectives in this type of meaning are *green, orange, purple, gray,* and *crimson.* The third type of meaning is the meanings related to time such as *young, recent, annual, biweekly,* and *late.* The fourth type of meaning contains evaluative meaning as in *good, bad, pretty, nice, horrible, shocking,* and *awful.* The fifth type of meaning is the one describing "an active or passive process" (480) such as *enlightening, tired, frightening,*

worn out, and *soothing.* The sixth type of meaning is related to "general qualities" (480) as in *warm, cool, bitter, hard, boring,* and *bright.* The seventh type of meaning is the one related to "a temporary state" (480) which are predicate adjectives such as *asleep, alone, awake,* and *ajar.*

There are three types of classifiers: restrictive, group-related, and "category-specific meanings" (Downing and Locke 2006: 480). Restrictive classifiers restrict the noun referent in its relation to other referents. Examples of adjectives that fall in this type are "*average, additional, chief, complete, entire, final, following, initial, main, only, particular, primary, public, single, standard"* (480) and those referring to either place or time such as *old, new, previous, former, right,* and *left.* Group-related classifiers refer to certain groups such as nationalities, political group, and religious groups such as *American, Republican,* and *Christian.* Finally, "category-specific meanings" (480) classifiers are associated with certain culture, science, and other specific fields. Example of these classifiers is *nuclear, medical,* and *parliamentary.*

3. Syntactic Functions

Syntactically, adjectives can be distributed and function in phrase and clause structures. Downing and Locke (2006) state that there are five functions that the adjectives realize in phrase structure and two functions that they realize in clause structure.

In phrase structure, adjectives can function as pre-modifier in a noun phrase, post-modifier in a noun phrase, head of a noun phrase, complement of a preposition, and modifier in an adjective phrase. Adjectives function as pre-modifier in a noun phrase such as in

(9) a *good* friend
(10) *extreme* drought
(11) an *old* book

In the following examples, the adjectives function as post-modifiers in noun phrases.

(12) something *expensive*
(13) the person *responsible*

The following gives the example of the adjectives as the head of noun phrases.

(14) the *Spanish*
(15) the *young*
(16) the *most sophisticated*

Adjectives function as the complement of a preposition as given in Downing and Locke (2006: 481)

(17) at *last*
(18) for *good*
(19) in *short*

Finally, the following are the example of adjectives which function as modifiers in adjective phrases.

(20) *shocking* pink
(21) *dull* red
(22) *tainted* green

In clause structure, there are two functions of adjectives. First, adjectives function as subject complements as in

(23) The performance was *magnificent.*
(24) Her voice is *extraordinary.*

and second, adjectives function as object complements as in

(25) I assume the painting *expensive*
(26) They think your remark *offensive*

This is used as the basic theory for the data analysis. The realization of adjectives in both phrase structure and clause structure are analyzed to support the findings.

Research Methodology

This part discusses two aspects in the methodology used in this research. First, the data collection elaborates the steps taken to gather the data for this research. Second, the data analysis presents the processes done to analyze the data collected.

1. Data Collection

There were three steps done in the process of collecting data. Step one was accessing the source, step two was limiting

the parameters for the query, and step three was submitting the query.

This particular research relied on the written data collected from the corpus as the source. First, written utterances containing various comparative adjectives taken from a collection of English corpora in the British National Corpus were selected as the source of the data for this research

The second step was deciding the number of the sentences used as the data of this research. Two hundred characters were chosen for each sentence in the attempt of minimizing the possibility of having fragmented sentences. Two hundred sentences were collected. By collecting two hundred sentences, the number of sentences to choose was maximized should there be fragmented or identical sentences. Moreover, the possibility of having sentences with comparative form which were not comparative adjectives also becomes the reason of choosing to have two hundred sentences.

The third step was submitting the query which met the requirements of this research. Firstly, the parameters of the query should be set. Thus for the concordance, the context was set for two hundred characters which will be sorted by word for the focus of this research are the lexical units of comparative adjectives. The output set was for two hundred lines with the hope of getting 200 examples of sentences containing comparative adjectives. For his data collection, the collocations box was left intact. Secondly, the tags for the search are set into comparative adjectives. Fortunately, this tag is provided by the corpora. Therefore by clicking "English tags", a list of English tags appears including the comparative adjectives. So "adjective, comparative (JJR)" was set as the tag for the search. Thirdly, BNC was chosen as the data source for the search before submitting the query. Two hundred sentences containing comparative adjectives appeared as the result of the search.

2. Data Analysis

There were three focuses in the data analysis. The first focus was distributing the cycles for the analysis. The second focus was analyzing semantic classes of the comparative adjectives. The third focus was analyzing the syntactic functions of the comparative adjectives.

There were two stages in the cycle distribution. The first stage was deciding the cycle for analyzing semantic classes of the comparative adjectives. The second stage was deciding the cycle to analyze syntactic functions of the comparative adjectives.

To decide the cycle for analyzing the semantic classes of the comparative adjectives, some conditions had to be considered before deciding the number of sentences to be analyzed in each cycle. The consideration was based on the number of the subclasses in the semantic classes. Considering the two major semantic classes for adjectives namely descriptors and classifiers have more sub-classes, the number of the sub-classes would be used to determine the number of the sentences in each cycle. There were seven sub-classes of descriptors (size/weight/extent, color, time, evaluative, process, general qualities, and temporary state) and three sub-classes of classifiers (restrictive, groups, and category-specific). In order to allow the ten sub-classes to be repeated at least twice and to allow different forms of comparative adjectives to appear, thirty sentences were going to be analyzed for each cycle.

On the other hand, even though there are only seven syntactic functions of comparative adjectives, it was decided to analyze thirty sentences for every cycle. This decision was closely related to the goal of this research. In order to identify the distribution of their semantic classes based on their syntactic functions, the analyzed sentences had to be exactly the same. Thus, only the ones that had been analyzed for their semantic classes which were analyzed further for their syntactic functions.

In the first cycle analysis of the semantic classes, six sub-classes were found. The analysis in the second cycle resulted in the finding of five sub-classes in which all were the same with the first cycle. Continuing to the third cycle, five sub-classes were found. All five sub-classes in found in the third cycle were also the same with those found in the second cycle. Since there was no more new sub-classes found, the analysis was stopped.

In the analysis of the syntactic functions of comparative adjectives, three syntactic functions were found in the analysis of the first cycle. The second cycle showed three syntactic functions, two functions were the same as those found in the first cycle and one function was different. In the third cycle, three functions were found. All three functions found in the third cycle were the same as those found in the second cycle. Thus, the analysis was stopped after finishing the analysis in the third cycle.

Results and Discussions

This part is divided into three areas of discussions. First discussion concerns the finding of the semantic classes' distribution of comparative adjectives. Second discussion is on the syntactic functions distribution of comparative adjectives. Third discussion covers the distribution of comparative adjectives' semantic classes based on their syntactic functions.

1. Semantic Classes Distribution of Comparative Adjectives

The result of semantic classes' analysis of the comparative adjectives shows that the distribution is dominated by the descriptors. Eighty four out of ninety sentences are in the class of descriptors. In other words, 93.33% of the analyzed sentences are descriptors and only 6.67% of them are classifiers. Comparative adjectives collected from the *British National Corpus* mostly have the function of describing their referent instead of sub-classifying them. The number of those which describe their referent is almost fourteen times bigger than those which sub-classify them.

In a more specific analysis, the analysis of semantic sub-classes distribution of comparative adjectives, there are five sub-classes of descriptors and one sub-class of classifiers which are identified from the overall data. The five sub-classes of descriptors identified from the data are size/weight/extent descriptors, time descriptors, evaluative descriptors, general qualities descriptors, and temporary state descriptors. The only sub-class of classifiers identified from the data is the restrictive classifiers, those which restrict their referents in its relation to others.

It is also noted that some semantic sub-classes are absence in the analyzed data. Two sub-classes of descriptors and two sub-classes of classifiers are not present in the analyzed sentences. The two absent sub-classes of descriptors are time descriptors and process descriptors. In the classifiers sub-classes, the two which are absent are group classifiers and category-specific classifiers.

The distribution of the semantic sub-classes of comparative adjectives is given in the table below.

Table1. Semantic Classes Distribution of Comparative Adjectives

Semantic Sub-classes	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Average
Size/weight/extent descriptors	56.67%	60.00%	70.00%	62.22%
Evaluative descriptors	23.33%	16.67%	6.67%	15.56%
Time descriptors	6.67%	6.67%	13.33%	8.89%
Restrictive classifiers	6.67%	10.00%	3.33%	6.67%
General qualities descriptors	3.33%	6.67%	6.67%	5.56%
Temporary state descriptors	3.33%	0.00%	0.00%	1.11%

The table shows the semantic sub-classes distribution of comparative adjectives from the highest to the lowest. From the table, it is visible that the most occurrences are in the sub-class of size/weight/extent descriptors with 62.22% whereas the least occurrence is in the sub-class of temporary state descriptors with only 1.11%. Evaluative descriptors, in the second position, are mostly identified in the first cycle of the analysis. Only a third of the number is identified in the third cycle. In the third position, time descriptors are more or less equally distributed in the first, second, and third cycles. General qualities descriptors and restrictive classifiers, in the fourth position, are also almost equally distributed in all three cycles. Most of the sub-classes are found in all three cycles except the temporary state descriptors which is only found in the first cycle analysis.

2. Syntactic Functions Distribution of Comparative Adjectives

From the analysis, it is found that the comparative adjectives appear in phrases as well as in clauses. From the analysis of syntactic functions, sixty eight sentences are identified to have comparative adjectives functioning in a phrase level and twenty two sentences are identified to have comparative adjectives functioning in a clause level. 75.56% of the analyzed comparative adjectives function syntactically in a phrase level whereas only 24.44% of them function syntactically in a clause level.

The syntactic functions distribution of comparative adjectives is presented in the table below.

Table 2. Syntactic Functions Distribution of Comparative Adjectives

Syntactic Functions	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Average
Pre-modifier in a Noun Phrase	66.67%	86.67%	66.67%	73.33%
Subject Complement in a Clause	30.00%	10.00%	30.00%	23.33%
Head of a Noun Phrase	0.00%	3.33%	3.33%	2.22%
Object Complement in a Clause	3.33%	0.00%	0.00%	1.11%

Focusing only to the phrase level, the analyzed comparative adjectives from the collected data show only two out of five syntactic functions. The first identified function is as pre-modifiers in a Noun Phrase. The comparative adjectives in sixty six out of ninety analyzed sentences are identified as pre-modifiers in a Noun Phase. It means that this function dominates the syntactic functions distribution with the occurrence of 73.33% of the overall data. The second identified function is as head of a Noun Phrase. In contrast to the high percentage of the function as pre-modifiers in a Noun Phrase, this function only appears in two sentences in all three cycles thus having 2.22% of the overall data. Three other syntactic functions in phrase level are not present in the collected data. Those which are absence are the syntactic functions of post-modifier in a Noun Phrase, complement of a Preposition, and modifier in an Adjective Phrase.

In the clause level, the distribution is dominated by the syntactic function of Subject Complement. Comparative adjectives in twenty one out of ninety analyzed sentences are identified as Subject Complements in a clause. It means that 23.33% of the overall data show comparative adjectives as the Subject Complements, leaving 1.11% as Object Complements in a clause.

3. The Distribution of Comparative Adjectives' Semantic Classes Based on Their Syntactic Functions

Based on the findings, each syntactic function of comparative adjectives can take either one or more semantic sub-classes. The results of the analysis of semantic classes and syntactic functions of comparative adjectives are summarized in the table below.

Table 3. Semantic Classes and Syntactic Functions Distribution of Comparative Adjectives

	Pre-modifier in a Noun Phrase	Head of a Noun Phrase	Subject Complement in a Clause	Object Complement in a Clause
Size/weight/extent descriptors	46	1	9	-
Time Descriptors	5	-	2	-
Evaluative Descriptors	7	1	6	-
General Qualities Descriptors	3	-	2	-
Temporary State Descriptors	-	-	-	1
Restrictive Classifiers	5	-	1	-

a. Comparative Adjectives as Pre-modifiers in Noun Phrases

As a pre-modifier in a noun phrase, comparative adjectives can take five semantic sub-classes. Those semantic sub-classes are size/weight/extent descriptors, time descriptors, evaluative descriptors, general qualities descriptors, and restrictive classifiers.

The distribution in this function is dominated by the semantic sub-class of size/weight/extent descriptors. The example of this type is as follow

(27) This pattern of *greater* flexibility toward outside investigation of human rights abuses is also shown by the Sri Lankan government's acceptance....

In the given example, the comparative adjective *greater* modifies the noun *flexibility* which comes after it and produce a noun phrase *greater flexibility*. Syntactically, the comparative adjective *greater* functions as a pre-modifier in this particular noun phrase. Seeing from the semantic perspective, the basic form of *greater* is *great. Great* carries the type of meaning which concern extent. Therefore, semantically *greater* stretches the extent of the word it describes, *flexible.*

The second semantic sub-class, the time descriptors, can be seen in the example below

(28) An *older* book, that is one published before around 1900, will only have black and white plates ...

In sentence (28) the comparative adjective *older* precedes the noun it modifies, *book.* By adding an article *an,* the combination forms a noun phrase, *an older book.* Thus it confirms its syntactic function as a pre-modifier in a noun phrase. Semantically, *older* contains the type of meanings related to time since it describes the age of the book. Thus *older* is included in the semantic sub-class of time descriptor in the noun phrase *an older book.*

The third semantic sub-class, the evaluative descriptors, is stated in the sentence below

(29) ...a habeas corpus petition was upheld by two *lower* courts.

The comparative adjective *lower* pre-modifies the noun *court* forming the noun phrase *two lower courts.* Based on the meaning of the word *low*, it might not seem to carry an evaluative meaning. However, Downing & Locke (2006: 480) state that the adjectives which refer to the ranking system carry evaluative meanings. Considering the argument, *lower* in sentence (29) describe a more inferior rank in the line of courts. Therefore, it can be concluded that *lower* carries an evaluative meaning to the word *courts.*

The fourth semantic sub-class, the general qualities descriptors, is given in the following sentence

(30) Lucas van Leyden is an artist of *frailer* calibre than Durer, ...

Frailer, coming from the word *frail,* has the meaning of general quality. As in the previous example, the comparative adjective *frailer* syntactically functions as a pre-modifier of the word *calibre,* forming the noun phrase *frailer calibre.*

The fifth semantic sub-class, the restrictive classifiers, is seen in the following sentence

(31) ...a *further* letter arrived ...

A further letter in sentence (31) is a noun phrase consists of an article *a,* and a comparative adjective *further* followed by a noun *letter.* It was stated previously that restrictive classifiers restrict the noun referent in its relation to other reverent. In sentence (31) the comparative adjective *further* restricts the word *letter* in its relation to other types of letter. *Further* carries the meaning of *following* which is stated as one of the restrictive adjectives based on the argument of Downing & Locke (2006: 480)

b. Comparative Adjectives as Heads of Noun Phrases

Based on the analysis, as a head of a noun phrase, comparative adjectives can take two semantic sub-classes. They are size/weight/extent descriptors and evaluative descriptors. The following are examples of comparative adjectives as heads of noun phrases

(32) Any benefit enjoyed by the donor or a " connected person " as a consequence of making a gift under Gift Aid must not exceed the *lower* of £250 or 2½% of the value of the gift.

(33) He recognized the truest limits of the medium in which he worked, never allowed technical virtuosity to have the *better*.

In both sentences, the comparative adjectives are preceded with the definite article *the.* The combination of an article with an adjective only forms a noun phrase. In sentence (32) the comparative adjective *lower* thus become the head of the noun phrase *the lower* as *better* in *the better* as seen in sentence (33). However, in sentence (32), *lower* carries the type of meaning concerning size/weight/extent whereas *better* carries the type of evaluative meaning.

c. Comparative Adjectives as Subject Complements in Clauses

As a subject complement in a clause, comparative adjectives can take the semantic sub-classes of size/weight/extent descriptors, time descriptors, evaluative descriptors, general qualities descriptors, and restrictive classifiers.

The first semantic sub-class is the size/weight/extent descriptors as seen in the example below

(34) This thematic method is combined in many introductory courses with formal analysis which is *closer* to the way that many artists describe pictures.

The comparative adjective *closer* has the meaning of extent in the sense of abstract relation concerning the distance of the method of analysis being used. *Closer* also functions as the complement of the phrase *formal analysis* which stands as the subject of the subordinate clause of the sentence.

The second semantic sub-class, the time descriptors can be seen in the sentence below

(35) Today the survival rate of a person with AIDS is *longer* than two years, ...

Syntactically, *longer* in sentence (35) functions as a complement to the subject *the survival rate.* Semantically, it carries the meaning of time for it does not refer to distance, but it refers to a period of time.

The third semantic sub-class, the evaluative descriptors, is presented in the example below

(36) ...to share costs of a show is *easier* for the participants.

The comparative adjective *easier* in sentence (36) contains the evaluative type of meaning as in *hard, good,* and *nice.* The adjective *easy* presents an evaluation to the action of sharing the cost of a show. Having stated this, *easier* gives an evaluative description to the phrase *to share costs of a show* which is the subject of the clause. Thus, *easier* has the syntactic function as a subject complement with evaluative meaning.

The fourth semantic sub-class, the general qualities descriptors, is given in the following sentence.

(37) ...a colour plate which is readily available (perhaps having been used in another publication) is much *cheaper* to use than a new plate which has to be commissioned.

In sentence (37), it can be seen that the comparative adjective *cheaper* describe the quality of the subject *a colour plate.* Thus *cheaper* function as the complement of *a colour plate* which is the subject of the sentence. Semantically, since *cheap* refer to the quality of the goods which is *a colour plate,* then *cheaper* carries the general quality meaning in describing the subject.

The fifth semantic sub-class, the restrictive classifiers, can be seen in the following example

(38) Solo shows and mixed exhibitions are *more common*, ...

The comparative adjective *more common* in sentence (38) describes the noun phrase *Solo shows and mixed exhibitions* which is the subject of the sentence. This makes the comparative adjective *more common* functions as a subject complement in this sentence. Semantically, the adjective *common* is a member of the classifiers with restrictive meanings. So, *more common* is also a member of the semantic sub-class of restrictive classifiers.

d. Comparative Adjectives as Object Complements in Clauses

As an object complement in a clause, comparative adjectives take the semantic sub-class of temporary state descriptors. From the data collected, there is only one comparative adjective which was identified to have the syntactic function of an object complement in a clause.

(39) ...other things which led him *more* or *less astray*.

The comparative adjective *more or less astray* can be broken down into *more astray* or *less astray.* In this sense, the word *more or less* can be categorized as a comparative form of adjective.

More or less astray refer to the object *him* and so syntactically they function as the object complement in the clause (39). Semantically, *astray* is considered as a predicate adjective which is the requirement of a temporary state sub-class. Thus in clause (39) *more or less astray* carries the meaning of the semantic sub-class of temporary state descriptors.

Conclusion

Concerning the analysis of syntactic functions, the result reveals there are four functions in which the comparative adjectives appears. The comparative adjectives function as a pre-modifier in a noun phrase, as a head of a noun phrase, as a subject complement in a clause and as an object complement in a clause.

Related to the distribution of comparative adjectives' semantic classes based on their syntactic functions, they can take more than one semantic sub-class for each syntactic function. As a pre-modifier in a noun phrase, comparative adjectives can take five semantic sub-classes. Those semantic sub-classes are size/weight/extent descriptors, time descriptors, evaluative descriptors, general qualities descriptors, and restrictive classifiers. As a head of a noun phrase, comparative adjectives can take two semantic sub-classes. They are size/weight/extent descriptors and evaluative descriptors. As a subject complement in a clause, comparative adjectives can take the semantic sub-classes

of size/weight/extent descriptors, time descriptors, evaluative descriptors, general qualities descriptors, and restrictive classifiers. As an object complement in a clause, comparative adjectives take the semantic sub-class of temporary state descriptors.

From the findings, it can be concluded that the most predictable semantic class and syntactic function of comparative adjectives. The most predictable semantic class for them is the class of descriptors in general and the descriptors with size/weight/extent type of meanings in particular. As for the most predictable syntactic function of comparative adjectives is the function as pre-modifier in a noun phrase. Thus, in the real-life usage of adjectives, the claim that attributive adjectives are the most widely used type of adjective is confirmed.

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