



A Comparative Study between the Ability of the Second Year Male and Female Students of Junior High School in Comprehending English Texts

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out the difference between the ability of the second-year male and female students of SMP N 5 Pekanbaru on comprehending English texts. The research was conducted at March 2024. The population of this research was the second-year students of SMP N 5 Pekanbaru with the total number of 70 students (32 males and 38 females). The random sampling technique was used to determine the research sample. The inferential analysis "Independent Sample T-Test" was used to measure the difference in reading comprehension between male and female students and descriptive analysis was used to determine the dominant factors affecting the reading comprehension of male and female students. To collect the data in this research multiple choice tests and open-ended questionnaires were used. Based on the research findings, it was found that the ability of the second-year male and female students of SMP N 5 Pekanbaru on comprehending English texts is in sufficient level. In addition, the sig was $0.581 > 0.05$. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is no significant difference on comprehending English texts in term of their genders. It means that Null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and Alternative hypothesis (H_1) is rejected. Whereas, the factors provide the most positive value in understanding English texts for male and female students were the environmental circumstances factor.

Keywords:

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the four essential skills in English that students should acquire, alongside listening, speaking, and writing (Surmanov, 2021). Reading is a critical-creative processing of reading by students to gain an understanding of a piece of writing. This means that reading is the most important ability needed and must be possessed by students, because reading is the key to finding information of knowledge. Reading is an important part besides writing, listening, and speaking of English subject in Junior High School level. Based on the Kurikulum Merdeka, students in junior high school

are subjected to genres like procedural texts, report texts, narrative texts, recount texts, and descriptive texts.

Naturally, reading is difficult for Indonesian students as English is not their first language. There are differences between the English and Indonesian languages in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, structure, and even dialect (Sipayung, 2018). They must really comprehend the content of the text they read. They read english texts and must comprehend it in order to really know what the author is conveying to the reader. But some students are very weak

in comprehending a text. Understand that there are several potential causes for the issue. And influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Mardiani et al., 2021).

Most studies state that the way of thinking of male and female students is different. Certain studies suggest that females have better language abilities than males (Lazarus, 2020). According to Non Erna Sri Utami (2020), there are slight differences in the structure and function of the brains of male and female, female tend to be good at managing their emotions and feelings, and are better at managing language, melodies and tones, while male are better at using logic, which according to them makes more sense. Many factors can affect students' success in reading. For example, in order to comprehend a text, the reader must be able to organize its sections. When the reader can organize the text, it is easier to understand what they are reading. Students may come across pre-question forms, therefore it's critical that they comprehend the reading material by having a general understanding of it (Purnama, 2018). Apart from gender, students' reading ability is also influenced by demographic factors in their environment. On the other hand, socioeconomic status has also been shown to be a factor in performance, although the results are not always significant either.

According to Dolean et al., (2019), "Education is a key factor in alleviating poverty and increasing the quality of life of children from vulnerable groups". This is intended in demographic factors that greatly affect student learning outcomes. Demographic factors include gender, socioeconomic status and home language (Völkel et al., 2016). The socio-economic environment is the basic condition for learning (Town & Fay, 2022).

Socioeconomics affects income levels, parental employment status and family education levels, which may affect access to learning resources and reading opportunities at home.

Studies conducted locally as well as internationally have consistently demonstrated significant differences between males and females in primary and secondary school reading motivation, text interest, and reading proficiency (Lepper et al., 2022). In this case, while considering the general reading motivation of students at the inter-student level, male children's reading comprehension is lower than female children's. This is based on how the society around him/her motivates them. Motivation is a determining factor for student success in learning (Ayu et al., 2018). Motivation to learn is the effort a person has that drives him to compete according to standards of excellence or high learning outcomes in the classroom. In this research, the researcher will examine the students' ability in comprehending English texts at the second-year of junior high school. In the Kurikulum Merdeka, the junior high school level is in phase D. Then, the research questions are as follows: 1) Is there any significant difference between the ability level of male and female students of Junior High School in comprehending English texts?; and 2) What are the factors that influence the ability level of male and female students of Junior High School in comprehending English texts?

METHOD

This research intends to investigate the comparison between the ability of the second-year male and female students of junior high school in comprehending English texts. This is a

descriptive-comparative research. Descriptive-comparative research is a quantitative research design that aims to describe differences between groups within a population without manipulating independent variables (Cantrell, 2011). The research conducted in SMP N 5 Pekanbaru. The sampling technique the researcher used was simple random sampling. The total sample in this research was 62 students which consisted of 31 male students and 31 female students.

The researcher used multiple-choice tests and open-ended questionnaires. The test is constructed by referring to the components of reading comprehension (finding main ideas, finding factual information, finding the meaning of difficult words, finding references, finding inferences) and followed with open-ended questionnaires. The open-ended questions is about socioeconomic status. The variables of socioeconomic status are education level, income level, family and social supports, and environmental circumstances. This study used a multiple-choice test to collect quantitative data and used open-ended questionnaires to collect descriptive analysis. This technique used to find out the results of significant differences between male and female students and to know the factors that influence the ability level of male and female students of Junior High School in comprehending English texts. Microsoft Excel 2019 and SPSS 29.0 used to compute students' ability scores and determine whether there is a significant difference between second-year male and female students. Therefore, the researcher only used 30 multiple-choice test questions.

The researcher used the t-Test analytic formula to compare interval or ratio data from free samples. Then, the researcher used open-ended

questionnaire as the survey method. The survey method has been widely used to describe phenomena that occur and develop naturally, in the sense that the variables are not manipulated by researchers (Rusdi et al., 2016). The researcher designed 6 questions with multiple answer options. The researcher will then categorize the answers thematically and draw deeper conclusions. Before knowing the sequence of factors, the researcher calculated the percentage in the data tabulation for each indicator by using formula from Sudijono (2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students Individual Scores

The percentage of male and female students' ability in reading comprehension can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Percentage of Male Students' Ability Level in Reading Comprehension

No	Range Score	Frequency	Percentage	Ability Level
1	81-100	0	0,00%	Very Good
2	61-80	18	58,06%	Good
3	41-60	3	9,68%	Sufficient
4	21-40	9	29,03%	Bad
5	0-20	1	3,23%	Very Bad
Total		31	100%	

Table 2. Percentage of Female Students' Ability Level in Reading Comprehension

No	Range Score	Frequency	Percentage	Ability Level
1	81-100	0	0,00%	Very Good
2	61-80	17	54,84%	Good
3	41-60	10	32,26%	Sufficient
4	21-40	4	12,90%	Bad
5	0-20	0	0,00%	Very Bad
Total		31	100%	

Table 1 and 2 shows that between male and female students have scores that are at the good level, but when the average score is done on both, they have the ability level at the sufficient level.

The Result of Independent Sample T-Test

Table 3 Independent Samples t-Test result

		t	df	1- sid. p	2- sid. p	Mean difference	Std. Error difference
Students' Score	Equal var. assumed	-.554	60	,291	,581	-2,235	4,0
	Equal var. Not assumed	-.554	49,771	,291	,582	-2,235	4,0

Based on the output SPSS above, independent sample t-Test showed that the t-test result was -0,554, df was 60, the sig (2-tailed) was 0,581, mean difference was -2,235, and standard error difference was 4,032. Then, from output above showed the Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.581. It means, the value was more than 0.05 or $0.581 > 0.05$. Therefore, the writer can conclude that alternative hypothesis (H_a) was rejected and null hypothesis (H_o) was accepted.

In the other words, there was no significant difference of reading comprehension of English texts between male and female students at the second-year of SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru. Besides, by looking mean score of each gender, it proved that female students were better than male students in comprehending English texts. Besides, the result of reading comprehension test whether it was high or low for both male and female students is strongly influenced by some factors included education level, income level, family and social support and environmental circumstances.

Table 4. The Sequence of Dominant Factors for Male and Female Students

Male Students					
No	No of Questions	Indicator	Maximum scale	Total	Percentage 50%
1	5	Environmental circumstances	A	29	46,8%
2	6	Environmental circumstances	A	26	41,9%
3	1	Education level	B	15	24,2%
4	2	Income level	B	15	24,2%
5	3	Family & social support	B	15	22,6%
6	4	Family & social support	B	13	21,0%

Female Students					
No	No of Questions	Indicator	Maximum scale	Total	Percentage 50%
1	6	Environmental circumstances	A	28	45,2%
2	5	Environmental circumstances	A	21	33,9%
3	1	Education level	B	18	29,0%
4	3	Family & social support	B	16	25,8%
5	4	Family & social support	A	13	21,0%
6	2	Income level	B	13	21,0%

Based on the results of this research, there are differences in the indicator of factors that influence their understanding of English texts. Where the higher the parental education, parental income, family income, and support from the family, the higher the understanding of male and female students in understanding English texts.

Based on the findings, the mean score of the second year male students of SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru in comprehending English texts is 56,42. While, the female students is 58,65. It means that the ability of male and female students in comprehending English texts can be categorized into *sufficient* level. Previous studies in this issue revealed two major findings, there is a significant difference between male and female students in comprehending English text, and the second one there is no significant difference between male and female students in comprehending English texts. From the result of the order dominant factors affecting reading comprehension of English texts, female students got higher scores than male students because female students are more motivated to learn English and to read English texts than male students. However, there is no significant difference between their

ability of the second-year male and female students of SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru in comprehending English texts after being analyzed using t-test generated from SPSS

CLOSING

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the findings in this research, the ability of the second-year male and female students of SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru in comprehending English texts is in *sufficient* level. From the results of the sequence of dominant factors that influence reading comprehension of English texts, female students obtained higher scores than male students because female students were more motivated to learn and read English texts than male students. The result shows that Null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, where there is no significant difference in comprehending English texts of the second-year students of SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru in terms of gender.

Recommendation

It is suggested that students need to do more reading exercises to improve their reading ability, especially in reading texts, so that students can understand the components of reading comprehension of each text and they can get higher scores than the previous tests they have done. The researcher would like to suggest to the English teachers at SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru to be able to distinguish the difference in ability between male and female students especially in comprehending English texts. In addition, the English teacher of SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru should give more support or motivation to male and female students in comprehending English texts.

Furthermore, it is suggested that future researchers should not only focus on one type of text, but also consider students' ability to understand other texts such as narrative text, recount text, procedure text, report text, and so on, and are expected to conduct research that not only includes students' ability in reading comprehension, but also students' ability in other skills (listening, speaking, and writing).

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