

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON READING COMPREHENSION BETWEEN STUDENTS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN CITY AND RURAL AREA (A Comparative Study at SMPN 1 Cilegon, SMPN 1 Serang and SMPN 1 Picung, SMPN 3 Banjarsari)

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Abstract: This study is aimed to: (1) find out the differences on reading comprehension between students of junior high school in city and rural area, (2) to find out factors that causes differences on reading comprehension between students in city and rural area. This research was carried out in SMPN 1 Serang, SMPN 1 Cilegon, SMPN 1 Picung and SMPN 1 Banjarsari. The method used was quantitative method in the form of comparative study. The writer used Ex Post Facto Design in this research. The population of the research was all the third year students of those four schools. The sampling technique was purposive sampling. The writer took 80 students for the sample. The instruments for collecting data were questionnaire, interview, test and also unstructured observation. The technique used to analyze data was T-Test separated variance and pooled variance. The result of the study showed that there was a significant difference of students reading comprehension between students in city and rural area. It can be seen from the result of the test. Based on questionnaire which were given to the students and interview for the teacher, the researcher could find out the factors that cause differences on reading comprehension between students in city and rural area, such as the students' interest, motivation of students, teaching methodology, reading material, vocabulary mastery, and culture.

Background of the Problem

Reading is as one of the skills that has closely related with another skill that is stated by Harris (1977:5) concludes that reading is an extension of oral communication and builds upon listening and speaking skills. Widdowson in *Reading as a second language* (1998, p.17) has defined reading as the process of getting linguistic information via print. Adams (1990) in the psychological assessment of reading (1997:163) states that Reading is the ability to comprehend the thoughts and feelings of another mind via the medium of text. Graph-phonetic, semantic syntactic and pragmatic awareness are involved in reading.

Perfetti (1998:17) suggests that reading can be considered as thinking guided by print, with reading ability as skill at comprehension of text. Reading can be viewed as the activity that need the ability to comprehend what we have read. And try to interpret the meaning of the

text we have read then those minds get the new information based on the text. In conveying reading comprehension texts, teachers of school need to provide some texts, certainly teachers are required to know how far the ability of students in comprehending many kind of texts. Based on the writer's experience while teaching reading material in Junior High School, most of the students still have difficulty in comprehending some texts. In writer's opinion it can be seen from several reasons of why they tend to find that problem. Two of the major reasons are most probably the learners' attitudes toward reading in the term of motivation and students' interest in reading certain text and their vocabulary mastery.

The students who come from different areas they will have different attitude toward reading. Besides, they also come from different ethnics that affect them to have different attitude toward learning. Gardners believes that the

attitude covers several things such as cognitive components, which covers beliefs, emotional reactions, and behavioral tendencies. The attitude toward reading is largely determined by the motivating things when they read the texts.

Thus, the students who come from different areas they will have different interest to read the texts. Based on the writer's assumption, the writer found that the students of the city, they were interested much in reading the text related with science and new technology, e.g., text related to computer, internet, mobile phone, etc. And they explored the new information from it and applied in their daily activity. On the other hand, the students of rural area have different interest in reading the text. They tend to receive a text that is derived from the teacher. They do not pay attention to the willingness of reading to know the new information about one issue. They like to read the text involve with their specification area such as text related with agriculture, cultivating, farming, etc. Although the students who live in rural area are given some kinds of text by teachers related with new technology, they can be interested with the information are being intended in the text, but they cannot apply the information found in the text practically.

Therefore, the capability of the students in understanding the text will be basically based on the areas they live, such as city and rural area. Based on the writer's assumption that the average capability of students' reading especially to understand certain text in rural is still lower than the city. The above condition probably happened due to the condition of both areas are totally different. It can be seen from reading material availability. As the fact that in city there is many kinds of reading material, so the students have much chance to read more many texts.

Likewise in rural areas, there is no more reading material availability. And it also can be caused by the teacher's style in teaching reading.

Based on the writer's experience while teaching for preparing national examination (UN), the writer found that fifty percents of the test items were referred to a text based reading comprehension. The students are used to understand the text related with special topic and genre of the text. They often complain about some kinds of the text, which is long passage, and they can't understand about the meaning of some vocabulary in the text.

Considering the explanation above the writer was interested in observing the differences of reading comprehension of students in city and rural area based on the characteristics of students in each area such as attitude in term of motivation, interest, reading materials, socio cultural environment. Finally, the writer conducted the research entitled "Comparative study on reading comprehension between students of junior high schools in city and rural area.

Theoretical Basis

1. Reading Comprehension

Richard and Banford (1998:90) states that reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process that relies on several components to be successful. To develop reading comprehension children need to develop their vocabulary and linguistic knowledge and interact with text to derive meaning.

...it might first be helpful to think about the kinds of knowledge learners can bring to comprehension tasks. In the second language comprehension process, at least three types of background knowledge are potentially activated: 1) Linguistic information or one's knowledge of

the target language code 2) knowledge of the world, including one's store of concepts and expectations based on prior experience. 3) knowledge of discourse structure or the understanding of how various kinds or types of discourse (such as conversations, radio broadcast, literary text, political speeches, newspaper and magazines stories, and the like) are generally organized. Swan (1988:131)

Based on Adams (1990) in the psychological assessment of reading (1997:163) Reading is the ability to comprehend the thoughts and feelings of another mind via the medium of text. Grapho-phonetic, semantic syntactic and pragmatic awareness are involved in reading. Reading is an activity that requires an understanding from the kinds of passage and it is depend upon readers' concept in their mind. According to Cashdan (1979:65) states that reading involves two processes: the reader must establish what the writer has said and he must follow what the writer meant. Richards (1997:12) has other cognitive view about reading, he states that reading is the construction of meaning from printed or written message.

The word comprehension can be defined as the students' ability to clarify what students read from any kind of text. The definition of comprehension explained by Richard and Banford (1998:97) stated that comprehension is a complex interactive process that begins with identifying words by using knowledge outside the text, accessing word meaning in context, recognizing grammatical structures, drawing inferences and self monitoring to ensure that the text is making sense.

According to Urquhart and Weir (1998, p.84) comprehension is frequently

mentioned in cognitive and educational psychology as well as of course the pedagogical literature.

Urquhart (1998, p.88) states that comprehension cannot be viewed simply as the product of any reading activity. Rather, in any reading situation, comprehension will vary according to the readers' background knowledge, goals, interaction with the writer, etc. Comprehension is a useful term to contrast with decoding; otherwise it is best perhaps taken as the product resulting from a particular reading task and evaluated such as.

2. Characteristics of learners

Lightbown and Spada in English language teaching in its social context (2001, p.29) stated about the characteristics of good language learner, they are:

“...1) a willing and accurate guesser, 2) tries to a message across even if specific language knowledge is lacking, 3) willing to make mistakes, 4) constantly looks the patterns in the language, 5) practice as often as possible, 6) analysis his or her own speech and the speech of others, 7) attends to whether his or her performance meets the standard he or she has learned, 8) enjoy grammars exercises, 9) begins learning in childhood, 10) has an above average IQ, 11) has good academic skills, 12) has a good self image and lots of confidence.

Obviously, learners' characteristics can view from some affective aspects that lead them to be successful in language learning. Lightbown and Spada's opinion above explain that characteristics of learners can influence by several factors in term of motivation, aptitude, personality, intelligence, and learner preferences.

Cameron (2001, p.1) states that “... Some differences are immediately obvious: children are often more

enthusiastic and lively as learners. They will have ago at an activity even when they don't quite understand why or how. However, they also lose interest more quickly are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult." Based on writer's assumption that children characteristics in language learning they tend to be active learners if the teacher can attract their attention with interested material. Then, Cameron (2001) continue her opinion that children often seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in a new language, and their lack of inhibition seems to help them get a more native like accent.

Moreover, Teaching English to children is not the same as that to adults in some ways. Firstly, in term of motivation, children learn a new language for interaction in order to be part of the peer group; thus, this suggests an integrative motivation. Adults, on the other hand, have more instrumental motivation, such as achieving a targeted TOEFL score for academic purposes, to fulfill the required English Proficiency in a job market, and many other specified practical purposes. (Dulay, 1982) in The 50th TEFLIN International Conference Journal (2002, p.3) English for young learners classes.

3. City and Rural area

Bintarto (1983:36) states that based on the geographical an area named a city as one network system that characterized by densely populated and marked by heterogeneous of social stratification and economic. The writer can make the interpretation that we can called an area as a city if the citizen in those area are so various which those have different occupation and diversity in social stratification. Bintarto (1983:43) suggest about the characteristics of city, there are can be seen from physics aspect such as shopping centers, parking area, recreation place, sport centers, neighborhood playground, play field, and

from social aspect such as the differences of education background and social stratification, individualism, density population, etc.

Finch (1957) in Bintarto (1983:12) states that a village or a rural area is principally a place of residence and not primarily a business center. It is composed chiefly of farm dwellings and their associated outbuildings. Similarly the same opinion from Misra (1962) in Bintarto (1983:12) suggests that a village or rural area is not just collection of dwellings. It is compact agricultural area with defined boundaries, usually 50-1000 acres in extent (1 acre: 4000 m²). Based on their opinion the writer try to take the conclusion about rural area, it is an area not only as a settlement characterized by agricultural area but also it has boundary in the extent of area just achieve 50-1000 acre. Bintarto (1983:13) explain about the element of rural area it can be characterized by the system of life in rural area referred to mutual cooperation between society unlike in the city which is referred to individualism, in rural area is still be a disguised unemployment.

Based on opinion from Min Zou (2003) in Urban Education articles: Challenges in Educating Culturally Diverse Children states that Research has shown that certain children living in the inner city are able to do well, despite adversarial conditions. A key difference is the availability and accessibility of community based resources, such as after school tutoring and other educational oriented programs that serve children.

4. Learners in city and rural area

Gordon (2003) in the article of Urban Education states that:

"...This has several prominent features: a high degree of diversity and heterogeneity, conflicting lifestyles of people who live in close proximity,

cultural richness, a concentration of material resources, ease of communication, geographic mobility, and coexistence of fluidity and rigidity in institutional and personal behavior. From the perspective of urbanicity, educators should be most concerned about how the concentration of people, resources, and sources of stimulation found in urban society leads to interactions that have great potential for affecting human development.”

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According to Sarkees (in TASPP Bulletin, v2 n1 p1- 4 Aug 1990) that approximately 25 percent of the U.S. Population is in rural areas and about 10 million students are enrolled in rural school, comprising 12.000 of the 15.000 schools in the country. He states that Although Rural communities and their schools are quite diverse, certain characteristics economic, cultural, and social factors create large numbers of “at risk” individuals.

There are several barriers to effective programs and services for rural at risk learners include:

1. Lack of exposure to occupational diversity, limiting the career development process
1. Family opposition to moving away, limiting job opportunities
2. Economic barriers to comprehensive career preparation curricula
3. Geographic isolation
4. High unemployment
5. Lack of adult service providers, making transition difficult
6. Transportation problems
7. Shortage of qualified staff.

In one article from Siphon Hlabane (a student in university of Limpopo and teacher in south Africa) on April, 6th 2005 state that:

“...Most of schools in south Africa are rural schools with learners from disadvantage background. Truly speaking, I would like to teach in rural school as I also attended a rural school. But my concern is some of these learners walk long distance to school, some come to school with empty stomach as they cannot afford a proper breakfast. The environment in the school is also not conducive, the classes are also crowded as there is shortage of classroom. So my concern, how are we expected to teach in such condition. Some of the schools do not even have laboratories.”

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

In this research the writer used Expost facto design. According to Hatch and Farhady (1982:26-27) Expost facto design are often used when the researcher doesn't have control over the selection and manipulation of the independent variables. The researcher look at the type and degree of relationships between two variables rather than at a cause and effect relationship. The researcher has no control

over what has already happened to the students. The treatment, whatever it might be, has been given prior to the research project.

The writer takes the design called criterion group design. In this design, two groups of students are compared on one measure. It means that the students come from city will be compared with students in rural area through reading comprehension test.

The design would look like this:

G1 T1

G2 T1

Notes:

G1 : students from city

G2 : students from rural area

T1 : test

According to Arikunto (2002:108), population is all of the research subjects. Population is defined as all members of any well defined class of people, events or objects. Kerlinger (1966: p.52)

The population of the research was schools in city and rural area which is represented by two schools come from city such as SMPN 1 Cilegon and SMPN 1 Serang. And two schools come from rural area such as SMPN 1 Picung and SMPN 1 Banjarsari. The sample of the research consist of eighty students.

2. Sampling Technique

The sample of this research took the third year students of junior high schools. The writer' consideration in choosing this class because the writer want to look for the ability of students in comprehending the text as the writer's knowledge that third year students of Junior High Schools has been studying about any kind of text from the first class until third class. They also have to prepare for the final examination in the last of their studying in junior high

schools. In choosing the sample, the writer chooses the technique which is known as purposive sampling. Arikunto (2002:117) says that purposive sampling is done to take the subject based on the certain purpose. This technique is enforced since it has several consideration such as the limitation of time so the writer will not take big sample.

3. Validity of the Test

Hatch and Farhady (1982, p.251) states that Content validity is the extent to which a test measures a representatives sample of the subject matter content. The focus of content validity is on the adequacy of the sample and not simply on the appearance of a test. If the test is covering course content, then the test items should correspond to the material covered in the course. Content validity means that the instrument test are categorized as a valid instrument if it is match with the material or content within curriculum that will be measured. To know whether the test valid or not, we should observe the instrument test have been representatives of the whole content or material.

4. Reliability of the test

Reliability can be defined as the extent to which a test produce a consistent results when administered under similar conditions. There are three basic method estimating reliability of the test. Here, the writer chooses internal consistency to measure reliability of the test there is split half method using spearman brown formula.

According to Hatch and Farhady (1982:246)

"...to use split half method, we first must split the test in two similar parts. We then correlate the scores of students on the two halves of the test just as if they were two separate tests. If the

items are homogenous, all odd numbered items become one half and the even number numbered items become other half. When we have obtained the reliability of the half of the test, we can use Spearman Brown's prophecy formula to determine the reliability of the full test."

$$r_{11} = \frac{2 \times r_{1/2/2}}{(1 + r_{1/2/2})}$$

Notes:

- r_{11} : reliability of instrument
- $r_{1/2/2}$: index of correlation mentioned as r_{xy} from Pearson Product Moment

To measure the reliability of the test, the writer divides the test in two halves. The first half is test from number 1-25. And the other half is the test from number 26-50. Then the writer search the reliability of the test by using the pattern from Spearman Brown. That is:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{(\sum x^2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{N})(\sum y^2 - \frac{(\sum y)^2}{N})}}$$

Notes:

- r_{xy} : Pearson r
- $\sum x$: The sum of scores in x distribution
- $\sum y$: The sum of score in y distribution
- $\sum xy$: The sum the products of paired x and y score
- $\sum x^2$: The sum of squared scores in x distribution
- $\sum y^2$: The sum of squared scores in y distribution
- n : The number of paired x and y score

(Arikunto, 2002:243)

Then the result of above calculation is used in the following formulation:

5. Data Collecting Technique

1. Interview technique

According to Cohen and Manion (1980:241) Interview defined as a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation.

The writer would like to interview the teachers for several school correlated with the situation of these school. And the writer proposed same questions for all those school. The interview for the teacher is related with student's ability in reading comprehension and possible factors that cause the difference students ability in comprehending text.

2. Questionnaire

The writer arranged some questions for the students. The questions consist of item involve with motivation, interest of students toward learning English especially in reading skill. The writer uses structured type of questionnaire. Ary (1979:175) states that a structured questionnaire contains the questions and alternatives answer to them. The answer provided for each question should be exhaustive of all possible responses and at the same time mutually exclusive. Scoring of structured questionnaire is easy to process and analysis.

3. Test technique

The purpose of test technique is to determine students' ability in comprehending the text. And look for the differences of students' reading comprehension between schools located in city and rural area.

6. Data Analysis Technique

In analyzing the data, the writer chose the technique namely t-test. This technique has divided into several steps as follows:

1. Normality distribution of variable X and Y

a. Determine the frequency distribution of variable X (City) and Y (Rural area)

Table of frequency distribution

Interval Class	Turus	f	fk
Total			

b. Determine Mean

Score	Xi	fi	fiXi
Total			

The Mean can be determined by using formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum fiXi}{\sum fi}$$

c. Determine Variance and Standard Deviation

The Variance of Score

Score	fi	Xi	fiXi	Xi ²	fiXi ²
Total					

The Variance of score are found by using formula :

$$S^2 = \frac{n \sum fiXi^2 - (\sum fiXi)^2}{n(n-1)}$$

Standard deviation used formula:

$$S = \sqrt{S^2}$$

2. Homogeneity Test

In determining homogeneity of the test, the writer counted several phase as follows:

1. Determine F Score

$$F = \frac{Vb}{Vk}$$

Notes :

F = Deviation Standard

Vb = Greater variance

Vk = Smaller variance

2. Determine degree of freedom

Notes:

$$\begin{matrix} df = n_1 - 1 \\ df = n_2 - 1 \end{matrix}$$

df = degree of freedom

n1 = total sample of variable X

n2 = total sample of variable Y

3. The formulation to prove the hypothesis

1. Separated variance

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{S_2^2}{n_2} + \dots}}$$

2. Polled variance

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(n_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)S_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2} \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}}$$

Notes:

\bar{x}_1 = Mean of Variable X (city)

\bar{x}_2 = Mean of Variable Y (Rural Area)

S_1^2 = Variance of Variable X

S_2^2 = Variance of Variable Y

n_1 = Number of students in city

n_2 = Number of students in rural area

RESULT

In this research the data is in interval. So, the writer used statistic parametric for independent sample. She used t-test for separated variance and polled variance since the sample from the city is similar with the sample in rural area and the variance between group is homogenous.

After the writer calculated interval data, the writer got the average score of reading comprehension for students in city and rural area. The mean of reading comprehension test for students in city (SMPN 1 Serang and SMPN 1 Cilegon) is 65.15. And the mean of reading test in rural area (SMPN 1 Picung and SMPN 1 Banjarsari) is 53.425. After that the writer look for variance and standard deviation. The variance of score reading comprehension test in city is 175,77 and the variance in rural area is 158,635.

From the mean and variance above the writer continue the calculation to look for T-value. Based on the calculation to look for t-test, the writer got the value of t observed (to) =4,0556 with degree of freedom (df) = 39. This value is compared to t-table. Based on data in table, t table 1% with df =39 is 2,70 and t table 5% is 2,02. As the conclusion, t observed is higher than t table 1% and 5%. It means that Ho is refused and Ha is accepted. Finally, the hypothesis that is accepted is there is significant difference of reading comprehension between students of Junior high Schools in City and Rural Area.

Based on questionnaire, it was found that:

1. The motivation of students in city is higher than the students in rural area. But the percentage is not far.
2. The interest of students toward English is much longer in city than in rural area.
3. The vocabulary mastery of students is quite different in both areas. Students

vocabulary mastery in city is higher than in rural area.

4. Some students find difficulties in comprehending the text.

Then, based on interview showed that teachers are generally using such method for teaching reading comprehension skills with variety of technique. Most of teachers in city and rural area have known the technique which called Three phase technique namely Production, Process and practice. But, in some situation in rural area, the teacher found difficulties to apply those methods since most of the students have low motivation and interest toward English. It is supported by the lack of vocabulary. And in rural area there is less of facility such as books, language laboratory, and library.

DISCUSSION

In this research, the null hypothesis (H_0) is refused and Alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. In other words, there is significant difference of reading comprehension between students of Junior High Schools at third grade in City and Rural Area.

Based on result of questionnaire for students and interview for English teacher, the writer identified the factors that cause the differences of reading comprehension in city and rural area. There are some factors that influence students' reading comprehension as follows:

1. Motivation of students in reading
2. Interest of students toward English especially reading
3. Teachers' method in reading
4. Reading Material
5. Students vocabulary mastery

CONCLUSION

Firstly, After collecting, computing and interpreting the data, the writer take the conclusion that there is significant difference of reading comprehension between students in city and rural area that showed by the data with t observed is higher than t table. T observed (t_o) =4,0556. Based on data in table, t table 1% with $df=39$ is 2,70 and t table 5% is 2,02.

Secondly, there are some factors that cause the differences of reading comprehension in city and rural area, such as students' motivation, interest of students, teacher methodology, reading material and the vocabulary attainment of students in city and rural area. There is quite different in motivation and interest of students toward English especially in reading comprehension between students in city and rural area.

This case is only occurred at third year students of Junior High School in City (SMPN 1 Serang, SMPN 1 Cilegon) and rural area (SMPN 1 Picung and SMPN 1 Banjarsari).

Suggestions

Based on the conclusion above, the writer may give some suggestion as follows:

1. English teacher should be improved their teaching reading with different method for avoiding students' bored. And they also have to prepare some kind of text for reading comprehension skills that is related with students' need and students' interest. And they should plan for teaching aid that will be used in teaching reading.
2. The students must have been given motivation by teachers also their parents to enhance their interest to read English text and avoid laziness to open dictionary. And they also have to

- increase their vocabulary in order to master in reading comprehension.
3. The schools must prepare the facility completely such as providing language laboratory, library, reading material, etc to improve language skills students especially in reading comprehension skill.
 4. The schools must prepare the facility completely such as providing language laboratory, library, reading material, etc to improve language skills students especially in reading comprehension skill.

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