



# A Study of the Students' Reading Competency in the Junior High School Based on the 2013 Curriculum

I Putu Budi Arcana Yasa<sup>1\*</sup>, Dewa Komang Tantra<sup>2</sup>, Putu Eka Dambayana Suputra<sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1,2,3</sup> English Education Department, Ganesha University of Education, Singaraja, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author: [budiarcana88@gmail.com](mailto:budiarcana88@gmail.com)

## Abstrak

Kemampuan membaca siswa berada di bawah kriteria ketuntasan minimal. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis kemampuan membaca siswa di tingkat SMP. Signifikansinya adalah merancang dan mengembangkan membaca instruksi modular dengan strategi membaca eksplisit. Penelitian ini dirancang secara kuantitatif. Kompetensi membaca siswa diukur secara kuantitatif dengan menggunakan tes kompetensi membaca. Tes terdiri dari 25 soal pilihan ganda dengan empat pilihan. Data yang diperoleh dianalisis secara kuantitatif dalam dua langkah, yaitu: analisis deskriptif dan inferensial. Nilai rata-rata kompetensi membaca siswa berdasarkan indikator membaca. Temuan penelitian ini adalah skor rata-rata kompetensi membaca siswa di kelas D adalah 63,20 dan di kelas H adalah 36,80. Kisaran skor antara kelas D dan H sama untuk teks deskriptif. Namun, untuk teks recount, skor di kelas D lebih besar daripada kelas H. Dibandingkan dengan kelas H, variabilitas skor di kelas D lebih besar untuk teks deskriptif dan lebih rendah untuk teks recount. Guru EFL disarankan untuk menggunakan strategi dan materi membaca yang tepat yang dapat mendorong siswa untuk mengikuti kegiatan membaca yang menyenangkan di kelas.

**Kata Kunci:** Kompetensi Membaca, Teks Deskriptif dan Recount, Sekolah Menengah Pertama

## Abstract

Students' reading abilities were below of minimum mastery criteria. This study was conducted to describe and analyze the students' reading competency at junior high school level. The significance was to design and develop reading modular instructions with explicit reading strategies. This study was designed quantitatively. The students' reading competency was measured quantitatively using a reading competency test. The test consisted of 25 multiple choice items with four options. The obtained data were analyzed quantitatively in two steps, namely: descriptive and inferential analysis. The mean scores of the students' reading competency based on the reading indicators. The research findings were the mean score of the students' reading competency in class D was 63.20 and in class H was 36.80. The range score between class D and H was same for descriptive text. However, for recount text, the score in class D was larger than class H. Comparing to class H, the score variability in class D was larger for descriptive text and lower for recount text. The EFL teachers are suggested to use the appropriate reading strategies and materials which can encourage the students for following fun reading activity in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Reading Competency, Descriptive and Recount Texts, Junior High School

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 2013 Curriculum has been implemented in Indonesia since 2013. The 2013 Curriculum is designed with scientific approach. The 2013 Curriculum is implemented to improve students' ability in the learning process such as productive skill (writing and speaking) and receptive skills (reading and listening) (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012; Maryati et al., 2019; Wulandari, 2020). Reading is the one of four skills in EFL that should be mastered. The learning goal of reading is understanding various English text types such as descriptive and recount text types (Ghabanchi & Behrooznia, 2014; Lestari et al., 2017; Zahra, 2019). Reading is important as it is used to access alternative explanations and informations (Antoni, 2010; Nurhayati & Fitriana, 2018; Rusmanayanti & Hanafi, 2018). Reading is an important skill for the students in order to be able to understand written texts which involves active and complex processes (Gupta & Ahuja, 2014; Zand, 2015). According to previous study reading

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is a complex skill as it requires students to extract meanings textually through cognitive skills (Huang & Yang, 2015). The complexity of reading processes often hindered students to comprehend the contents as well as the structures successfully (Delgadova, 2015; Montag, 2019).

Previous research has showed factors related to the students' poor reading comprehension of written texts. First study conducted a comparative study of the senior high school students' reading comprehension achievement in two classes using Numbered Heads Together and Predictive Reading Techniques (Sharma & Puri, 2020). Aside from the differences in achievements across classes, they analyzed that poor reading comprehension was due mainly to lack of vocabulary and text complexity. Other study conducted a study to compare the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Gemolong and SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Gemolong (Fazal et al., 2012). She observed all the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Gemolong and SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Gemolong. She found out that the students' low comprehension was due to the students' limited vocabulary and complex text structures. Next study proposed about reading competency beyond texts, namely reading habits and confidence (Fazal et al., 2012; Sholihah, 2013). These studies observed the students then concluded that bad reading habit lowered the students' reading motivation and self-confidence in reading. These factors affected to the students' low reading competency at Narsipatnam Mandal of Visakhapatnam District.

The present research was based on the results of prior observation conducted at Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri 2 Sawan (henceforth: SMPN 2). To ascertain the students' reading competency, a reading test was administered to a class of the seventh grade students at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. In general, the results showed that many students' reading abilities were below the 'Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)' or Minimum Mastery Criteria set forth by the school as high as 70%. When analyzed in detail, they failed to understand texts' main ideas, specific ideas, word meanings as well as textual references. The observed students' test results urged to observe a bigger number of the seventh grade students' reading competency at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. The significance of studying the seventh grade students' reading competency on a wider scale was to ascertain the quality of EFL reading at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. The present research was conducted to survey the students' reading competency based on the 2013 Curriculum at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja.

The focus was laid on describing and analyzing the students' reading comprehension on text main idea, specific ideas, word meanings, and textual references. The analysis was conducted based on class, text genre, and reading indicators in order to discover deficiency of the learning processes and outcomes in each class, text genre, and reading indicators. Through such an analysis further learning strategies could be implemented in reading at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. Therefore the aims of this study is to describe and analyze the students' reading competency at junior high school level.

## **2. METHOD**

A descriptive quantitative research was applied in this research (Creswell, 2012). The students' reading competency was measured quantitatively using a reading competency test. The test consisted of 25 multiple choice items with four options. The test items were so developed that matched with the reading indicators, namely, main idea, specific ideas, word meanings, and textual references.

The research population included the seventh grade students at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja in the academic year 2019/2020. There were eight intact classes in the population with 280 students. Two classes were sampled purposively based on relatively poor and good

readers. The poor class is VIIH consisted of 25 students. While the good class was VIID consisted of 25 students. The total sample recruited were 50 students altogether.

Two intact classes were surveyed and measured using a reading competency test. Prior to test administration, the test blueprint, variable, indicators, descriptors, and test items were judged independently by an experienced teacher and a language expert to ascertain reliability and validity. After validating the test items, it was tried out for further evidences of test reliability, item difficulty, and items discrimination. The obtained data were analyzed quantitatively in two steps, namely: descriptive and inferential analysis.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

After recapitulating the students' paper work of reading test, the first analysis was conducted to describe the students' reading competency based on class at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. This analysis was done through descriptive statistics of the students' reading competencies which were computed by means of a SPSS package. The analysis results were shown in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Students' Reading Competency (Based on Class)

No.	Descriptive Statistics	Class D	Class H
1	Mean	63.20	36.80
2	Mode	64.00	32.00
3	Median	64.00	36.00
4	Standard Deviation	7.75	6.81
5	Variance	60.00	46.33

In general, [Table 1](#) showed the detail descriptive statistics of the students' reading competency in both classes at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. The mean score of the students' reading competency in class D was 63.20 or at the average level (Mean  $\pm$  1 Standard deviation). Meanwhile, the mean score of the students' reading competency in class H was 36.80 or at the below average level (Mean - 2 Standard deviation). In other words, the students in class D got a higher score in reading competency test than the students in class H.

The mode showed the most frequent reading score appeared in the distribution. The score of 64 in reading competency most frequently obtained by the students in class D. Many students in class D scored at the average level in reading competency. Contrastingly, many students in class H scored at below average level in reading competency. The median showed that fifty percent of the students score below that particular score in the distribution. Fifty percent of the students' reading competency scores lied below the score of 64.00. Whereas, fifty percent of the students' reading scores lied below the score of 32.00.

The standard deviation and variance show score variability in the students' reading competency at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. The minimum and maximum scores in the students' reading competency in class D are 48 and 76 so that the range score is 28. Whereas, the minimum and maximum scores in the students' reading competency in class H are 32 and 52 so that the range score is 20. The second analysis was concerned with describing the students' reading competency based on text genre at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. The analysis results are shown in [Table 2](#).

[Table 2](#) showed detailed descriptive statistics of the students' reading competency based on text genre at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. The mean score of the students' reading competency on descriptive text in class D = 11.80 and in class H = 6.64. Whereas, the mean score of the students' reading competency on recount text in class D = 4.12 and in class H =

2.52. The mean score of the students' reading competency in class D was higher than in class H for descriptive text and the mean score of the students' reading competency in class H was lower than in class D for recount text.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics of Students' Reading Competency (Based on Text Genre)

No.	Descriptive Statistics	Descriptive		Recount	
		D	H	D	H
1	Mean	11.80	6.64	4.12	2.52
2	Range	6.00	6.00	4.00	5.00
3	Standard Deviation	1.85	1.68	1.13	1.48
4	Variance	3.42	2.82	1.28	2.18
5	Standard Error	0.37	0.34	0.23	0.30

The range score was the same in class D and H for descriptive text. Whereas, the score was larger in class H than D for recount text. The score variability is standard deviation and variance show score variability in the students' reading competency at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. The score variability was bigger in class D than H for descriptive text. Whereas, the score variability was larger in class H for recount text. The standard errors of measurement for the students' reading competency in class D and H for descriptive and recount texts were less than 1%. The third analysis was concerned with describing the students' reading competency based on the reading indicators at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. The analysis results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Mean Scores of Students' Reading Competency (Based on Reading Indicators)

No.	Reading Indicators	Descriptive + Recount	
		D	H
1	Main Idea	2.00	1.68
2	Specific Ideas	4.52	2.60
3	Textual Reference	4.60	3.24
4	Word Meaning	4.68	1.52

Table 3 showed the mean scores only of the students' reading competency based on the reading indicators. The mean scores of the students' reading competency on the main idea, specific idea, textual reference, and word meaning were higher in class D than class H.

The result of descriptive statistics analysis showed that the students in 7D class achieved the highest mean score than 7H class. Besides 7H class got the lowest mean score. It could be shown from the mean score in each class, the mean score of D class was 63,20 and for the mean score H class was 36,80. Besides, the students in 7D class also achieved the highest value of variance score. It means, the students in 7D class had a lot of variance score. Meanwhile based on the standard deviation, the students in 7D class also achieved the highest value in standard deviation. It means that the score of the students 7D class are spread out the mean of the data. The mean score of the students' reading competency in class D = 63.20 or at the average level (Mean  $\pm$  1 Standard deviation). Whereas, the mean score of the students' reading competency in class H = 36.80 or at the below average level (Mean - 2 Standard deviation). In other words, the students in class D scored higher than those students in class H in reading competency test.

By using the performance indicators, the researcher found that just 7 students from 50 students who could achieve the score above the performance indicators through reading test, in which the school already set the performance indicators about 70. Nevertheless, the rest of

the students had score below the performance indicators. In analyzing the data through the frequency distribution of reading competency, it showed that the students in 7D class were achieved the highest frequency especially in first interval in which the minimum and the maximum score of the students in 7D class were 48 and 76. Meanwhile the frequency distribution of students' reading competency in 7H class showed that the highest score was achieved in the second interval, whereas the students in 7H class had minimum and maximum score about 24 and 52.

Descriptive statistics of the students' reading competency based on text genre at SMPN 2 Sawan, the mean score of the students' reading competency on descriptive text in class D = 11.80 and in class H = 6.64. Whereas, the mean score of the students' reading competency on recount text in class D = 4.12 and in class H = 2.52. The mean score of the students' reading competency in class D was higher than in class H for descriptive text and the mean score of the students' reading competency in class D was lower than in class H for recount text.

The range score was the same in class D and H for descriptive text. Whereas, the score was larger in class H than D for recount text. The score variability is standard deviation and variance show score variability in the students' reading competency at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. The score variability was bigger in class D than H for descriptive text. Whereas, the score variability was larger in class H for recount text. The standard errors of measurement for the students' reading competency in class D and H for descriptive and recount texts were less than 1%.

## Discussion

From the description above, it showed that the range score of the students were too far in each class. Based on the performance indicators, it showed that the most of the seven grade students in two classes had the score under the value of the performance indicators which definitely applied at school as the reference, due to just seven students in two classes who could achieve the value above the value performance indicators. It happened due to the items of the multiple choices were difficult based on the students' perception that may be influence the result of the students' reading competency in two classes. Despite of that the data found by answering questions of objective test that make students feel lazy to answer the test it, several students seemed to be unmotivated in which there were students who late to collect the answer of the test. It is supported by previous study state Indonesian students did not show to have the good English reading habit (Anandari & Iswandari, 2019; Salikin et al., 2017), meanwhile few of them can be classified to have the good English reading habit while the students have willingness to spend their time regularly for reading various types of English text and those students also have high motivation to read the English test for getting pleasure.

In addition, the researcher determined the students' reading deficiency which could be viewed from the reading indicators by using the students' score in reading test of the two classes. It could help the researcher to identify the students' reading deficiency, in which the indicators were used as the reference. From the result of the mean score in each indicators, that the students in 7D class had deficiency in finding out main idea. The students in 7H also were deficient in finding out main idea. In line with the result of the students' reading deficiency which can be viewed from reading indicators, it show those two classes had deficiency in finding out main idea (Awada & Plana, 2018; Lestari et al., 2017). Based on the data, from 4 indicators, the mean score of Main Idea lowest than the others, for 7D class was 2.00, for mean score of 7H class was 1.68

Reading competency is also well known as the students' ability for comprehending the meaning and the rhetorical steps in the written text, by which it covers with finding out

the main idea, specific information, word meaning and textual reference (Baig et al., 2020; Khairuddinayah, 2018). Someone is capable in achieving the reading competency, if they are able to master four reading indicators, namely: main idea, specific information, word meaning and textual reference (Gheytsi et al., 2015; Khofifah & Ramadan, 2021). Additionally, reading competency also considered as the meaning construction which is obtained from the used of the students' prior knowledge about the skill and the strategies. Thus, the students are easier to understand the topic of the written text if they are interested with the topic, and the students also have the background knowledge through the topic. Hence, the students are able to active their prior knowledge when they are reading the written text. Therefore it can make the students easier for understanding the written text. Reading defined a the receptive skill whereas the professional may interact with the text, predict what will turn up next, and bring their prior knowledge of the subject and language to the text in order to understand the content of the text itself

In answering the items which were existed in the reading test, sometimes the students were not familiar with certain word which inserted in the written text, and it made the student were difficult to understand the content of the written text. It also happened because the even grade students had lack vocabulary mastery, so that they were not able to catch the meaning of the written text. It is supported by the study stated that the vocabulary mastery and the teaching strategies had the strong relationship on the students' reading competency (Thomas et al., 2020). The vocabulary can influence the students to understand the content of the written text (Mokshein et al., 2019; Prihatini, 2020). If the students do not familiar with the words used in the written text, they can face the difficulty in understanding the information which obtained from the text itself. If the students are trained frequently to read outside and inside the classroom, it will bring the significant improvement of the students' ability in learning. In this case the students, may enhance their ability in reading in order to get the update information, and understand the content of the written text.

In general, the mean score of the students' reading competency in class D was higher than in class H could be speculated as follows. First, as study that had pointed out that the students in class H might be lacking in vocabulary both in the descriptive and recount texts (Lin et al., 2022). Other study also discovered the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and the level of motivation in reading comprehension skill of Iranian EFL learners (Kharaghani & Ghonsooly, 2015). Poor reading habits and low motivation, Bad habit of learning make students did not want to learn because they have lack motivation to learn some material and they also have lack of vocabulary, low self-confidence, inappropriate teachers' methods of reading, might had caused the students' deficiency in reading at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja.

There are several suggestions for the EFL teachers and students. The teachers are suggested to use the appropriate reading strategies and materials which can encourage the students for following fun reading activity in the classroom. The students are suggested to improve their reading competency through building reading habits outside and inside classrooms. Also, the students are suggested to do extensive reading through which they can find main idea, specific information, textual reference, and word meaning.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The range score was the same in class D and H for descriptive text. The score was larger in class D than H for recount and descriptive text. The score variability is standard deviation and variance show score variability in the students' reading competency at SMPN 2 Sawan, Singaraja. The score variability was bigger in class D than H for descriptive text and recount text. The mean scores only of the students' reading competency base on the reading

indicators. The mean scores of the students' reading competency on the main idea, specific idea, textual reference, and word meaning were higher in class D than class H.

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