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Differences in Effective Reading Speed of Fiction and Nonfiction Texts Among Eighth Grade Students at SMP Negeri 5 Ukui Pelalawan Regency

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan perbedaan kecepatan membaca efektif teks fiksi dan nonfiksi siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 5 Ukui menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif. Data diperoleh melalui tes kecepatan membaca dan tes pemahaman melalui aspek kognitif literasi membaca. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan uji t berpasangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan KEM peserta didik pada teks nonfiksi dengan rata-rata 124,33 lebih tinggi dari teks fiksi dengan rata-rata 119,14. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa jenis teks sangat berpengaruh terhadap kemampuan membaca peserta didik, dan guru diharapkan memberi latihan mendalam pada teks fiksi maupun teks nonfiksi saat pembelajaran guna peningkatan membaca secara merata pada jenis teks apapun.

Kata Kunci: kecepatan membaca efektif, teks fiksi, teks nonfiksi

Abstract

This study aims to describe differences in effective reading speed between fiction and nonfiction texts among eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Ukui using a descriptive quantitative approach. Data were collected through reading speed tests and comprehension tests based on cognitive aspects of reading literacy. Data analysis employed a paired t test. The results showed that students' effective reading speed in nonfiction texts, with an average score of 124.33, was higher than in fiction texts, which averaged 119.14. These findings indicate that text type significantly influences students' reading ability, and teachers are encouraged to provide balanced and intensive practice.

Keywords: effective reading speed, fiction text, nonfiction text

Differences in Effective Reading Speed of Fiction and Nonfiction Texts Among Eighth Grade Students at SMP Negeri 5 Ukui Pelalawan Regency

Introduction

Education is a planned effort to create a learning atmosphere that enables students to develop their potential optimally (Pristiwanti et al., 2022). In the 21st century, learners are required not only to have knowledge and skills but also to be able to think creatively, work with others, and be fluent in language (Septyanti et al., 2023). The four basic language skills include reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Ritonga et al., 2023). One of the language skills that students must have is reading (Rahmadhani & Sholehuddin, 2024). Reading is the process of understanding the ideas or imaginations conveyed by the author through text, either for personal enjoyment or broad understanding (Hermawan et al., 2020). Moreover, reading is a bridge of knowledge that opens access for students to broader insights (Ritonga et al., 2023).

Access to reading materials is now more widespread, but not all students are able to make optimal use of them due to a lack of time for reading. Given this situation, the main challenge for students today is how to use their limited time to obtain information effectively amid the rapid flow of digital information (Yahya, 2025). One important strategy in addressing this condition is to increase reading speed (Ginanjar & Astriani, 2022). However, reading speed is not just about skimming through the text quickly but also includes a deep understanding of the content. The ability that combines speed and comprehension is known as effective reading speed (Anggreani et al., 2023). In line with this, Mukminah (2021) defines effective reading speed as the motoric eye movement ability to view and identify text without compromising comprehension.

Indonesian language learning in grade VIII in the Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes the development of reading literacy and critical thinking through mastery of fiction and nonfiction texts that are relevant to the daily lives of students (Verawati et al., 2024). Fiction is a type of reading that is imaginative and usually composed in a more expressive, free, and aesthetically rich style of language (Nurhadi, 2020). Types of fiction include short stories, novels, poetry, comics, and so on, which aim to entertain readers (Fauziatul, 2020). On the other hand, non-fiction texts are texts that present factual, logical information with a more systematic and concise structure (Hasim, 2022). Types of non-fiction texts include popular scientific articles, news, observation reports, or expositions that require readers to think critically in understanding the information (Nursyaidha, 2023).

The differences in characteristics between fictional and nonfictional texts create their own dynamics in the reading process (Hayati et al., 2024). Light fictional texts tend to be read more quickly, although this does not always guarantee deep understanding (Ihsania et al., 2020). Meanwhile, non-fiction texts that are dense with information can slow down reading speed because they require higher concentration (Amalia et al., 2023). These differences in

text characteristics are important factors to consider, as they are important aspects in measuring the effective reading speed of students in a school environment (Anggreani et al., 2023).

In line with this view, research on effective reading speed has been conducted by a number of researchers with varying focuses. Rahayu et al (2019) examined the effective reading speed of eighth-grade junior high school students using descriptive texts and found that the students' reading abilities were relatively high, with differences based on grade and gender. However, this study did not examine differences in effective reading speed based on fiction and nonfiction text types. Meanwhile, Khairunnisa et al (2020) examined the effective reading speed of eighth-grade junior high school students' non-fiction texts and showed that students' reading abilities were in the moderate category with varying speeds and levels of comprehension. However, these studies still focused on one type of text and did not place the comparison of fiction and non-fiction texts as the main focus of the study. This study differs from previous studies because it specifically examines the comparison of effective reading speed for fiction and nonfiction texts by considering the integration of reading speed and reading comprehension based on cognitive literacy at the junior high school level, particularly in the context of implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka.

SMP Negeri 5 Ukui is one of the schools that has implemented the Kurikulum Merdeka, where literacy-based learning is one of the main focuses. However, based on interviews with Indonesian language teachers, it is known that the reading skills of students are generally still low. Assessment of students' reading skills has also been general in nature and has not touched on technical aspects such as reading speed, level of reading comprehension, and time efficiency in reading. Therefore, it is not yet known whether students' reading skills are good, very good, or excellent. The assessment of students' reading skills has also been general in nature and has not touched on technical aspects such as reading speed, level of reading comprehension, and time efficiency in reading. Therefore, it is not yet known whether students' effective reading speed is in line with junior high school standards or below, especially in reading fiction and nonfiction texts.

Based on the above, the researcher aims to describe the level of effective reading speed of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Ukui, Pelalawan Regency, in understanding non-fiction popular science articles. The results of this study are expected to form the basis for designing reading strategies that not only encourage students to read quickly, but also to understand the content of the reading material in a comprehensive and critical manner, as required by 21st-century literacy.

Methodology

This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 5 Ukui, Pelalawan Regency, focusing on the differences in students' effective reading speeds for fiction texts in the form of short stories and non-fiction texts in the form of popular scientific articles. The population in this study consisted of 86 students, and the sampling technique used was a saturated sample, which is the determination of a sample when all members of the population are used as samples

because the population size is relatively small or the researcher wants to produce more accurate data (Suriani et al., 2023)

The research instruments used were a fictional text entitled Have the Biggest Dreams with 500 words and a non-fiction text entitled Teenagers and Drugs: Between Dreams and Lurking Dangers with 550 words, as well as ten objective questions for each text based on the cognitive aspects of reading literacy to measure content comprehension. The tools used in data collection included a stopwatch, reading sheets, and answer sheets. The test was conducted individually. Students read each text for 3 minutes and then answered comprehension questions within a maximum of 8 minutes.

After that, the data was analyzed quantitatively and descriptively by calculating the average reading speed using the formula number of words/reading time x 60 seconds, calculating reading comprehension using the formula score obtained/ maximum score x 100%, calculating effective reading speed using the formula reading speed x reading comprehension, and categorizing the results into classifications of effective reading speed levels (very low, low, moderate, high, very high) based on relevant standard indicators of reading ability. Then the data was tested for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test and then a paired t-test was performed to see if there was a difference in effective reading speed levels between fiction and nonfiction texts. The hypotheses were as follows.

H_0 = there is no difference in the ERS of fikction and nonfiction texts

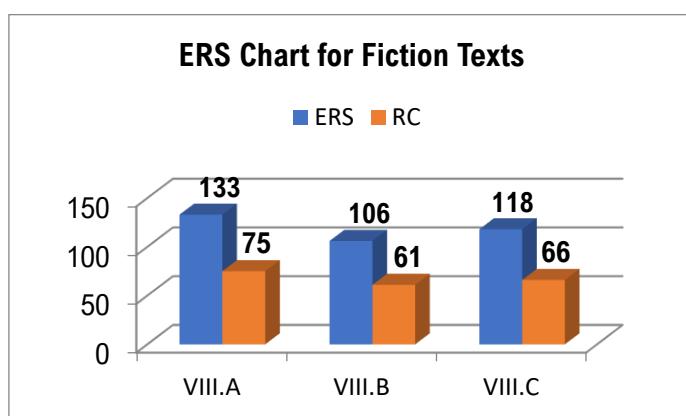
H_1 = there is a difference in the ERS of fiction and nonfiction texts

Results

The research data was obtained through an effective reading speed test of short fiction texts for eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Ukui, Pelalawan Regency, involving 86 students from three classes as samples. The results of the effective reading speed test and the fiction text comprehension test are as follows.

ERS Results and Cognitive Literacy in Reading Fiction Texts

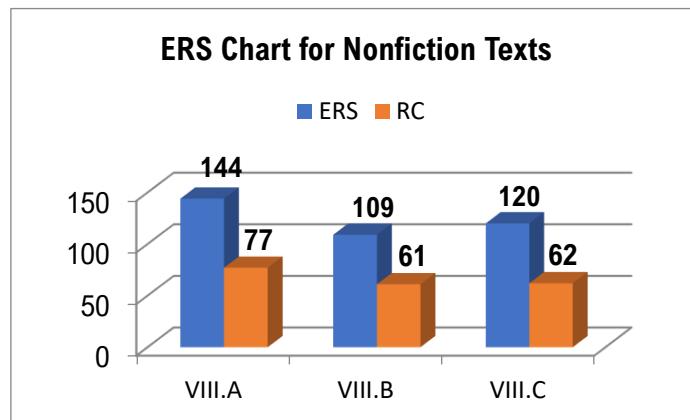
Figure 1. ERS Chart for Fiction Texts



Based on the effective reading speed graph for fiction texts, the average reading speed test results for class VIII.A were 133 wpm, which is categorized as very high. This category is based on Razak (2015) opinion regarding the ERS category for junior high school >120 wpm is categorized as very high with an average reading comprehension of 75 categorized as high. This category is based on Putri and Rahmah (2023) opinion regarding the junior high school reading literacy category with a value range of 66-79 categorized as high. Class VIII.B showed an average effective reading speed test result of 106 wpm, categorized as high. This category is based on the opinion of Razak (2015) regarding the ERS category at the junior high school level, with a range of 90-120 wpm categorized as high and an average comprehension test of 61 categorized as sufficient. This category is based on the opinion of Putri and Rahmah (2023) regarding the junior high school reading literacy category with a score range of 56-65 in the adequate category. Class VIII.C showed an average effective reading speed test of 118 wpm in the high category with a comprehension test of 66 in the high category.

ERS Results and Cognitive Literacy in Reading Nonfiction Texts

Figure 2. ERS Chart for Nonfiction Texts



Based on the effective reading speed graph for fiction texts, the average reading speed test results for class VIII.A were 144 wpm, which is categorized as very high. This category is based on Razak (2015) opinion regarding the ERS category for junior high school >120 wpm is categorized as very high with an average reading comprehension of 77 categorized as high. This category is based on Putri and Rahmah (2023) opinion regarding the junior high school reading literacy category with a value range of 66-79 categorized as high. Class VIII.B showed an average effective reading speed test result of 109 wpm, categorized as high. This category is based on Razak (2015) opinion regarding the junior high school ERS category range of 90-120 wpm, categorized as high, with an average comprehension test score of 61, categorized as sufficient. This category is based on Putri and Rahmah (2023) opinion regarding the junior high school reading literacy category with a score range of 56-65, categorized as sufficient. Class VIII.C showed an average effective reading speed test result of 109 wpm, categorized as high. This category is based on Razak (2015) opinion regarding the junior high school ERS category range of 90-120 wpm, categorized as high, with an average comprehension Putri and Rahmah (2023) regarding the junior high school reading literacy category with a score range of 56-65 in the sufficient category. Class VIII.C showed an average effective reading

speed test of 120 wpm in the high category with a comprehension test of 62 in the sufficient category.

Overall, the average effective reading speed test of eighth grade students at Negeri 5 Ukui SMP in Pelalawan Regency for high-level fiction texts and very high-level nonfiction texts showed an average comprehension test score of 67 for both fiction and nonfiction texts. See the following table for more details.

Table 1. Overall Average for Fiction and Nonfiction Texts

| No | Class | Fiction | | | | Nonfiction | | | |
|----------------|--------|----------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | | ERS | Cat | RC | Cat | ERS | Cat | RC | Cat |
| 1 | VIII.A | 133 wpm | VH | 75 | H | 144 wpm | VH | 77 | H |
| 2 | VIII.B | 106 wpm | H | 61 | E | 109 wpm | H | 61 | E |
| 3 | VIII.C | 118 wpm | H | 66 | H | 120 wpm | H | 62 | E |
| Average | | 119 wpm | H | 67 | H | 124 wpm | VH | 67 | H |

Table 2. Testing the Normality of Fiction and Nonfiction Texts

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

| Table | n | df | d _{max} | d _{table} | Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | Status |
|------------|----|----|------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Fiction | 85 | 1 | 0,0722 | 0,0955 | 0,200 | Normal |
| Nonfiction | 85 | 1 | 0,0429 | 0,0955 | 0,200 | Normal |

Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test results table, the Sig. (2-tailed) value for fiction texts is 0.20 and for nonfiction texts is also 0.20. The Sig. (2-tailed) value is consistently above the specified significance level of 0.05. Referring to the decision-making criteria in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, if the significance is > 0.05 , the data is normally distributed, and if the significance is < 0.05 , the data is not normally distributed. Therefore, it can be concluded that the effective reading speed data for both fiction and nonfiction texts is normally distributed because $0.20 > 0.05$.

Table 3. Paired T-Test

Paired Sample Test

| Text | M | Sd | df | t _{count} | t _{table} | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|-------|--------|----|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Fiction-Nonfiction | 5,186 | 15,643 | 85 | 3,074 | 1,4316 | 0,003 |

The basis for decision making in paired t-tests is that if the Sig. (2-tailed) value is < 0.05 , then H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, whereas if the Sig. (2-tailed) value is > 0.05 , then H_0 is accepted and H_1 is rejected. Based on the paired t-test table, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003. Based on the paired t-test table, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003. When related to the formulated hypothesis, $0.003 < 0.05$, so H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, meaning that there is a difference in the effective reading speed of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Ukui between fiction and nonfiction texts.

Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis of the effective reading speed of fiction and nonfiction texts by students in grade VIII at SMP Negeri 5 Ukui, Pelalawan Regency, in general, it is classified as good and in line with expectations. Although there are still many students who are not yet in line with expectations, overall, the students have been able to achieve the expected category, both in classes VIII.A, VIII.B, and VIII.C.

In class VIII.A, the results showed that the average effective reading speed for fiction texts reached a score of 133 wpm, which is in the very high category. The comprehension test results were also quite good, with an average of 75 in the high category. Most of the participants in this class were able to read quickly while understanding the content well. Class VIII.B also showed good effective reading skills with an average of 106 wpm, which is in the high category. The comprehension test results for class VIII.B were 61 in the adequate category. Although not extremely low, these results still did not meet expectations. This indicates the need for further coaching for students in this class so that they can catch up with other classes. Meanwhile, in class VIII.C, the average effective reading speed was 118 wpm, which is in the high category. The comprehension test in this class was quite satisfactory, with an average of 66 in the high category. The significant variation in effective reading speed in these three classes needs to be given special attention so that the reading literacy skills of students improve evenly.

The results of effective reading speed for nonfiction texts in class VIII.A show an average reading speed of 144 wpm, which is categorized as very high, with an average comprehension test score of 77, which is categorized as high, similar to the fiction text. Grade VIII.B showed an increase in the average results from fiction texts, namely 109 wpm, which is categorized as high. However, the average comprehension test results were still similar, namely 61, which is categorized as sufficient. In class VIII.C, the average effective reading speed was 120 wpm, which is categorized as high, an increase from the previous fiction test results. The average comprehension test in this class actually decreased from high to sufficient, which is 62.

Overall, the results of the reading speed test for students on fiction texts showed an average of 119 wpm in the high category with an average comprehension test of 67 in the high category. On non-fiction texts, the reading speed test results were 124 wpm in the very high category with an average reading comprehension also of 67 in the high category. Although most students showed good results, the distribution of average scores was still quite diverse. In line with this, Belvar et all (2024) stated that reading is not just the ability to answer questions, but also the skills of critical thinking, assessing, and interpreting through written words. Learning interventions that emphasize critical thinking exercises need to be strengthened in the reading learning process (Sari et al., 2025). Ultimately, students' reading literacy skills can grow optimally and support the formation of critical and reflective thinking skills in accordance with the demands of 21st-century learning (Hidayati et al., 2024; Verawati, Hamidah, Faris, Hidayat, Andriyanti, 2024).

Answering the research hypothesis, regarding the presence or absence of differences in the effective reading speed of eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Ukui, Pelalawan Regency, based on the type of text, namely fiction and nonfiction texts. Based on the results of the paired t-test, a Sig. value of (2-tailed) of 0.003 ($p < 0.05$) was obtained, so the null hypothesis (H_0) stating that there is no difference in the effective reading speed of fiction and non-fiction texts was rejected, while the the alternative hypothesis (H_1) stating that there is a difference in effective reading speed between fiction and non-fiction texts is accepted. This is evidenced by the average effective reading speed of fiction texts of 119.14 and nonfiction texts of 124.33, which have an average difference of 5.186 with a standard deviation of 15.643, indicating that the effective reading speed of fiction texts is lower than the effective reading speed of nonfiction texts. The value of $t.\text{hitung}$ obtained is 3.074, which is greater than the value of $t.\text{tabel}$ of 1.431 at a significance level of 0.05 with a Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.003, which is below the significance level of 0.05.

Nonfiction texts outperform fiction texts because nonfiction texts are more informative and use language that is more straightforward and clear, making them easier to understand than fiction texts (Alvionita & Muhamafidin, 2021). Although nonfiction texts are longer than fiction texts and some students in class VIII of SMP Negeri 5 Ukui, Pelalawan Regency, need a little more time when reading nonfiction texts, the comprehension test results show that they understand straightforward reading material better than fiction and can easily remember the content of the text because it is informative and clear. Conversely, fiction texts contain many figurative language styles and more complex storylines. Although there are students who are able to read fiction texts quickly, the reading comprehension test results show that students understand and remember the content of the reading less well compared to nonfiction texts, which do not use figurative language (Sibarani et al., 2025).

From a teaching perspective, the results of this study indicate that reading instruction needs to be designed to be more balanced and varied. Fauziatul (2020) states that teachers should provide more practice in reading fictional texts so that students become accustomed to and are able to adapt to the characteristics of fictional texts, in terms of language, theme, and plot. This method can train students' effective speed reading skills to grasp the deep meaning of fictional texts. Pransisko et al (2022) also mention that reading learning needs to utilize various learning strategies and media. For example, teachers can use group discussion learning strategies or utilize visual media to make learning more lively and interesting. Using this kind of approach, it is hoped that students will be more enthusiastic about reading fiction and nonfiction texts, so that their effective reading speed will increase continuously.

Overall, the differences in effective reading speed based on text type in this study indicate that reading instruction should take into account the characteristics of the text and the prior abilities of the learners. Well-planned and interconnected learning will develop effective reading speed in depth for both fiction and nonfiction texts, thus enabling the achievement of reading learning objectives to improve literacy and academic achievement of students optimally (Purwantiningsih, 2023).

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the effective reading speed of fiction and nonfiction texts of eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Ukui was classified as good with an average reading speed and comprehension in the high category for fiction texts and very high for nonfiction texts. The results show that the reading speed of non-fiction texts tends to be higher with an overall average of 124 compared to fiction texts with an overall average of 119. This indicates that text characteristics greatly influence students' speed and comprehension; informative and straightforward nonfiction texts are easier to understand, while fiction requires a deeper understanding of language style and plot. As a recommendation, teachers are expected to provide regular reading exercises of both fiction and nonfiction texts in Indonesian language learning to balance speed and understanding on an ongoing basis, as well as provide integrated HOTS exercises as a reference for critical and analytical thinking. Schools also need to support literacy activities in a structured manner. Researchers are further advised to conduct more in-depth research on effective reading speed, such as using other fiction or nonfiction texts, using speed reading methods like skimming or scanning, and employing more varied strategies.

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