

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of this study. This chapter is divided into seven sections: Background of the Study, Identifying the Problem, Outline of the Problem, Research Questions, Objective of the Study, Significance of the Study, and Summary of the Study.

Background of the Research

Listening, writing, speaking, and reading are four important parts of language learning. Mastering these components helps students improve their language skills. Johnson (2008) argues that mastering listening, writing, speaking, and reading improves students' academic performance. The four components have not only benefited from the success of classroom language learning. This is in line with Sadiku (2015) who states that listening, writing, speaking and reading have important purposes in language learning; they help support learning, giving people the opportunity to create ideas and exchange real information. Benefits provide knowledge, information, increased performance, need for language, create ideas for people, and provide evidence of people's skills.

Among these components, reading is an essential component. The ability to read is a foundation in academics that everyone must master for their survival. In the researcher's experience, reading activities have many advantages. The benefits of reading are obtaining new information, opening insight and knowledge, and improving the quality of memory. One of the important aspects of

reading is the level of reading comprehension. The reading comprehension level is an activity that must be performed to understand the content of the reading until the reader knows the purpose of the text to be read. According to Susilo (2015), the level of reading comprehension explains the relationship between the process of finding and understanding information in the reading text. Based on Pikulski and Templeton (2004), reading has several advantages, namely the acquisition of knowledge and the increase of students' vocabulary. Reading comprehension is therefore a process of reading to acquire the knowledge of students and is one of the elements of vocabulary learning. The importance of reading has prompted many researchers to conduct research on reading comprehension between men and female.

Gender differences in reading comprehension have been observed in several studies. Male and female students differ in their reading choices, reading frequency, and comprehension toward reading (Coles & Hall, 2002). Several studies have shown that female students enjoy reading much more than male (Merisuo-Storm, 2006). Sadowski (2010) argues that men read less than female, which is directly correlated with their reading performance. Male college students also tend to see themselves as bad readers (Boltz, 2007). From the above statement, several studies have indicated that male and female students have different comprehension towards reading and several studies have shown that most female students have the greatest positive comprehension towards reading by compared to male students.

There are several factors explaining the differences in reading comprehension between male and female. As students, the researchers observed that the differences in reading comprehension between male and female students towards reading depend on their interest in reading. According to Ngongare, Gabriela & Samalo, Nurmin & Rettob, Aloysius. (2021), this study deals with the effect of gender differences on reading comprehension. This indicates that female students outperformed their male counterparts in reading comprehension. In other words, it can be stated that gender differences affect reading comprehension. Female students prefer to read novels, magazines, and fashion books. but male students prefer to read sports magazines, novels, and newspapers. Gender differences in reading preferences have also been observed in several studies. According to Boltz (2007), men tend to be involved in reading through a different type of female and men tend to read short informative texts. Male college students also prefer to read non-fiction books, comics, graphic novels, fantasy, sports, humor, and horror (Merisuo-Storm, 2006; Boltz, 2007) while adventure books are female's favorites (Merisuo-Storm, 2006).

This condition also occurs in the English Department of a University in Yogyakarta. Students have different comprehension towards reading. Some English Department of a University in Yogyakarta students have different levels of reading comprehension. Therefore, gender is a factor in reading comprehension differences. According to Veronica (2009), goal of investigating gender difference in reading comprehension is, for example: (a) to make us aware of how gender can affect development and achievement in reading; (b) to enable teachers to use

this awareness to help their students of both sexes to achieve gains in reading comprehension; (c) to encourage further research on gender roles in reading; and (d) to accommodate the individual needs of students, bearing in mind that male and female are entitled to equal opportunities for successful learning.

This research is based on the phenomenon of an English Department of a University in Yogyakarta. The researcher found that the students at English Department of a University in Yogyakarta had some problems in understanding the text based on the informal interviews that the researcher did with the students. English Department of a University in Yogyakarta students admitted to encountering several obstacles; One of the problems is that they have difficulty understanding what they are reading, especially with new vocabulary that they do not understand. In addition, some students had problems with reading comprehension levels, which did not change significantly over time. In addition, students encounter problems if they come across new words and do not know the meaning of the new words. Based on the above issues, the researcher wishes to conduct research titled “Survey of Gender Differences in Reading Comprehension of English Department Students at the University in Yogyakarta”. This study aims to determine the level of reading comprehension of students.

Identification of the Problem

As future English learners, reading activity is one of the important skills to support students' abilities to learn English. Each student at English Department of a University in Yogyakarta has a different level of reading comprehension. There are factors that cause differences in reading comprehension, and gender

differences are factors that cause differences in reading comprehension. In addition, English Department of a University in Yogyakarta students have preferences for different types of books as mentioned earlier. The difference in reading comprehension between male and female students at English Department of a University in Yogyakarta has not been identified. Therefore, in this study there are issues to consider, such as gender differences in reading comprehension.

Delimitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem, the researchers focused on the differences in reading comprehension between male and female students in the English education department. In particular, the researcher focused on the differences in reading comprehension between the students of the English Department of a University in Yogyakarta. Some students at English Department of a University in Yogyakarta have different levels of reading comprehension. Female students at this university have a positive tendency to appreciate books or texts that appeal to them, such as novels. Also, male students at this university usually prefer to read books or informative texts.

Research Question:

There are three research question in this research:

1. How is the reading comprehension of male students at English Department of a University in Yogyakarta?
2. How is the reading comprehension of female students at English Department of a University in Yogyakarta?

3. Is there any significant differences between the reading comprehension of male and female students at English Department of a University in Yogyakarta?

Objectives of the Research

Based on the research question that mentioned above, objective of the research is:

1. To find out reading comprehension of male students at English Department of a University in Yogyakarta.
2. To find out reading comprehension of female students at English Department of a University in Yogyakarta.
3. To find out the significant difference in reading comprehension between male and female students at English Department of a University in Yogyakarta.

Significances of the Research

There are three significant points of this research that provide the contribution to the students, teacher, and future researcher.

For students. The results of this study can be considered by students in learning about the level of reading comprehension. The results can show the level of students' reading comprehension between male and female. So that students will increase their reading level to improve the quality of reading comprehension.

For teacher. The results of these studies can be used as consideration for teachers in teaching reading. Teachers can choose the right reading material to be

used as teaching materials and can choose groups according to the gender and abilities of the students.

For future researchers. The results of this study will provide a reference for other researchers in the future on reading comprehension between male and female students. The results of this study with future research may also be different from the results that researchers have obtained.

Outline of the research

There are five chapters in this thesis. The first chapter provides a description of the research. This chapter describes the background of the research, identification of the problem, delimitation of the problem, the research questions, the research objectives, the significances of the research, and the outline of the research. Chapter two discusses about literature review, there are definition of reading activity, definition of reading comprehension, definition of differences reading comprehension between female and male students, and conceptual framework between female and male students. Chapter three describes the methodology. This chapter includes research design, population and research samples, methodology and data analysis. Chapter four is about finding and discussion. This chapter describes the results of the search results and discusses the results to answer the research questions. The last chapter contains conclusions and recommendations.