A STUDY ON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ABILITY IN COMPREHENDING NARRATIVE TEXT

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Abstract: Narrative text is one of the types of text learned in school. Therefore, it is necessary to know the students' ability in comprehending narrative text. The aim of this study is to find out the ability in comprehending narrative text of the third year of Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit which consists of 82 students in total. The writer used cluster random sampling technique to determine the sample. The samples were 30 students. The instrument was a test which consisted of 40 items. The frame of the test covers 8 components: main idea, reference, detailed information, vocabulary, inference, social functions, generic structures, and language features. The findings show that the ability in comprehending narrative text of third year of Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit was high level with mean score 83.The highest mean score (80) was in language features and the lowest mean score (51.3) was in determining main idea. However, the students are suggested to expand their ability of the eight components in comprehending narrative text for the better results. Furthermore, the teachers are expected to be able to provide better teaching and learning to improve students' reading comprehension abilities.

Key Words: Ability, Reading comprehension, Narrative text

SEBUAH STUDI KEMAMPUAN SISWA SEKOLAH MENENGAH PERTAMA DALAM MEMAHAMI TEKS NARATIF

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Abstrak: Teks naratif adalah salah satu jenis teks yang dipelajari di sekolah. Oleh karena itu, penting untuk mengetahui bagaimana kemampuan siswa dalam memahami teks naratif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kemampuan siswa tahun ketiga SMPN 1 Sungai Apit dalam memahami teks naratif. Jumlah populasi 82 siswa dibagi menjadi tiga kelas. Penulis menggunakan teknik *cluster random sampling* untuk menentukan sampel. Jumlah sampel adalah 30 siswa.Instrumen yang digunakan adalah tes yang terdiri dari 40 soal. Tes terdiri dari 8 komponen, yaitu ide pokok, referensi, informasi rinci, kosa kata, inferensi, fungsi sosial, struktur teks dan tata bahasa teks. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan siswa tahun ketiga SMPN 1 Sungai Apit dalam memahami naratif teks adalah tinggi dengan rata-rata 83. Rata-rata skor tertinggi (80) adalah unsur kebahasaan dan rata-rata skor terendah (51.3) adalah mencari ide utama pada teks naratif. Meskipun begitu, para siswa disarankan untuk memperluas kemampuan mereka dalam memahami delapan komponen pada teks naratif untuk hasil yang lebih baik. Selain itu, para guru diharapkan dapat memberikan pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang lebih baik untuk meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman dalam membaca.

Kata Kunci: Kemampuan membaca, pemahaman membaca, teks naratif

INTRODUCTION

Due to globalization, English is the most frequently used language in international commerce, education, business, technology, and tourism. Seidlhofer (2004) defines English as lingua franca as a language that is used as a medium of communication among the speakers in which English is not their first language. In Indonesian institutions, English is taught as the first foreign language, and students must acquire four abilities for proficiency: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Harmer, 2007). Reading is one of the skills that the students should master in learning English materials. The students be able to obtain information and explanation from written texts through the act of reading. According to Kreshen and Brown (2007), reading is the most essential of the four skills because it can improve overall English proficiency.

Furthermore, Snow (2002) stated the purpose of reading is to extract and construct meaning from all kinds of texts. It involves the interaction between skills and cognitive processes of the reader and the linguistics characteristic of the text. this kind of understanding called comprehension. Neufeld (2005) stated comprehension is the process of constructing a deep understanding of the text which involves two important features : being actively involved with the text and using appropiate background knowledge to interpret the text. Pertaining with Klingner (2007), reading comprehension is multi components, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text as well as variable related to the text. Based on the definition, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is essential to overall English proficiency and necessitates subskills, processing, and knowledge sources.

To emphasize the significance of reading comprehension ability among students, the Indonesian government has designed an English curriculum that places an emphasis on text comprehension and requires students to comprehend and compose various texts such as exposition, narrative, descriptive, and recount genres. This kind of curriculum emphasize text norms, context and comprehension. In Junior High School, narrative texts are taught, including in the third year at Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit. According Anderson (2003) narrative text is using characters, narrative, setting, and action, these texts amuse readers by depicting the resolution of previous conflicts. According to the 2013 school-based curriculum, the students are expexted to comprehend the social functions, text structures, and linguistic elements of narrative text by identifying main ideas, locating references, detailed information, understanding vocabulary and making inferences.

The third-year students were required to master reading narrative text in the first semester. The English teacher places a greater emphasis on the teaching and learning process, attending to the needs, experiences, and emotions of students and intervening to facilitate their knowledge acquisition. Students construct their own knowledge based on relevant contexts, so that learning can be regarded as a natural progression. The 2013 curriculum emphasizes narrative texts, particularly fable short stories, and employs discovery learning strategies to promote a scientific method of instruction. Students actively pursue and discover discovery learning, with the teacher functioning as a facilitator of the learning process. However, the writer had experience during PLP and discovered that the students had problem in comprehending texts ecspecially narrative text.

Based the explanation above, the writer conducted the research entitled: A Study on Junior High School students' Ability in Comprehending Narrative text.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This quantitative analysis takes a descriptive approach. According to Sugiyono (2016), a quantitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of positivism that utilizes a specific population or sample, sampling techniques that are generally conducted at random, data collection using research instruments, and data analysis using quantitative terms in order to test the established hypothesis. The nature of this investigation is descriptive. (Arikunto, 2010) Descriptive research is research that seeks to gather information about a particular case, which is a tendency at the time the research is conducted. In other terms, a descriptive result is an up-to-date summary of the data.

The purpose of this study was to find out the Junior High School Ability in Comprehending Narrative Text. Therefore, a descriptive method was used in this study because it describes the students' narrative text skills at the junior high school level. The population was 82 students, as the sample Sugiyono (2016) introduced cluster random sampling, a method for selecting random members of a population without considering the population's existing strata. The researcher composed three classes on each roll of paper and packaged them in a carton, then selected one sheet, resulting in class IX.1 (30 students)

The study utilized a test to assess students' reading comprehension skills, focusing on generic structures, determining main idea, detailed information, locating reference understanding vocabulary, making inferences, social functions, and language features. The test, constructed using the 2013 school-based curriculum, included 40 questions and was based on third-year English textbooks. The test aimed to determine students' abilities using standardization models, ensuring accurate conclusions and addressing the problem in the study.

The writer used statistical descriptive data analysis to find out the data. According to Gall (2013), descriptive statistics are mathematical techniques for organizing and summarizing numerical data. In this research, the author examined the ability of third-year students at Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit to comprehend narrative text. Furthermore, the students' score can be seen in this following table below:

Table 1. The classification of students' score

No.	Score	Categories
1.	85-100	Very high
2.	69-84	High
3.	52-68	Moderate
4.	36-51	Low

(Adopted from Sugiyono, 2008)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings describe the findings of this study, which are displayed as a percentage of the students' scores and classification scores of students' ability to comprehend narrative text. Those are determining main ideas, locating reference, detailed information, understanding vocabulary, making inference, social functions, generic structures and language features. Based on the result of the test, the percentage of the student scores can be presented in bar chart below:

Bar Chart 1.
**Percentage of the Students' Ability in Comprehending Narrative Text**
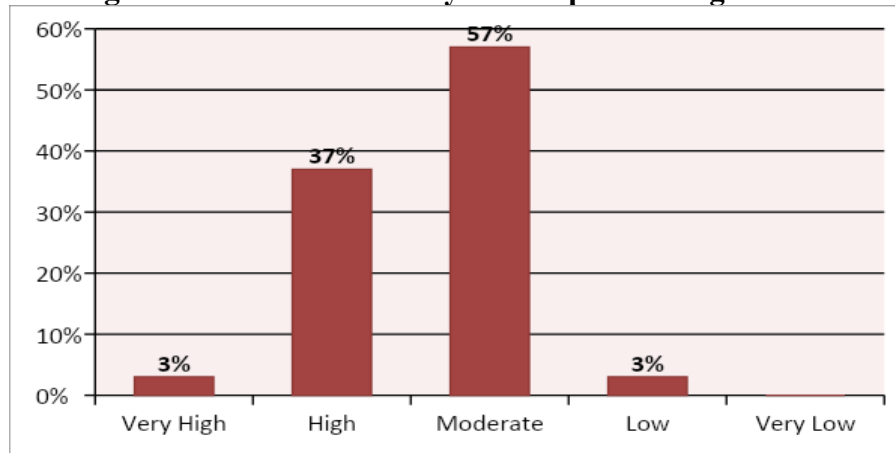
The chart above shows that almost half students in total are categorized as Moderate level. There was 1 student (3%) who obtained a very high score. Then, there were 11 students (37%) who obtained high scores, 17 students (57%) obtained moderate scores and 1 student (3%) obtained low scores. There is no student (0%) obtaining a very low score. It can be concluded that the ability of third year Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit in comprehending narrative text is in high level with the mean score 83.3.

Bar chart 2.
Percentage of the Students' Ability in Determining Main Idea
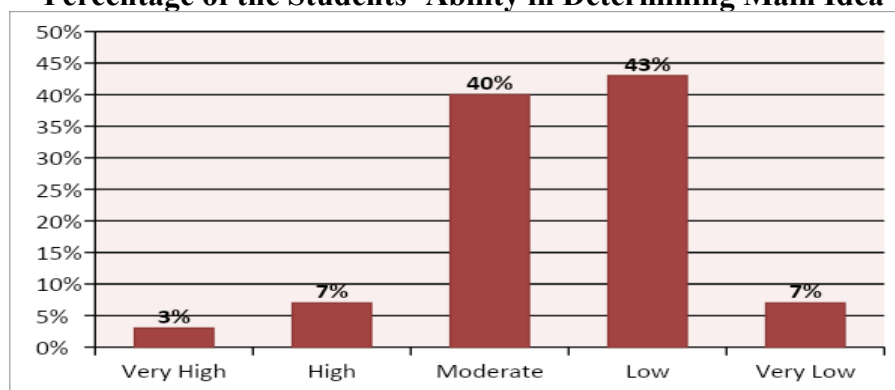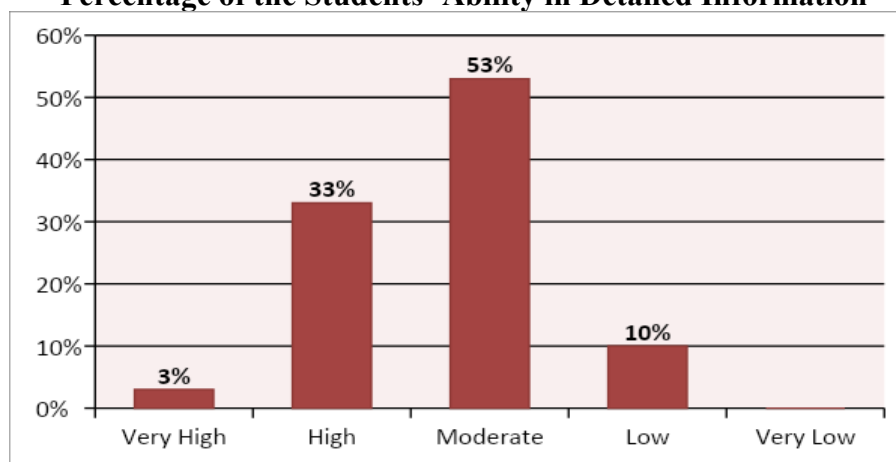
The bar chart above shows that 1 student (3%) obtains a very high score. Then, there were 2 students (7%) obtaining high scores , 12 students (40%) obtaining moderate scores, 13 students (43%) obtaining low scores and 2 students (7%) obtaining very low scores. It can be concluded that the ability of third year Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit in determining the main idea is at a low level with the mean score 51.3.

Bar chart 3.
Percentage of the Students' Ability in Locating Reference
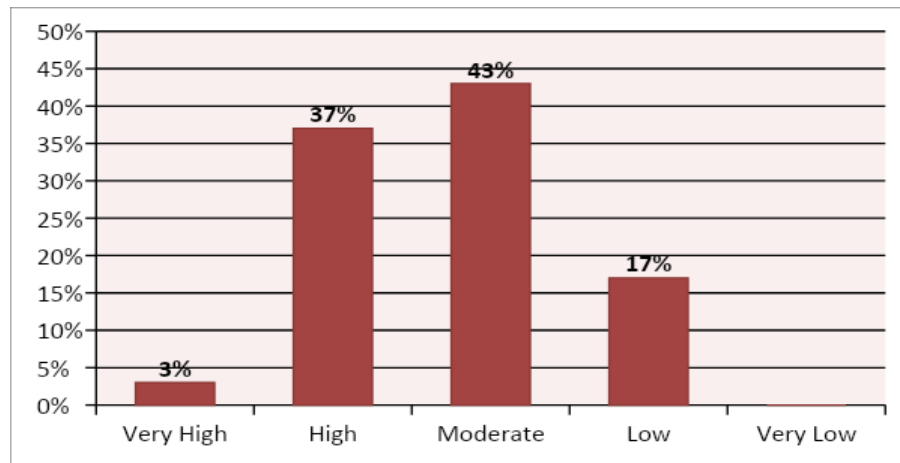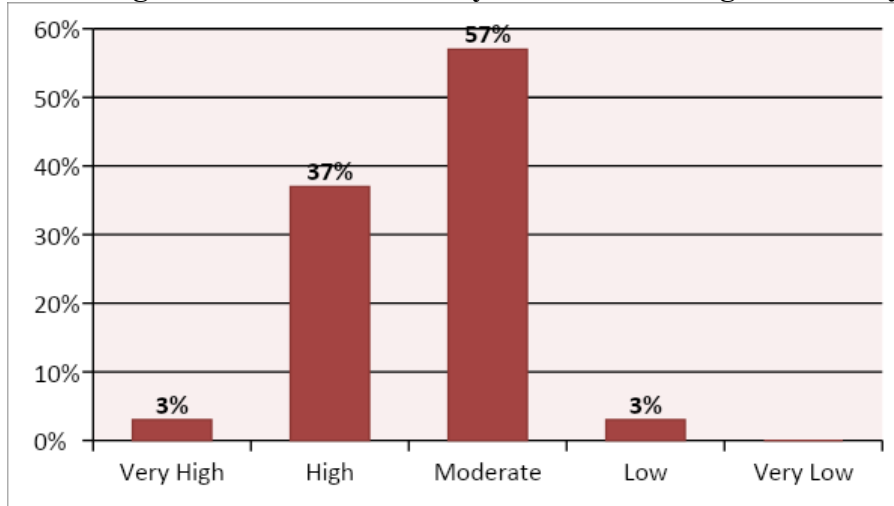

The bar chart above shows that there was 1 student (3%) who obtain very high score, 11 students (37%) obtain high score, 13 students (43%) obtain moderate score, 5 students (17%) obtain low score and there was no student (0%) who obtain very low score. It can be concluded that the ability of third year Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit in locating reference is in moderate level with the mean score 65.3.

Bar chart 4.
**Percentage of the Students' Ability in Detailed Information**

The bar chart above shows that there was 1 student (3%) who obtains very high score. Then, there were 10 students (33%) who obtain high score, 16 students (53%) obtain moderate score, 13 students (10%) obtain low score and there was no students (0%) obtain very low score. Therefore, it can be concluded that the ability of third year Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit in detailed information is in moderate level with the mean score 66.

Bar chart 5.
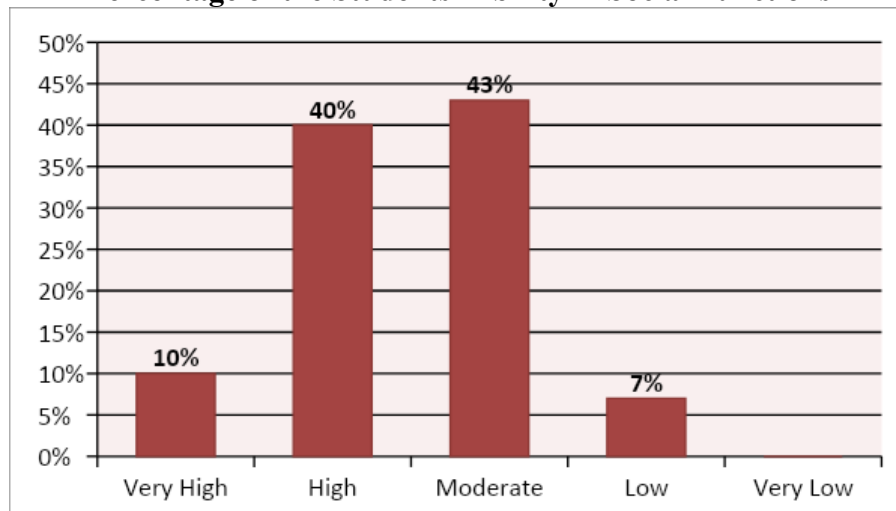**Percentage of the Students' Ability in Understanding Vocabulary**

The bar chart above shows that there was 1 student (3%) who obtained a very high score. Then, there were 12 students (40%) obtained high scores, 9 students (30%) obtained moderate scores, 7 students (23%) with low scores and there was 1 student (3%) who obtained a very low score. It can be concluded that the ability of third year Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit in understanding vocabulary is in moderate level with the mean score 63.3.

Bar chart 6.
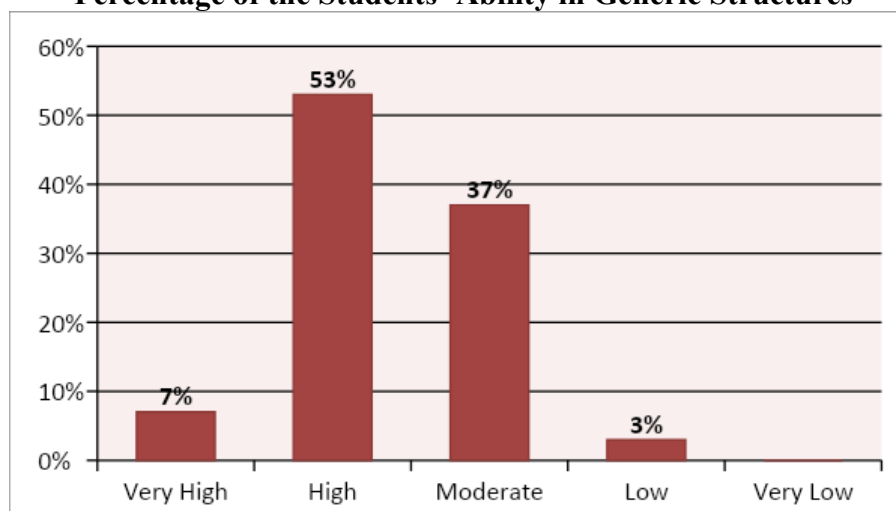**Percentage of the Students' Ability in Making Inference**
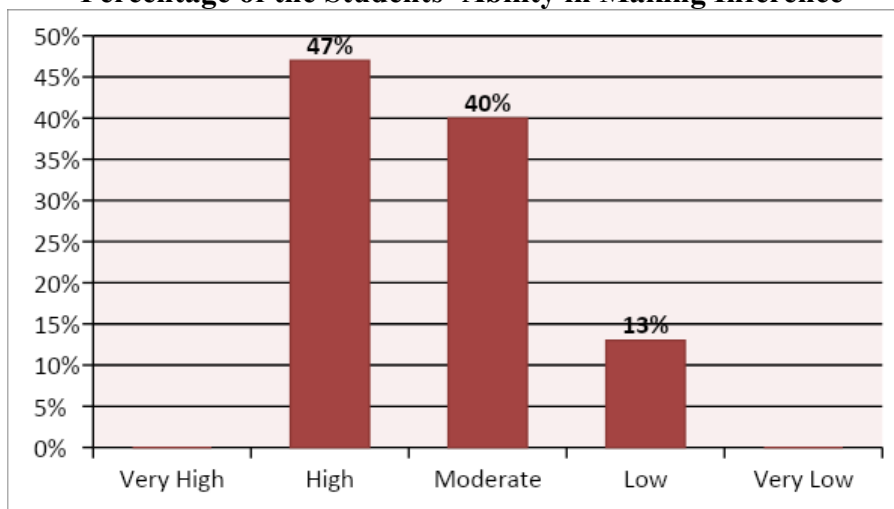
The bar chart above shows that there was no student (0%) who obtained a very high score. Then, 14 students (47%) obtained high scores, 12 students (40%) obtained moderate scores, 4 students (13%) obtained low scores and there was no one student (0%) obtaining very low scores. It can be concluded that the ability of third year Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit in making inference is in moderate level with the mean score 66.7.

Bar chart 7.
Percentage of the Students' Ability in Social Functions

The bar chart above shows that there were 3 students (10%) who obtain very high score, 12 students (40%) obtain high score, 13 students (43%) obtain moderate score, 2 students (7%) obtain low score and there was no one student (0%) obtain very low score. It can be concluded that the ability of third year Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit in social functions is in high level with the mean score 70.7.
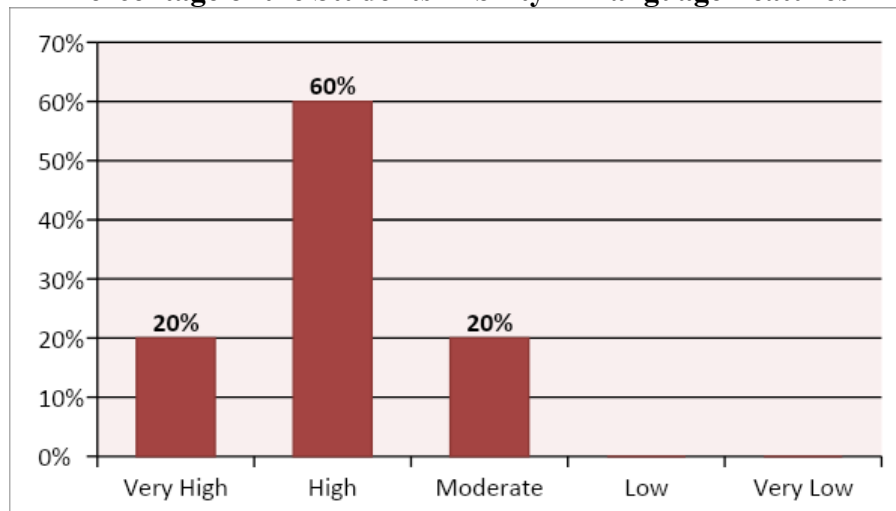
Bar chart 8.
Percentage of the Students' Ability in Generic Structures

The bar chart above shows that there were 2 students (7%) who obtain very high score, 16 students (53%) obtain high score, 11 students (37%) obtain moderate score, there was 1 students (3%) obtain low score and no one student (0%) obtain very low score. It can be concluded that the ability of third year Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit in generic structures is at a high level with a mean score of 72.7.

Bar chart 9.
Percentage of the Students' Ability in Language Features

The bar chart above shows that there were 6 students (20%) who obtained a very high score, 18 students (60%) obtained a high score, 6 students (20%) obtained a moderate score, and there was no one student (0%) who obtained a low and very low score. It can be concluded that the ability of third year Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit in language features is at a high level with a mean score of 80.

Discussion

To find out the comprehension of narrative texts by students in Third Year at Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit, the writer was using statistical descriptive data analysis. The results showed that students struggled to locate the implied or inferred main idea, which is the most difficult indicator for students to comprehend. Saraswati (2021) who conducted the research in another school stated that many students face difficulties in determining the main idea because it tends to be implicit in the texts. Pertaining Kaya and Ulutas (2023) also discussed the difficulty of finding main ideas in their research. They stated many students have trouble finding main ideas because they cannot infer the author's intent to convey in the text.

The mean student score was 66, classified as moderate, with students expected to achieve a high level due to detailed information in the text. It can be said that students are unable to locate the information by examining specific details throughout the text. This is in contrast to previous studies, such as Yani (2018) and Silvi (2019), which found detailed information with high-level scores. This indicator is kind of easier than determining the main idea because the answer is absolutely in the text. The students

seem to run out of time when they have to fulfill entire questions. Therefore, the students need more practice in their scanning skills.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, students did not develop reading skills, such as skimming, scanning, and extensive and intensive reading, due to the interruption of their education. They were accustomed to virtual education and had more time for in-class research. The teaching and learning process, including the use of instructional media, has significantly changed since before the pandemic. In addition to locating the main idea, many indicators expected to reach a high level, such as locating references and detailed information, only reached a moderate level. This may be due to students' desire to pursue the texts.

Despite that, third-year students at Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit have a high ability to comprehend narrative texts. The writer assumed that the reading ability of students could be essential and useful information for readers, particularly at Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit. In the future, they may be able to identify components of reading comprehension and acquire necessary reading skills to correctly answer questions. Additionally, the end of the corona outbreak could allow normal teaching and learning to resume in direct class, providing teachers with an opportunity to enhance their students' reading skills.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the data analysis of the research findings, the writer found some conclusions.
1. From the eight components, the highest score come from language features with mean score 80, which is categorized in high level. The next following high score is from generic structures with mean score 72.7 and social functions 70.7.
2. There were four components that expected in high score but still in moderate level such as locating reference (65.3), detailed information (66), understanding vocabulary (63.3) and making inference (66.7). The writer assumed that the students get interrupted because of pandemic. They used to done their assignments in online with longer time than in offline class. the writer compared it with other researchers who conducted the research before pandemic outbreak and showed contrasting results.
3. In this research, the lower score of eight components was in determining main idea with mean score 51.3 which is categorized in low level. The writer found that the students face difficulties during find out the main idea in the texts. That was because main idea in the text tends to inferred or implied. The writer compared it with another researchs and found the same result.
4. The results of the test revealed that the students'ability of the third year of Junior High School 1 Sungai Apit is in high level with the total mean score 83.3. However, the students still require additional instruction, practice, and guidance from instructors in order to comprehend narrative texts, despite their high aptitude.

Recommendations

`   The study reveals that determining main idea of a narrative text is the most challenging aspect, highlighting the need for teachers to focus on specifics and use appropriate teaching strategies to maintain students' interest and make the material easier to understand. Students should review lessons and expand their knowledge of reading comprehension components, particularly narrative text, before discussing the findings. The study's results can serve as a reference for other writers with different discussions.

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