



Level of Effectiveness of Reading Comprehension Ability of Grade VII Students of SMP Negeri 1 Tilango

Robbiyana Lasomba¹, Sayama Malabar², Puspita Dian Agustin³

^{1,2}Pgram Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Gorontalo, Indonesia

*E-mail: ainlasomba02@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is a basic skill that plays an important role in supporting student learning success, especially at the junior high school level. However, various findings show that students' reading comprehension skills are still relatively low. This study aims to describe the reading comprehension skills and Reading Effectiveness Skills (KEM) of seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango. This study uses a quantitative descriptive design. There were 26 seventh-grade students participating in this study. Data were collected through a KEM-based reading test that measured reading speed and reading comprehension, as well as interviews as supporting data. Data analysis was conducted by calculating reading speed (words per minute), reading comprehension percentage, and KEM scores obtained from the multiplication of these two components. The results of the study show that the average reading speed of seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango is 113 wpm with an average comprehension level of 63%. The average KEM score obtained by students is 74 wpm. Based on the KEM category, 80.8% of students were in the ineffective category and only 19.2% of students reached the fairly effective category. These findings indicate that the reading comprehension skills of seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango are still low and there is an imbalance between reading speed and comprehension of reading content. Therefore, more focused and continuous reading learning efforts are needed to improve the effectiveness of student reading.

Keywords: reading comprehension, effectiveness skills, students

Tingkat Kemampuan Efektivitas Membaca Pemahaman Siswa Kelas VII SMP Negeri 1 Tilango

ABSTRAK

Membaca pemahaman merupakan keterampilan dasar yang berperan penting dalam menunjang keberhasilan belajar siswa. Khususnya pada jenjang Sekolah Menengah Pertama. Namun, berbagai temuan menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan membaca pemahaman siswa masih tergolong rendah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kemampuan efektivitas membaca pemahaman siswa kelas VII SMP Negeri 1 Tilango. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kuantitatif. Subjek penelitian berjumlah 26 siswa kelas VII. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes membaca kemudian menggunakan metode KEM untuk mengukur kecepatan membaca dan tingkat pemahaman bacaan, serta wawancara sebagai data pendukung. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menghitung kecepatan membaca kata per menit (kpm), persentase pemahaman bacaan dan nilai KEM yang diperoleh dari perkalian kedua komponen tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rata-rata kecepatan membaca siswa kelas VII SMP Negeri 1 Tilango adalah 113 kpm dengan rata-rata tingkat pemahaman sebesar 63%. Nilai rata-rata KEM yang diperoleh siswa adalah 74 kpm. Berdasarkan kategori KEM, sebanyak 80,8% siswa berada pada kategori tidak efektif dan hanya 19,2% siswa yang mencapai kategori cukup efektif. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan membaca pemahaman siswa kelas VII SMP Negeri 1 Tilango masih rendah dan belum seimbang antara kecepatan membaca dan pemahaman isi bacaan. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan upaya pembelajaran membaca yang lebih terarah dan berkelanjutan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas membaca siswa.

Kata kunci: membaca pemahaman, kemampuan efektivitas membaca, siswa

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INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a language skill that plays a fundamental role in supporting student learning success at various levels of education. Through reading, students not only acquire information but also construct knowledge, interpret meaning, and develop critical thinking skills. However, reading is not a simple activity, but rather a complex process involving visual, cognitive, and linguistic abilities, as well as effective reading factors. Successful reading comprehension is strongly influenced by various internal factors, such as interest, motivation, and cognitive abilities, as well as external factors, such as the family environment, the availability of reading materials, and learning strategies implemented at school.

At the junior high school (SMP) level, reading comprehension becomes increasingly important as students begin to encounter more complex texts that require in-depth understanding. Ideally, seventh-grade students should be able to comprehend explicit and implicit information, draw conclusions, and connect reading content to existing knowledge. However, various national and international reports indicate that Indonesian students' reading skills remain low. The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results placed Indonesian students' reading skills below the OECD average. This situation indicates that reading comprehension remains a serious challenge in Indonesian education.

This problem is also found at the junior high school level. Based on initial observations at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango, seventh-grade students demonstrated suboptimal reading comprehension skills. Most students were able to read text mechanically, but struggled to deeply understand the content, interpret implied meanings, and draw conclusions from the text. This difficulty was reflected in students' low accuracy in answering reading comprehension questions. This low reading comprehension ability is thought to be influenced by low interest and motivation in reading, limited engaging reading materials, conventional reading learning methods, and a lack of family support.

To obtain an objective picture of students' reading comprehension abilities, measurements are needed that not only assess reading comprehension but also consider students' reading speed. One approach that can be used is the Reading Effectiveness Ability (KEM), which combines reading speed and reading comprehension level. The KEM measurement allows researchers to obtain more comprehensive data on students' reading effectiveness, thus providing a basis for formulating more appropriate and effective learning strategies. Based on this background, the problems in this study can be formulated as follows: (1) how are the reading comprehension abilities of grade VII students of SMP Negeri 1 Tilango, (2) and how are the effective reading abilities of grade VII students of SMP Negeri 1 Tilango. This objective is in line with the research objective stated in the abstract, namely to provide a comprehensive overview of the condition of the reading comprehension abilities of grade VII students of SMP Negeri 1 Tilango.

The results of this study are expected to provide benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study can enrich scientific studies in the field of language education, particularly related to reading comprehension abilities and the application of the concept of Effective Reading Ability in junior high school students. Practically, this study is expected to serve as reference material for teachers in developing literacy programs, as well as providing encouragement for students to increase their interest and ability to read comprehension.

Theoretically, this research is based on the concept of reading as a cognitive process involving interaction between the reader and the text to construct meaning. Reading comprehension encompasses the ability to comprehend literal, interpretive, critical, and creative information. Furthermore, the theory of Reading Effectiveness Ability asserts that effective reading is determined not only by reading speed but also by the level of comprehension of the reading content. Therefore, the balance between speed and comprehension is a key indicator of student reading effectiveness.



Several previous studies have shown that students' reading comprehension remains a major challenge in Indonesian language learning. Research by Sunandi et al. (2023) found that elementary school students' reading comprehension was in the adequate category and was influenced by low vocabulary mastery and reading interest. Khaerawati et al. (2023) reported that implementing level-based learning can significantly improve elementary school students' reading ability. Meanwhile, research by Sarah and Yatri (2022) showed that low reading motivation, limited reading resources, and family environment were the dominant factors hindering students' reading comprehension. Unlike those studies that focused on elementary school students, this study focused on seventh-grade junior high school students using the Reading Effectiveness Ability approach. It examined not only ability levels and difficulty factors but also solutions implemented to address reading comprehension issues. Thus, this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive contribution to efforts to improve junior high school students' reading comprehension skills.

METHOD

The research procedure was carried out systematically through three stages: preparation, implementation, and completion. In the preparation stage, the researcher conducted a preliminary study by reviewing relevant theories regarding reading comprehension and Reading Effectiveness Ability (KEM), developing research instruments, and obtaining research permits at the school. The implementation stage included administering reading tests and measuring reading time. The study concluded with data analysis and drawing conclusions based on the findings in the field.

This study employed a quantitative descriptive design, aiming to objectively describe students' reading comprehension levels without any special treatment. Quantitative data were obtained through reading tests using the Reading Effectiveness Ability (KEM) method, while supporting data were

collected through interviews to strengthen and clarify the research findings. The research findings are presented in the form of scores, percentages, and reading ability categories.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango, Gorontalo Regency, considering the reading ability issues among seventh-grade students based on initial findings. The study lasted approximately two months, from September to November 2025, covering data collection, data processing, and the compilation of research results.

Sugiyono (2013:80) explains that a population is the entirety of objects and subjects within a specific area, each with a specific number and characteristics to be studied and analyzed to draw conclusions. Based on this definition, the population in this study was all 53 seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango. Meanwhile, for the research sample, the researcher used only 26 samples, consisting of 7th-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango.

The data collection instrument in this study consisted of a reading test. The test used was a reading test designed using the KEM method, consisting of descriptive texts accompanied by multiple-choice and essay questions to measure students' reading comprehension levels. Furthermore, reading time was measured to determine students' reading speed in words per minute (wpm).

Data analysis techniques were quantitative and descriptive. Reading speed was calculated by dividing the number of words in the text by the students' reading time. Reading comprehension level was determined based on the percentage of correct answers on the reading comprehension test. Next, the Reading Effectiveness Ability (KEM) score was obtained by multiplying reading speed by the reading comprehension percentage. The KEM measurement results were then classified into very effective, effective, moderately effective, less effective, and ineffective categories. Interview data were analyzed descriptively to support and clarify the quantitative findings.

RESULTS

1. Level of Reading Comprehension Ability of Grade VII Students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango

The results of this study regarding the reading comprehension ability of grade VII students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango were obtained through measurements of reading speed, reading comprehension level, and calculations of reading effectiveness ability.

1.1 Reading Speed Score of Grade VII Students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango

The reading speed score calculation began with a descriptive text entitled "The Charm of Senggigi Beach" containing 409 words, followed by 10 multiple-choice and essay questions, each with a stopwatch. After completing the reading test, the reading ability test was administered, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1
 Reading Speed Score

| No. | Sample Code | Number of Word | Time (Second) | Speed (kpm) |
|-----|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | S2 | 409 | 150 | 163,60 |
| 2 | S4 | 409 | 170 | 144,35 |
| 3 | S3 | 409 | 180 | 136,33 |
| 4 | S5 | 409 | 185 | 132,64 |
| 5 | S8 | 409 | 185 | 132,64 |
| 6 | S20 | 409 | 187 | 131,22 |
| 7 | S11 | 409 | 188 | 130,53 |
| 8 | S1 | 409 | 190 | 129,15 |
| 9 | S9 | 409 | 190 | 129,15 |
| 10 | S7 | 409 | 191 | 128,48 |
| 11 | S17 | 409 | 191 | 128,48 |
| 12 | S22 | 409 | 191 | 128,48 |
| 13 | S10 | 409 | 192 | 127,81 |
| 14 | S15 | 409 | 193 | 127,15 |
| 15 | S19 | 409 | 194 | 126,49 |
| 16 | S14 | 409 | 195 | 125,84 |
| 17 | S26 | 409 | 197 | 124,56 |

| | | | | |
|----|------|-----|--------|---------|
| 18 | S16 | 409 | 200 | 122,70 |
| 19 | S21 | 409 | 205 | 119,70 |
| 20 | S23 | 409 | 210 | 116,85 |
| 21 | S24 | 397 | 300 | 79,40 |
| 22 | S6 | 344 | 300 | 68,80 |
| 23 | S12 | 335 | 300 | 67,00 |
| 24 | S18 | 335 | 300 | 67,00 |
| 25 | S25 | 149 | 300 | 29,80 |
| 26 | S13 | 141 | 300 | 28,20 |
| | Sum | | 5584 | 2946,35 |
| | Mean | | 214,77 | 113,32 |

Based on Table 1, the reading speed score results showed a total reading time of 5,584 seconds, with a total reading speed of 2,946 wpm for all students. The average reading time for 409 words was 214 seconds, and the average reading speed for all students was 113 wpm.

1.2 Percentage of Reading Comprehension Level of Grade VII Students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango

After obtaining the reading speed score, the percentage of comprehension level was calculated. The reading comprehension level was calculated using multiple-choice scores, essay scores, and the percentage of reading comprehension level. The reading comprehension score results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2
 Percentage of Reading Comprehension Level

| No. | Sample Code | PG Score | Essay Score | Comprehension |
|-----|-------------|----------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | S1 | 100 | 67 | 83% |
| 2 | S2 | 100 | 67 | 83% |
| 3 | S4 | 90 | 70 | 80% |
| 4 | S5 | 90 | 62 | 76% |
| 5 | S8 | 100 | 52 | 76% |
| 6 | S6 | 100 | 51 | 75% |
| 7 | S10 | 90 | 57 | 73% |



| | | | | |
|----|-------|-------|------|-------|
| 8 | S11 | 90 | 55 | 72% |
| 9 | S15 | 90 | 55 | 72% |
| 10 | S26 | 80 | 63 | 71% |
| 11 | S9 | 90 | 52 | 71% |
| 12 | S16 | 80 | 56 | 68% |
| 13 | S7 | 80 | 50 | 65% |
| 14 | S17 | 80 | 49 | 64% |
| 15 | S24 | 90 | 30 | 60% |
| 16 | S20 | 90 | 28 | 59% |
| 17 | S22 | 80 | 36 | 58% |
| 18 | S14 | 80 | 34 | 57% |
| 19 | S3 | 70 | 40 | 55% |
| 20 | S12 | 70 | 38 | 54% |
| 21 | S19 | 80 | 29 | 54% |
| 22 | S13 | 80 | 19 | 49% |
| 23 | S21 | 60 | 34 | 47% |
| 24 | S23 | 50 | 42 | 46% |
| 25 | S18 | 80 | 10 | 45% |
| 26 | S25 | 50 | 24 | 37% |
| | Total | 2140 | 1170 | 1650% |
| | Mean | 82,31 | 45 | 63% |

Based on a reading comprehension test conducted on 26 seventh-grade students, the results showed that their comprehension abilities varied considerably. The total multiple-choice score was 2,140 with an average of 82.30. Meanwhile, the total essay score was 1,170 with an average of 45. Converted to a percentage, the average comprehension score reached 83%, but some students only achieved around 37-45%.

1.3 Reading Effectiveness (KEM)

This section presents the research results regarding reading effectiveness (KEM), obtained through the calculations of reading speed and reading comprehension levels described above. The following table presents the KEM calculations.

Table 3
 Reading Effectiveness (KEM) Calculation

| Sample Code | Speed (kpm) | Comprehension (%) | KEM (kpm) | Category |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| S2 | 163,6 | 83% | 136 | quite effective |
| S4 | 144,35 | 80% | 115 | quite effective |
| S1 | 129,15 | 83% | 107 | quite effective |
| S5 | 132,64 | 76% | 100 | quite effective |
| S8 | 132,64 | 76% | 100 | quite effective |
| S11 | 130,53 | 72% | 94 | ineffective |
| S10 | 127,81 | 73% | 93 | ineffective |
| S9 | 129,15 | 71% | 91 | ineffective |
| S15 | 127,15 | 72% | 91 | ineffective |
| S26 | 124,56 | 71% | 88 | ineffective |
| S7 | 128,48 | 65% | 83 | ineffective |
| S16 | 122,7 | 68% | 83 | ineffective |
| S17 | 128,84 | 64% | 82 | ineffective |
| S20 | 131,22 | 59% | 77 | ineffective |
| S3 | 136,33 | 55% | 75 | ineffective |
| S22 | 128,48 | 58% | 74 | ineffective |
| S14 | 125,84 | 57% | 72 | ineffective |
| S19 | 126,49 | 54% | 68 | ineffective |
| S21 | 119,7 | 47% | 56 | ineffective |
| S23 | 116,85 | 46% | 54 | ineffective |
| S6 | 68,8 | 75% | 52 | ineffective |
| S24 | 79,4 | 60% | 48 | ineffective |
| S12 | 67 | 54% | 36 | ineffective |
| S18 | 67 | 45% | 30 | ineffective |
| S13 | 28,2 | 49% | 14 | ineffective |
| S25 | 29,8 | 37% | 11 | ineffective |
| Total | 2946,71 | 1650% | 1930 | |
| Mean | 113,335 | 63% | 74,23 | ineffective |

Based on the calculation of Reading Effectiveness Ability (KEM), which combines reading speed and reading comprehension, we obtain a picture of the reading effectiveness of seventh-grade students. The data shows that students' KEM scores varied widely, with the highest score reaching 136 wpm and the lowest only 11 wpm. The average KEM score obtained by students was 74 wpm. When viewed by category, the majority of

students still fall into the "Ineffective" category. Several students remain in the "Ineffective" category, while others have fallen into the "Quite Effective" category. The student's reading effectiveness ability (KPM) categories are shown in the following table.

Table 4
Reading Effectiveness Ability (KEM) Categories

| KEM Score | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| ≥ 300 | very effective | 0 | 0 |
| 200 – 299 | effective | 0 | 0 |
| 100 – 199 | quite effective | 5 | 19,20 |
| ≤ 100 | ineffective | 21 | 80,80 |

Based on the Reading Effectiveness Ability (KEM) category data, the majority of participants fell into the ineffective category, with 21 (80.8%) scoring ≤ 100 . Only 5 (19.2%) participants fell into the moderately effective category, with scores ranging from 100 to 199, and none reached the effective or very effective categories. This finding indicates that participants' reading ability remains low and requires improvement to achieve a higher level of effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

Reading Comprehension Level of Grade VII Students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango

The results of this study indicate that the reading comprehension level of grade VII students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango remains in the low category. This finding is based on the results of a reading comprehension test that measures two main components: reading speed expressed in words per minute (wpm) and comprehension level of the reading content, measured as a percentage. These two components are then combined to obtain a KEM score as an indicator of students' overall reading ability. From an evaluative perspective, the use of KEM provides a more comprehensive picture than measuring a single aspect of reading, as effective reading requires not only speed but also adequate comprehension.

The average reading speed of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango was 113 wpm, indicating that students' reading ability is still far below the effective reading ability standard for junior high school level. According to Rahim (2011), junior high school readers should ideally be able to read at a speed of 250-300 wpm to achieve effective reading. From the perspective of speed reading theory, low reading speed indicates that students are not yet capable of automatic decoding, so students' cognitive attention is focused more on word recognition than on understanding the content. This condition causes the reading process to be slow and inefficient. Low student reading speed cannot be entirely viewed as an individual weakness. Hendrasari (2011) states that reading speed is strongly influenced by the characteristics of the reading material, such as the text's difficulty level, text type, and readability.

In addition to reading speed, the results of the study also showed that the level of comprehension of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango varied significantly. A small number of students were able to achieve a high level of comprehension, while the majority of students were still in the medium to low category. This condition indicates that most students were not yet able to grasp the main idea of the reading, understand the relationship between information, and draw accurate conclusions. This is in line with the opinion of Nurhadi (in Wulandari, 2012) who stated that readers with low abilities tend to only understand explicit information and have difficulty in grasping the implied meaning in the reading text.

Low reading comprehension reflects that students' reading process does not fully involve higher-order thinking activities. Harjasujana & Damaianti, 2003; Razak, 2005) explains that reading comprehension does not occur automatically, but rather through a process of linking the reader's prior knowledge with new information contained in the text. If any of these components is weak, the reading comprehension process will be suboptimal. In the context of this study, limited vocabulary, poor reading habits, and lack of mastery of



reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, and inference are suspected factors hindering student comprehension. This finding aligns with Sunandi et al. (2023), who stated that a limited vocabulary makes it difficult for students to fully comprehend reading.

When reading speed and reading comprehension levels are combined into the KEM score, it is clear that the majority of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango are in the "Ineffective" category. The average KEM score is 74 wpm, indicating that students' reading ability does not meet the criteria for effective reading. Based on these results, the predominance of the "Ineffective" category in the KEM scores indicates that most students are unable to balance speed and comprehension in the reading process. This finding supports Ebel's opinion (Somadayo, 2011), which states that differences in reading ability are influenced by internal factors within the student, family environment, culture, and school environment.

The KEM results also show a small number of students in the "Quite Effective" category. This finding indicates that the potential to achieve better reading skills already exists in some seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango. In other words, the low general reading ability of students does not preclude the possibility of improving reading skills through appropriate learning interventions. This aligns with the view of Lamb and Arnold (in Somadayo, 2011), who assert that reading ability is dynamic and can be developed through a supportive learning environment.

Overall, the reading comprehension level of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango still requires serious attention and ongoing practice. The low reading speed, varying levels of reading comprehension, and the predominance of "Ineffective" scores in the KEM (Ineffectiveness) category indicate that reading instruction in schools has not fully developed students' reading skills optimally.

This study's strength lies in its use of KEM analysis, which integrates reading speed and reading comprehension, providing a more comprehensive picture of the reading abilities of seventh-

grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango. Furthermore, data collection through tests and interviews allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the factors contributing to reading difficulties.

However, this study is limited by its relatively small sample size and its limited scope within a single school, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the analysis's clarity did not include other variables such as text type and students' socioeconomic background. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve a larger sample size and more diverse variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' reading comprehension abilities.

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the level of effective reading comprehension among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango is still relatively low. This is evident from the reading speed measurement, which showed an average of 113 wpm, which is still below the effective reading ability standard for junior high school level. Furthermore, students' reading comprehension levels also showed significant variation, with an average comprehension percentage of 63%. This indicates that most students are unable to comprehend reading material deeply, either in terms of grasping the main idea, understanding implied meaning, or drawing conclusions from the text.

The calculation of Effective Reading Ability, which combines reading speed and reading comprehension, provides a more comprehensive picture of students' reading abilities. The average KEM score of 74 wpm indicates that the majority of students fall into the "Ineffective" category. Most students are unable to optimally balance reading speed and comprehension. However, a small number of students fall into the "Quite Effective" category, indicating potential for improved reading ability with appropriate and sustained learning strategies. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the level of effective reading comprehension of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tilango still requires serious attention in the learning process. The low reading speed, varying levels of reading comprehension, and the pre-

dominance of ineffective KEM categories indicate the need for systematic efforts to improve students' reading skills.

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