A Story of Readers' Characteristics and Text Preferences in Reading Time

Mega Mulianing Maharani*, Abdurrachman Faridi, Dwi Rukmini, Sri Wuli Fitriati

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
*Corresponding Author: megamulianing@students.unnes.ac.id

Abstract. This qualitative study investigated 20 students as readers on a certain university in Semarang who joined reading class at a certain semester. The purpose of the study was to share the readers' characteristics and their text preferences in reading time. The researchers examined the readers' characteristics (socio-economic status and gender) and text preferences (animation, non-animation, printed and digital) used in accompanying their reading time. Female and male students who came from different socio-economic status read differently in their reading time. They had different preferences in choosing text. Female and male students had different preferences in choosing animation and non-animation texts. Printed and digital texts were also classified to be different choice for female and male students. Implications include how to mediate students with the most dominant text preferences in facilitating their reading time. The text selection can accommodate the success of reading activities.

Key words: readers' characteristics, text preferences, reading time

INTRODUCTION

Research on reading is growing in both quantity and quality. In the part of quality, research on reading is divided into reading aloud e.g. Duncan (2018); O'Connor et al. (2013); and Warner et al. (2016); reading comprehension e.g. Cho et al. (2015); Muijselaar et al. (2017); and Young et al. (2019). In the reading comprehension, contributing a certain text or some texts is needed. Such research has been done by Ebe (2012); Hefer (2013); and Park (2018). Building an organized readers' characteristics is crucial for reading comprehension. Through regular updating of the characters, coherence is built into the characters throughout reading (Batanova et al., 2016). The most common approach to modernizing characters is to make inferences from the current corpus of prior knowledge or from other sources in order to establish connections between concepts (Elbro & Buch-Iversen, 2013). Sentence breaks are a common place for readers to make characters adjustments (Kim et al., 2022). The reader's knowledge and abilities also play a role in character development (W. Wei & Cook, 2016). The reader's ability to make inferences from memory improves as their vocabulary grows since they will have a greater grasp of the concepts presented in the text (Nevo & Breznitz, 2014). Reading as a series of interactions among the reader, the text, and the environment. A readers' preconceived notions and biases colored their interpretation of the text.

Some studies have focused on elementary students' motivation and genre preferences. The students' genre preferences were on nonfiction reading which were reported to be at the same level as fiction reading (Ives et al., 2020; Jensen et al., 2016; Potter et al., 2011). The positive effects of reading motivation on academic performance are well-documented (Bozack & Salvaggio, 2013; Mahowald & Loughnane, 2016). However, studies of readers' characteristics and text preferences in reading time are quite scarce. Characteristics of the readers themselves are the determining factor in how well they understand a book. In addition, preferences in text format are context-dependent. Young men and women are likely to have distinct reading tastes and interests. The reader's knowledge and abilities also play a role in character development.

Through this study, the researchers wanted to know the readers' characteristics and text preferences on reading time. Readers' characteristics include skilled and unskilled readers. Dechant (2013) argues that proficient or skilled readers are able to construct reading processes that include both language comprehension and word reading processes. There are various steps involved in each process. There are five phases that readers must master in order to comprehend language: activating word

meanings, understanding sentences, making inferences, comprehension monitoring, and understanding text structure. On the other hand, there are three phases that readers must master when word reading: letter sound knowledge, accurate word decoding, and automaticity in decoding. The goal of the study was to apply those theories to a comparison of skilled and unskilled readers across demographics (such as socioeconomic status and gender) and reading and reading preferences in their reading time. Therefore, the findings of this study may encourage less-adept readers to improve their reading abilities despite the challenges posed by differences in socioeconomic status and gender when deciding on a reading time.

METHODS

The study was conducted at a specific Central Java university. The researchers took one reading class. Twenty students took part in the study. Fifteen girls and five boys made up the group. Their socioeconomic status was varied. The majority of their parents worked as merchants, farmers, or educators. As a qualitative method, semi-structured interviews with twenty students served as the basis for this study's data collection to know their reading preferences. In addition, the result of observation in reading class was the second data collection. The observation was done to know the students' characteristics whether they were skilled or unskilled readers by correlating their socioeconomic backgrounds and gender. In analyzing the data, the researchers used the theory of readers' characteristics. As a result, the data analysis results were used to set the conclusion of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the study was based on the theory of readers' characteristics. The explanation of those characteristics was used as the main data of the study. The researchers figured out the characteristics as stated in figure one.

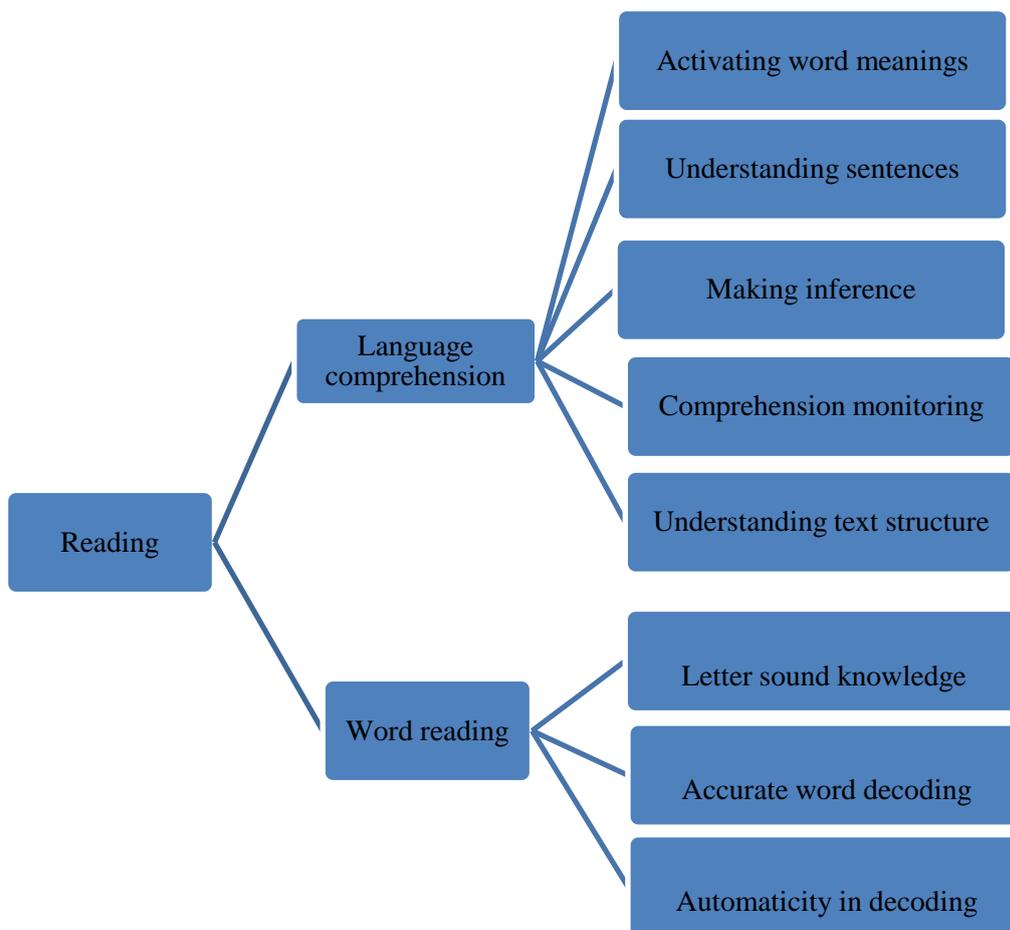The readers' characteristics were classified theoretically as mentioned in the figure1.

Figure 1. Readers' Characteristics Guideline

Findings of reading observation on twenty readers' characteristics in the perspective of socioeconomic and gender.

Table 1. Readers' characteristics

Code	Gender	Socioeconomic Background	Reading Process Language Comprehension	Word Reading
R1	M	Middle	Skilled	Skilled
R2	M	Middle	Skilled	Unskilled
R3	M	High	Unskilled	Skilled
R4	M	Middle	Skilled	Skilled
R5	M	Middle	Skilled	Skilled
R6	F	Middle	Unskilled	Unskilled
R7	F	Middle	Skilled	Skilled
R8	F	Middle	Skilled	Unskilled
R9	F	Middle	Skilled	Skilled
R10	F	Middle	Skilled	Skilled
R11	F	High	Unskilled	Skilled
R12	F	Middle	Skilled	Skilled
R13	F	High	Skilled	Skilled
R14	F	Middle	Skilled	Unskilled
R15	F	Middle	Skilled	Skilled
R16	F	Middle	Unskilled	Unskilled
R17	F	Middle	Skilled	Skilled
R18	F	Middle	Skilled	Skilled
R19	F	Middle	Unskilled	Skilled
R20	F	Middle	Skilled	Unskilled

By considering the readers' characteristics observation finding, the researchers categorized that the most students were skilled both on language comprehension and word reading. Theoretically the high socioeconomic background readers were skilled both on language comprehension and word reading. However, the researchers found that in reality that theory did not work. The finding was in line with the study done by (Wang, 2018). On the other hand, theoretically male readers were unskilled but the researchers found that there were males who were skilled. The finding was in line with the study done by (Smit et al., 2013).

Findings of semi-structured interview on twenty readers about their text preferences whether the texts were animation or non-animation and printed or digital.

Table 2. Readers' text preferences

Code	Gender	Socioeconomic Background	Text Type Animation	Non-animation	Text Type Printed	Digital
R1	M	Middle	√	-		√
R2	M	Middle	√	-		√
R3	M	High	√	-		√
R4	M	Middle	√	-		√
R5	M	Middle	√	-		√
R6	F	Middle	√	-	√	
R7	F	Middle	√	-	√	
R8	F	Middle	√	-		√
R9	F	Middle	√	-		√
R10	F	Middle	√	-		√
R11	F	High	√	-		√
R12	F	Middle	√	-		√
R13	F	High	√	-		√
R14	F	Middle	√	-		√

R15	F	Middle	√	-	√	
R16	F	Middle	√	-		√
R17	F	Middle	√	-	√	
R18	F	Middle				
R19	F	Middle				
R20	F	Middle				

By considering the readers' text preferences, the researchers categorized that the most students liked digital animation texts. The finding was in line with the study done by Eutsler & Trotter (2020) that while none of the readers who read the paper version asked for more books to read, roughly half of the readers who read the digital version did. In different research, Wei & Ma (2017) stated that while girls tended to pay less attention to what they saw in school, by adulthood girls' visual attention had surpassed that of boys; not noticeably different from what male adults paid attention to visually.

CONCLUSION

The spread of digital gadgets had made readers more accustomed to visual text, and this had increased their enjoyment of the effect of digital animation text. Middle-class and affluent male and female readers have stated their preference for digital animation texts over printed animation texts or printed non animated writings. Readerly traits were displayed by male and female from affluent, middle-class, and affluent backgrounds alike. In terms of both language comprehension and vocabulary, they tended to be skilled readers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Batanova, M., Bowers, E. P., Hilliard, L. J., Tirrell, J. M., Stacey, D. C., McClain, A. M., & Lerner, R. M. (2016). Examining Cross-Age Peer Conversations Relevant to Character: Can a Digital Story About Bullying Promote Students' Understanding of Humility? *Research in Human Development*, *13*(2), 111–125. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427609.2016.116 6014

Bozack, A. R., & Salvaggio, A. N. (2013). Relational Effects of Reading Motivation and Academic Achievement Among Adolescent Boys. *Reading Psychology*, *34*(6), 507–522. https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2012.660 302

Cho, K. W., Altarriba, J., & Popiel, M. (2015). Mental juggling: When does multitasking impair reading comprehension? *Journal of General Psychology*, *142*(2), 90–105. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221309.2014.100 3029

Dechant, E. (2013). Understanding and Teaching Reading. In *Understanding and Teaching Reading*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315044538

Duncan, S. (2018). Lend Me Your Ears: Mass Observing Contemporary Adult Reading Aloud Practices. *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education*, *25*(4), 410–425. https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2018.150 4620

Ebe, A. E. (2012). Supporting the Reading Development of Middle School English Language Learners Through Culturally Relevant Texts. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, *28*(2), 179–198. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2012.651 078

Elbro, C., & Buch-Iversen, I. (2013). Activation of Background Knowledge for Inference Making: Effects on Reading Comprehension. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, *17*(6), 435–452. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2013.774 005

Eutsler, L., & Trotter, J. (2020). Print or iPad? Young Children's Text Type Shared Reading Preference and Behaviors in Comparison to Parent Predictions and At-home Practices. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, *59*(4), 324–345. https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2020.177 7229

Hefer, E. (2013). Reading second language subtitles: A case study of Afrikaans viewers reading in Afrikaans and English.

Perspectives: Studies in Translatology, *21*(1), 22–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2012.722 652

Ives, S. T., Parsons, S. A., Parsons, A. W., Robertson, D. A., Daoud, N., Young, C., & Polk, L. (2020). Elementary Students' Motivation to Read and Genre Preferences. *Reading Psychology*, *0*(0), 660–679. https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2020.178 3143

Jensen, J. D., Christy, K., Krakow, M., John, K., & Martins, N. (2016). Narrative transportability, leisure reading, and genre preference in children 9–13 years old. *Journal of Educational Research*, *109*(6), 666–674. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2015.103 4351

Kim, M., Crossley, S. A., & Kim, B. K. (2022). Second language reading and writing in relation to first language, vocabulary knowledge, and learning backgrounds. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *25*(6), 1992–2005. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2020.183 8434

Mahowald, M., & Loughnane, M. (2016). Reading Development and Achievement of 4th-Grade Hmong Students. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *30*(1), 57–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2015.110 7155

Muijselaar, M. M. L., Swart, N. M., Steenbeek-Planting, E. G., Droop, M., Verhoeven, L., & de Jong, P. F. (2017). Developmental Relations Between Reading Comprehension and Reading Strategies. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, *21*(3), 194–209. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2017.127 8763

Nevo, E., & Breznitz, Z. (2014). Effects of working memory and reading acceleration training on improving working memory abilities and reading skills among third graders. *Child Neuropsychology*, *20*(6), 752–765. https://doi.org/10.1080/09297049.2013.863 272

O'Connor, R. E., Gutierrez, G., Teague, K., Checca, C., Kim, J. S., & Ho, T. H. (2013). Variations in Practice Reading Aloud: Ten Versus Twenty Minutes. *Scientific Studies*

of Reading, *17*(2), 134–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2011.624 566

Park, H. R. (2018). Influences of reading online texts in Korean English language learners' cultural identities. *Journal of Educational Research*, *111*(4), 385–397. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2017.128 4038

Potter, R. F., Lee, S., & Rubenking, B. E. (2011). Correlating a Motivation-Activation Measure with media preference. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *55*(3), 400–418. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2011.597 468

Smit, E. G., Neijens, P. C., & Heath, R. (2013). The differential effects of position, ad and reader characteristics on readers' processing of newspaper ads. *International Journal of Advertising*, *32*(1), 65–84. https://doi.org/10.2501/IJA-32-1-065-084

Wang, F. Y. (2018). An expert EFL reading teacher's readers club: reader identity and teacher professional development. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *41*(4), 517–528. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.141 6084

Warner, L., Crolla, C., Goodwyn, A., Hyder, E., & Richards, B. (2016). Reading aloud in high schools: students and teachers across the curriculum. *Educational Review*, *68*(2), 222–238. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2015.106 7881

Wei, C. C., & Ma, M. Y. (2017). Influences of Visual Attention and Reading Time on Children and Adults. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, *33*(2), 97–108. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2015.109 2100

Wei, W., & Cook, A. E. (2016). Semantic Size and Contextual Congruency Effects During Reading: Evidence From Eye Movements. *Discourse Processes*, *53*(5–6), 415–429. https://doi.org/10.1080/0163853X.2016.117 5899

Young, C., Durham, P., Miller, M., Rasinski, T. V., & Lane, F. (2019). Improving reading comprehension with readers theater. *Journal of Educational Research*, *112*(5), 615–626. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2019.164 9240