

Indonesian Language Proficiency Based on Gender of Junior High School Students in Lampung Province

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Abstract: Indonesian language proficiency among junior high school students is an essential component of academic development and effective communication; however, differences based on gender during early adolescence remain underexplored. This study aims to describe Indonesian language proficiency levels of junior high school students in Lampung Province based on gender using data from the Indonesian Language Proficiency Test (UKBI). A quantitative descriptive research design was employed, utilizing secondary data from 8,204 UKBI participants, consisting of 3,192 male students (38.91%) and 5,012 female students (61.09%). Language proficiency was measured through three UKBI sections: listening, responding to grammatical rules, and reading comprehension, with the final score obtained from the average of these sections. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including mean scores and standard deviation, to examine proficiency levels and score distributions by gender. The findings reveal that the overall Indonesian language proficiency of junior high school students in Lampung Province is at a moderate level. Female students consistently achieved higher average scores than male students across all sections. Reading comprehension emerged as the strongest skill area, while listening showed the lowest performance for both genders. The relatively low standard deviation values indicate that students' scores tend to cluster around the mean. In conclusion, Indonesian language proficiency differs by gender, with female students demonstrating superior performance in listening, grammatical sensitivity, and reading comprehension. These results highlight the need for gender-responsive instructional strategies, particularly to strengthen listening and grammatical competencies among male students.

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Introduction

Indonesian language proficiency in the community is an interesting issue to study for several important reasons, both in terms of social, educational, and technological developments. One of the things that affects a country's linguistic conditions is the widespread globalization that negates national and cultural boundaries. This condition has a great influence on the use of foreign languages, especially English. This raises concerns about the shift in national language identity. The widespread use of foreign languages in various

fields and in society, especially students, is one example that can cause language shift. Therefore, students' inability to speak Indonesian well can gradually erode their proficiency in the use of language.

A person's language proficiency can be seen from their ability to communicate. Someone with good language skills will have no difficulty in communicating. Language ability refers to the ability related to the use of language in real daily communication (Djiwandono, 1996). Language proficiency has two elements, namely logical and linguistic elements, in contrast to thinking skills which only have one element, namely logic. Logical elements consist of content, material, material, and organization, while linguistic elements consist of diction, word formation, sentence formation, phonology (language sounds) for speaking, and spelling for writing. Everyone has the ability to think well, but not everyone has the ability to speak well. What is thought will not necessarily be said and done. However, what has been said is what is thought and done. Language and speaking can define a person's identity pattern, character pattern, and thinking pattern.

There are four aspects to language proficiency, namely listening, reading, writing and speaking. Listening and reading are receptive aspects, while speaking and writing are productive aspects. All four skills are related to the thought process that is the basis of language. The language a person expresses reflects their thoughts. The more proficient a person is in language, the clearer and more directed his thoughts. Proficiency can only be mastered and acquired through practice and training. To measure a person's language proficiency, a linguistic measurement tool is needed, namely in the form of a language test. The Indonesian language proficiency test (UKBI) acts as a test tool to measure language proficiency. UKBI is an instrument for testing Indonesian language proficiency developed by the Language Development and Guidance Agency which has been tested for validity and reliability. Based on the division of language tests according to Djiwandono (1996), UKBI is a language proficiency test that can show information about ability at a certain stage. The UKBI results show that the overall UKBI score has a high correlation, both with educational and occupational backgrounds, as well as with the reality of a person's ability to use Indonesian as a means of communication.

Research involving the UKBI measurement tool to describe language skills has been conducted by Atikah Solihah (2007). The study aimed to describe the speaking competence of high school and vocational school students in Jakarta. As a result, there was a difference in the speaking competence scores of high school and vocational school students. The average speaking competence of high school students is better than the average speaking competence of vocational students.

In addition, Winiasih (2018) describes the Indonesian language skills of students in public and private universities in East Java. The results showed that based on the UKBI score, the average value of section I, II, III, and the overall UKBI score of state university students was higher than private universities. Based on the UKBI predicate, the average value of Indonesian language students in public and private universities is in the same predicate, namely superior. Based on some of these studies, it can be seen that research measuring Indonesian language proficiency using the UKBI instrument has been conducted on high school, vocational and university students. Research measuring Indonesian language proficiency based on gender using the UKBI instrument has not been conducted. Therefore, this research needs to be done because language acquisition based on gender is an important part of linguistic studies, especially sociolinguistics.

Sociolinguistics not only talks about the relationships that exist in society based on social and language differences and language forms, but also language and gender. Gender differences are an unavoidable reality and everyone perceives them or gives different perceptions. The distinguishing aspect of language that is not always present in language, namely gender. In sociolinguistic studies, it turns out that there are differences between men and women in language. These differences can be in the form of language structure, vocabulary, and the way certain languages are used (Wibowo, 2012).

Research on language differences based on gender has been conducted by Murtianis, et al. (2017). In this study, she analyzed the language use of teenagers in terms of gender differences. Specifically, this study describes the use of diction, sentence effectiveness in expressing language, and the use of slang among vocational high school adolescents in terms of gender differences. In this study, it is concluded that there is a significant difference between the language use of men and women. Men in using language tend to use language that is still mixed with regional languages. In expressing something, men tend not to use effective language. However, in contrast to men, women use language much more organized, especially in expressing ideas. The sentences they use are also effective.

The age of children at the junior high school level has a vulnerability in language absorption and daily language use. According to some educational observers, the age of children at the junior high school level is an age group that is in a period of self-discovery because it is heading towards the formation of maturity. In the process of language absorption and daily language use, gender should be expected to play a role in the Indonesian language proficiency of junior high school students.

It is necessary to study how Indonesian language proficiency based on gender among junior high school students in Lampung Province. This study aims to see how the level of language proficiency based on gender for junior high school students. This research can be used to map language proficiency based on gender. In addition, the results of this study are expected to be an input for educators in determining appropriate learning strategies for students.

Gender and language are interesting factors to study. Gender is the roles and responsibilities assigned to men and women. This role is determined by society and culture (social construction) (Dalimoenthe, 2021). This definition is as said by Jalil (2018) gender is interpreted as a difference that is socio-cultural and is a value that refers to social relations that provide differences in roles between men and women due to biological differences that become nature, and by society and become a culture in social life.

Recent research and biological perspectives imply that it is likely that sex differences are also related to biological aspects of the brain. It is known that the human brain has two hemispheres, the left and right hemispheres. Both hemispheres have different intelligence functions. The left hemisphere functions to respond to verbal abilities, such as the ability to memorize, remember, and understand; the right hemisphere functions to respond to visual-spatial abilities. According to lateralization theory (hemisphere theory) in women the left hemisphere network develops specifically, while in men the right hemisphere develops specifically (Dagun, 1992).

From the above explanation, it can be seen that the brain and behavior (language) are inseparable. The brain as the nerve center controls all behavior. Specifically regarding language behavior, it is explained that the left hemisphere of the brain is more dominant than the right brain. Gender differences cause differences in language abilities, for example

differences in abilities in aspects of phonology, vocabulary and morphology, and sentence structure. The difference also concerns the topic of conversation (Tamba, 2019).

A person who masters a language is not only at a skilled level, but also needs to be upgraded to a language proficient level. The word proficient (KBBI, 2018) means 'highly trained, capable, clever and skillful', while proficiency means 'proficiency (in doing something), ability, cleverness'. A person is said to have the ability if they have gone through and completed a process. There are four aspects to the language and language process. These four aspects are listening, reading, writing and speaking. These four aspects not only support in the scope of language but also in the scope of life and are closely interconnected.

To analyze the problems studied, theories related to language skills are used, namely listening, reading, and responding to rules. According to Tarigan (2008), listening is a process of listening to oral symbols with full attention, understanding, appreciation, and interpretation to obtain information, capture content or messages, and understand the meaning of communication that has been conveyed by the speaker through speech or spoken language. According to Ardi (2012), listening events always begin with listening to the sound of language, either directly or through recordings, radio, or television.

As a component of language, grammar is a part related to phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and discourse. According to Djwandono (1996), in accordance with the definition and scope of grammar, the targets of grammar tests broadly include understanding and using the formation of words, phrases, and sentences. In this study, grammar ability is realized in the ability to respond to rules. In UKBI, the ability to respond to rules is the ability to measure the test takers' sensitivity in responding to the rules of formal Indonesian. These rules include spelling, word form and choice, and sentence structure.

Finochiaro and Bonomo (in Tarigan, 2008) state that reading is picking and understanding the meaning or meaning contained in written materials. The main purpose of reading is to find and obtain information, cover the content and understand the meaning of reading. Everyone's level of understanding in reading texts is different. Alderson (in Winiasih, 2018), reading comprehension activities are distinguished from literal understanding of the text, understanding meanings that are not explicitly stated in the text, and understanding the implications or impact of the text that has been read. In the context of UKBI, the aspect used is the comprehension aspect, namely understanding the meaning and content contained in the reading with the aim of answering the questions given based on the content of the reading in question.

Research Method

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design aimed at systematically describing Indonesian language proficiency levels of junior high school students based on gender. The descriptive approach was chosen to provide an objective overview of language proficiency patterns without manipulating variables or testing causal relationships. The data used in this study were secondary data derived from the Indonesian Language Proficiency Test (UKBI) administered to junior high school students in Lampung Province. The total number of participants was 8,204 students, comprising 3,192 male students (38.91%) and 5,012 female students (61.09%), drawn from both urban and rural districts. The large sample size enhances the representativeness and generalizability of the findings.

Language proficiency was measured using the UKBI, a standardized and nationally validated language proficiency test developed by the Language Development and Guidance Agency of Indonesia. In this study, three UKBI sections were analyzed: 1) Section I (Listening): measuring the ability to comprehend spoken Indonesian. 2) Section II (Responding to Rules): assessing grammatical sensitivity related to spelling, word choice, and sentence structure. 3) Section III (Reading): evaluating reading comprehension and interpretation skills.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical techniques, including measures of central tendency (mean) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation). Mean scores were used to compare Indonesian language proficiency across genders and across test sections, while standard deviation values were used to examine score variability and distribution patterns. This analytical approach enabled a clear comparison of proficiency levels between male and female students.

Result and Discussion

The data of this research is the UKBI result data of junior high school students in Lampung Province. The test participants consisted of male and female participants. The number of participants reached 8,204 people. Male participants totaled 3,192 people or 38.91 percent and female participants totaled 5,012 people or 61.09 percent.

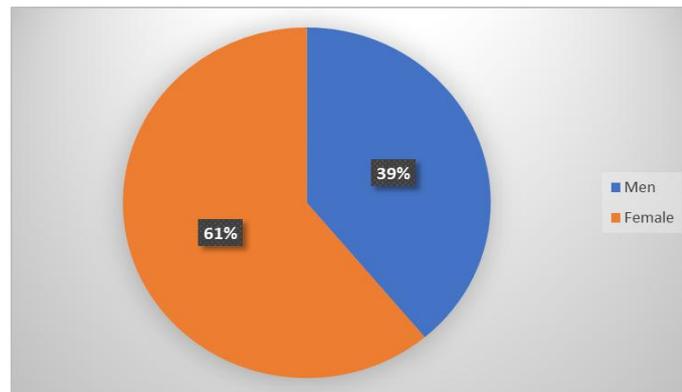


Figure 1. UKBI Participants of Secondary School Students in Lampung by Gender

Figure 2 below explains the UKBI participants of junior secondary school students in Lampung by district and city. Participants from the city (Metro and Bandarlampung) reached 2,697 people or 32.87 percent while those from the district reached 5,507 people or 67.13 percent.

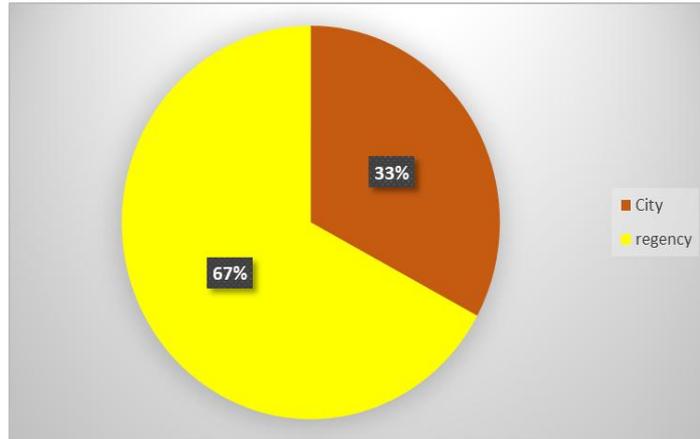


Figure 2. UKBI Participants of Secondary School Students in Lampung by District and City

The Indonesian Language Proficiency Test (UKBI) consists of 5 sections. The UKBI participants of junior high school students only conducted three sections, namely Section I (listening), Section II (responding to rules), and Section III (reading). The scores of the three sections are averaged to get the UKBI score. The average score for each section and the average UKBI final score are explained as follows

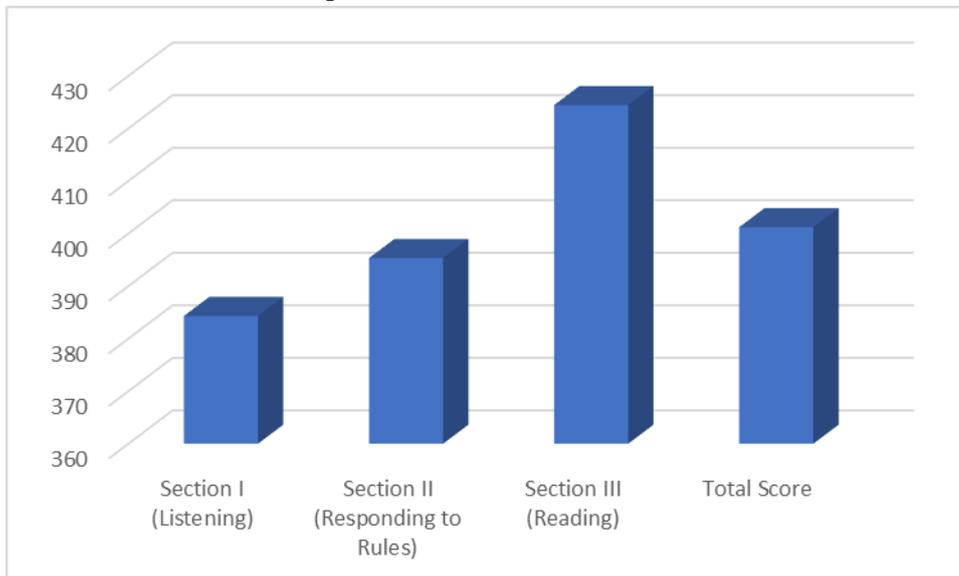


Figure 3. Average Score of Each Section and Average Total Score of UKBI Results of All Junior High School Students in Lampung

In Figure 3 above, it can be seen that the average score of Section I (listening) is the lowest and Section III (reading) is the highest (maximum scale). 800). The average score of Section I (listening) reached 384.32, the average score of Section II (responding to rules) reached 395.34, and the average score of Section III (reading) reached 424.46. In total, the average UKBI score reached 401.22 or was in the semana predicate. Standard deviation is a value used in determining the distribution of data in a sample and seeing how close the data is to the average value. Standard deviation or standard deviation is the best measure of spread, because it describes the magnitude of the spread of each observation unit (Ghozali, 2016).

Standard deviation is the square root value of a variance used to assess the average or expected. Standard deviation or standard deviation of data that has been arranged in a frequency table. The standard deviation value is a value used in determining the distribution of data in a sample and seeing how close the data is to the mean value (Sekaran & Bougie in Ghozali, 2016).

Statistically speaking, the larger the sample size, the better the results. With a large sample, the mean and standard deviation obtained have a high probability of resembling the population mean and standard deviation. This is because the sample size is related to statistical hypothesis testing. Although the larger the sample the better, a small sample when randomly selected can also accurately reflect the population (Hajar, 1999).

In Figure 4, the standard deviation values of each section and the total score are below the mean. This shows that the data is less variable and it indicates that the distribution tends to cluster around the mean.

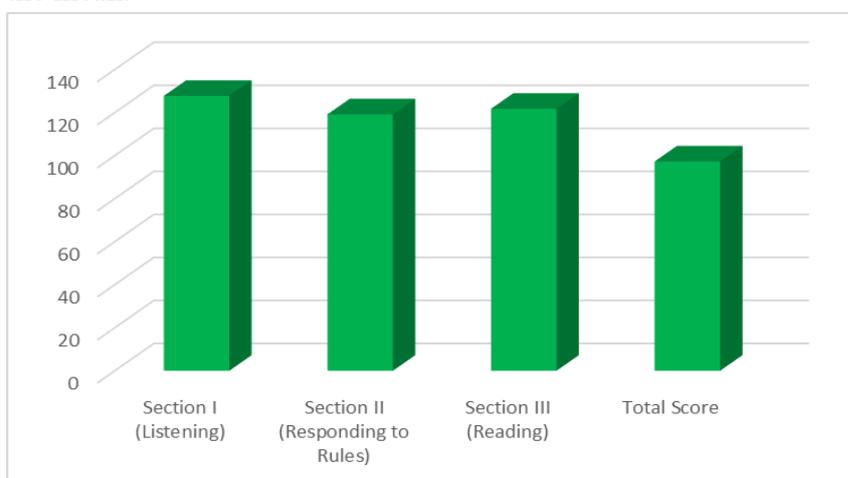


Figure 4. The standard deviation values

The average language proficiency scores of each section and total score by gender can be seen in table 1 below.

Table 1. Average Score of Each Section and UKBI Score by Gender

No.	Average Value	L	P
1.	Section I (Listening)	372.69	391.74
2.	Section II (Responding to Rules)	384.19	402.45
3.	Section III (Reading)	410.43	433.40
4.	Score	388.90	409.08

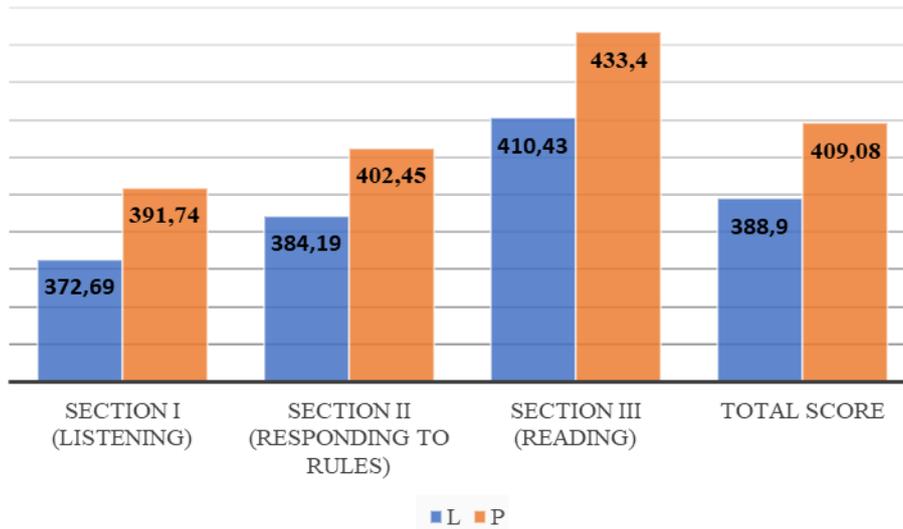


Figure 5. Average UKBI Score of Junior High School Students in Lampung by Gender

From the average score, we can see that the Indonesian language proficiency of female junior high school students is superior to that of male junior high school students. The UKBI score of female junior high school students reached 409.08 while the UKBI score of male junior high school students reached 388.90.

In Section I (listening), the average score of female junior high school students reached 391.74, which was superior to the average score of male junior high school students who reached 372.69. In Section II (responding to rules), the average score of female junior high school students reached 402.45 which was also superior to the average score of male junior high school students who reached 384.19. In Section III (reading), the mean score of female junior high school students reached 433.40, which was also superior to the mean score of male junior high school students who reached 410.90.

Figure 6

Standard Deviation of UKBI Results of Junior High School Students in Lampung by Gender

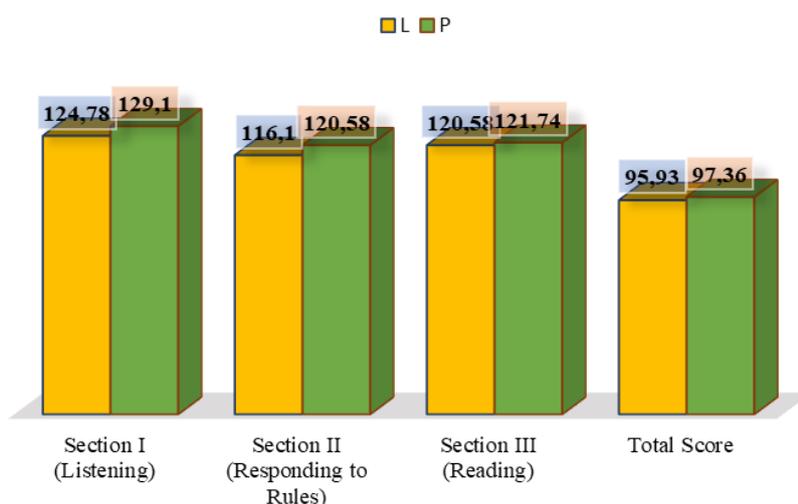


Figure 6 illustrates the standard deviation of each section and the UKBI final score by gender.

The standard deviation of each section and the total score between male and female participants did not differ significantly. Overall, all the values both in each section and in the final UKBI score were below the mean. This indicates that the data is less varied and it shows that the distribution tends to cluster at the mean value for both male and female participants.

Indonesian language proficiency is a very important aspect of students' education and personal development. It encompasses various elements, including reading, writing, speaking and listening. Each of these aspects plays a crucial role in shaping effective communication skills. In this context, we will take a closer look at the elements that make up language proficiency, as well as the factors that influence the development of these skills among students.

First of all, reading is a basic skill that not only serves to comprehend information, but also as a bridge to access wider knowledge. The reading process involves using the right vocabulary, understanding grammar, as well as the ability to structure and analyze information from the text being read. For example, when students read a novel, they not only interact with the storyline, but also with the characters, themes, and language style used by the author. This requires them to understand the context and nuances of the language, which in turn enriches their vocabulary and analytical skills.

Furthermore, writing is a skill that allows students to express their ideas and thoughts in writing. In writing, students are required to pay attention to spelling, grammar, and proper word choice. For example, in essay writing, students should be able to organize arguments logically and coherently, and support them with relevant evidence. This process not only trains language skills, but also critical and creative thinking abilities. A study by Graham and Perin (2007) showed that students who engaged in regular writing activities showed significant improvement in their writing ability.

Speaking and listening are also integral parts of language proficiency. Speaking skills involve the ability to convey information clearly and effectively, while listening requires the ability to understand and analyze information conveyed by others. In a learning context, verbal interactions between students and teachers, or between students, are crucial to building

these skills. For example, in group discussions, students not only learn to speak, but also to listen to others' opinions, provide responses, and argue in a constructive way. This is in line with Bandura's (1986) social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the development of communication skills.

The use of appropriate vocabulary, correct grammar, and the ability to compose coherent discourse are also very important in the development of language proficiency. A wide vocabulary allows students to express their ideas more variedly and precisely. In this regard, it is important for teachers to provide practice and learning that supports vocabulary acquisition. For example, the use of interactive teaching techniques, such as word games or group discussions, can help students to better understand and use vocabulary in appropriate contexts.

In addition, analyzing the differences in language skill development between female and male students is also an interesting focus. According to research by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974), girls tend to develop verbal skills faster than boys. This could be due to the way parents and social environments more often encourage girls to engage in language-related activities, such as reading and discussion. For example, girls may be read stories by their parents more often or engaged in activities that involve verbal communication, thus improving their language skills.

Furthermore, research by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) shows that intrinsic motivation towards reading is higher in female students. This motivation contributes to their language proficiency, as motivated students tend to be more active in seeking and understanding reading materials. In addition, the higher proportion of female participants in the Indonesian Language Proficiency Test (UKBI) also shows that they are more prepared to face challenges in mastering Indonesian. This suggests that motivational factors, social support and learning opportunities provided to female students play an important role in the development of their language skills.

In conclusion, Indonesian language proficiency is a combination of various interrelated skills, including reading, writing, speaking and listening. Each aspect plays an important role in shaping effective communication skills. Factors such as social support, motivation and gender differences also influence the development of students' language skills. Therefore, it is important for educators to create a learning environment that supports all aspects of language proficiency, so that students can develop optimally in their language skills. By understanding and applying relevant theories, we can help students reach their full potential in Indonesian language.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Indonesian language proficiency of junior high school students in Lampung Province is generally at a moderate level. Analysis of the UKBI results shows consistent differences in language proficiency based on gender, with female students outperforming male students across all assessed aspects, including listening, responding to grammatical rules, and reading comprehension. Among the three sections, reading comprehension demonstrates the highest level of achievement, while listening remains the weakest skill for both genders. The relatively low standard deviation values indicate that students' proficiency levels are fairly homogeneous and clustered around the mean. These findings suggest that gender plays a role in Indonesian language proficiency during early adolescence and highlight the importance of implementing targeted and gender-

responsive instructional strategies, particularly to improve listening and grammatical competencies among male junior high school students.

Recommendation

Recommendation describe things that will be done related to the next idea of the research. Barriers or problems that can influence the results of the research are also presented in this section.

Acknowledgment (12pt, Times New Roman)

This section can be written in case there are certain parties need to be acknowledged, such as research sponsors. The acknowledgment must be written in brief and clear. In addition, avoid hyperbole acknowledgment.

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