

Gender And Students' Language Achievement: Male Vs Female

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Abstract

Investigating the relationship between gender and students' language achievement in junior high level is the purpose of this research. Ex-post facto (quantitative research) was used as the research design of this study. The participants of this study were 48 students (N=25 male and N=23 female) and an English teachers at one of the junior high schools in East Java, Indonesia. The researcher used two instruments in this study: tests and questionnaires. The test was delivered to the students in the last meeting of the second semester (final exam) whereas the questionnaires were given to the English teacher which consisted of two open and six closed questions. Quantitative analysis using statistical measurements such as descriptive statistics, Independent T-test, and Pearson correlation were conducted in this study. The result of the findings indicated that there is no correlation between students' achievement and gender was reported in this study.

Keywords: *Language achievement, Male, Female, Gender.*

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Introduction

Gender is one of the crucial parts of an individual's life in the world that determines the ways of running experience. It is key to people's descriptions and labels to make the differences in a social community. It influences many disciplines such as sociology, psychology, literary theory, performance theory, and psychoanalysis (Healey et al., 2018). Brown (Brown, 2007) reports, personality traits and academic achievement have a positive association. Skehan (Skehan, 1991), Horwitz & Young (Horwitz & Young, 1991) and Brown (2007) admit that individual differences affect language teaching and learning.

The issues about gender, especially in language teaching, have developed. Many researchers were interested in investigating about gender and language (Chan, 2013) (Ellis & Ellis, 1994) (Lai, 2007) (McKenzie et al., 2016) (Sung & Padilla, 1998). Cheng (Cheng, 2002) examined the Taiwanese students' writing anxiety. He notified female learners were more worried than male learners, especially for writing achievement. Pappamihel (Pappamihel, 2002) agrees that female learners have more worries about language achievement than male learners. Polat & Mahalingappa (Polat & Mahalingappa, 2010) explored the gender of Kurdish ethnic students' background in language acquisition of the dominant culture. The participants are 121 learners at the secondary level. Their result corroborated those female students got much higher accent ratings than males. Another study, Kurnia (Kurnia, 2019), investigated students' language learning strategies different issues in the English language in Indonesia secondary schools. Forty-eight students of secondary schools in West Java Indonesia participated in his study. He found those female students prefer to implement a metacognitive strategy, and male students applied cognitive learning strategy. Namaziandost & Çakmak (Namaziandost & Çakmak, 2020) involved 58 Iranian English learners with intermediate levels to analyze the difference of the flipped method on students' self-efficacy and gender. They revealed that female learners have better improvement of self-efficacy than male students. A correlation study conducted by Ilaahiyah, Andina, Tiven & Cahyono (Ilaahiyah et al., 2019) engaged 50 learners of the university level in Malang. They admitted that there was a different correlation between males and females on their reading motivation and writing achievement.

However, Alkhrisheh, Aziez & Alkhrisheh (Alkhrisheh et al., 2019) explored the gender differences in English and Arabic writing. The participants were 40 of the Mutah University of Jordan. The result clarified that no difference between female and male English essays in the frequency of modifiers, nouns, numerals, and prepositions. Kumari & Gartia (Kumari & Gartia, 2012) conducted a study to examine the relationship between stress and academic achievement. One hundred twenty senior high school students of North-western Delhi were involved in their research. They reported that students' gender did not mediate the students' stress and academic achievement. That was in line with Oda & Abdul-Kadhim (Oda & Abdul-Kadhim, 2017) research. They stated that no significant difference between male and female learners on their reading comprehension (inferential, appreciative, and literal).

Based on the previous studies above indicates that there is a contradictory finding of them. It means that there is an inconsistency of the previous studies findings.

Therefore, the researcher wants to explore the gender and English achievement relationship in Gresik, East Java Indonesia. The research questions of this study are: 1) Do female learners get higher English achievement than the male? 2) Is there any significant difference in English achievement between female and male students? 3) Is there any correlation between gender and students' English achievement?

In this study, there are two variables: students' gender and students' English achievement. In the first research question, the researcher wants to examine English achievement based on the students' gender. In the second and third research questions, the researcher investigated the differences and the correlation between gender and English achievement. In the previous studies: Polat & Mahalingapa (Polat & Mahalingappa, 2010), Pappamihiel (Pappamihiel, 2002), Kurnia (Kurnia, 2019) indicated that students' gender influenced language achievement. Based on those previous studies and the research questions the researcher constructed three hypotheses below:

Hypothesis 1

H1: Female students get higher language achievement than males.

H0: Female students do not get better language achievement than male students.

Hypothesis 2

H1: There is a difference in English achievement between female and male students.

H0: There is no difference in English achievement between female and male students.

Hypothesis 3

H1: There is a correlation between students' gender and language achievement.

H0: There is no correlation between students' gender and language achievement.

Method

The method section tells about how your conducted the study. The method must be presented in past tense. The method may cover research design, participants (population/sample), instruments/data collection and data analysis. The researcher in this study used quantitative ex-post-facto. It meant that the researcher did not give any treatment or action. The participants of this study were 48 of EFL learners (N=25 male and N= 23 female) in grade seven and an English teacher of an Islamic junior high school in East Java, Indonesia. The school has classified the classroom based on gender (male and female class). The average age of the participants is 12-14 years old. The researcher used two instruments in this study: post-test and questionnaires. The test was done in the last meeting of the second semesters by the English teacher (final exam of English lesson). The questionnaires were carried out to the English teacher. It consisted of eight questions; six closed-ended questions and 2 open-ended questions. The questionnaires illustrated in table 1.

Table 1. The Questionnaires for English teacher

No	Questions	Male	Female	Both
1	In what class do you enjoy in teaching English?			
2	In what class do you think more comfortable to teach English?			

- 3 Which students do get a better English score?
- 4 Which students do have a better attitude in English?
- 5 Which students do have higher motivation in joining the English class?
- 6 Which students are more active and dominate English discussion in the teaching-learning process?
- 7 What are the strengths and weaknesses of male students?
- 8 What are the strengths and weaknesses of female students?

In analyzing the data, the researcher used statistical measurement: descriptive statistics, Independent T-test, and Pearson correlation. The researcher uses SPSS 24 to get the students' means score of English achievement based on gender and analyzing the students' differences. The researcher compared the result of students' tests and questionnaires. After that, the researcher discussed the result of students' tests and questionnaires and concludes.

Results

The researcher used the students' scores of the test from both classes (male and female) to answer the first research question. The students' ratings of English achievement were presented in figure 1.

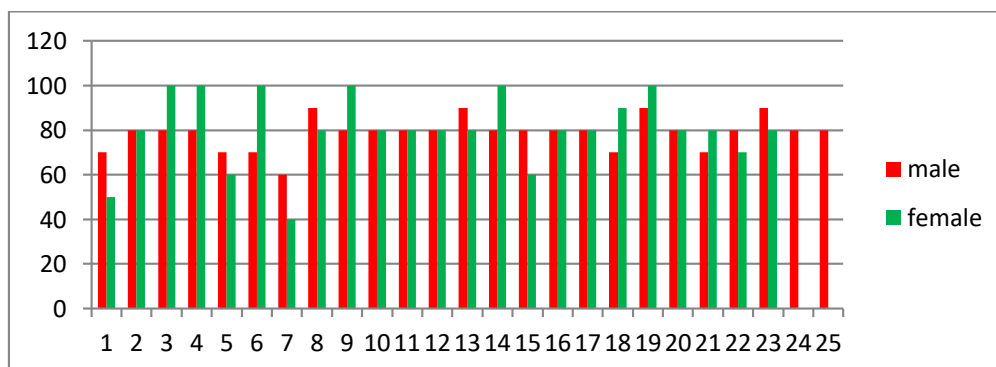


Figure 1. The Students' Scores of English Achievements

The red lines showed the males' English scores (25 students), and the green lines described the females' English scores (23 students). The lowest & the highest females' English scores were 40 100 whereas for the males' English scores were 60 and 90. To know the differences in students' mean scores of tests, the researcher used descriptive statistics (table2).

Table 2. The Result of Students' Mean Score

	N.	Min.	Max.	Mean.	Std. Deviation.
Female	23	40,00	100,00	80,4348	16,37022

Male	25	60,00	90,00	78,8000	7,25718
Valid N (listwise)	23				

Based on table 2, the mean score of females was 80.4, and the male was 78.8. The result above showed that the females' English scores were higher than the males. It clarified; the first hypothesis was not supported. Although female students had a higher rating, the gap between males' and females' mean scores was low (1.63).

Next, the researcher analyzed the students' scores by using an independent t-test to know the significance of students' English scores. It was done by the researcher to respond to the second research question. The result of the independent t-test illustrated in table 3.

Table 3. The Independent T-Test Result

	Sig. (2-tailed)	The Difference of Mean	Std. Error Difference
Score of The Test	0,652	-1,63478	3, 60457

Table 3 described the sig. (2-tailed) the score showed that it was higher than 0.005 (0.652). It meant that female and male English achievement scores were no different. This result indicated that the second hypothesis of this research was unsupported.

As a supporting data, the researcher provided the questionnaires result that distributed to the English teacher. The questionnaire result was provided in table 4.

Table 4. The Result of Questionnaires

No	Questions	Male	Female	Both
1	In what class do you enjoy in teaching English?			√
2	In what class do you think more comfortable to teach English?		√	
3	Which students do get a better English score?		√	
4	Which students do have a better attitude in English?		√	
5	Which students do have higher motivation in joining the English class?		√	
6	Which students are more active and dominate English discussion in the teaching-learning process?		√	
No	Questions	Answer		
7	What are the strengths and weaknesses of male students?	The strengths: Female students have high motivation, active in discussion, polite, are diligent and be responsible for their tasks.		

		The weaknesses: female students are talking more and selfish.
8	What are the strengths and weaknesses of female students?	The strengths: Male students are flexible, confident, creative and not much talk during the teaching-learning process. The weaknesses: male students have low motivation, not active in discussion and not responsible for their tasks.

The questionnaires result in table 4 described that the English teacher was easier in teaching English in female class than male class. Besides, it explained that female students had higher motivation, better English scores, and attitudes than male students.

The next step that the researcher did was analyzing the correlation between gender and language achievement to reply to the third research question. To answer it the researcher applied Pearson correlation in analyzing the data. The report of it described in table 5.

Table 5. The Result of the Correlation between Gender and Language Achievement

	Gender	Test Score
Pearson Correlation.	1	0,67
Sig. (2-Tailed).		0,652
Total of The Students	48	48

Table 5 explained the result of the correlation between gender and language achievement. It exhibited that the score of sig (2-tailed) was 0.652. This finding indicated that no meaningful correlation between students' gender and students' English achievement. This result indicated that the third hypothesis was not supported.

Discussion

The first finding pointed out that female language scores were higher than males. The means scores of females were better than males. Zoghi et al. (Zoghi et al., 2013) said that "Most recently, evidence has shown that while both boys and girls have improved their performances, girls achieved higher marks than boys in EFL learning." When the students' mean scores were associated with the teacher's response from the questionnaires, the researcher found that students' attitudes and motivation influenced the difference between student's scores. It was following Graddol and Swann (Graddol & Swann, 1989), the distinction between male and female learners in English learning was influenced by some factors from outside the gender which interacted with it. According to Lennartsson (Lennartsson, 2008) emphasized positive students' attitude and motivation affected students' learning achievement in language

learning. Kirkpatrick (2007) pointed out that students' attitudes influenced students' motivation and students' performance in English language education. The result of the questionnaires also confirmed that female students have a better attitude and motivation. It was in concert with some studies which reported that female had the more substantial interest and positive attitudes in learning the language (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000)· (Heining–Boynton & Haitema, 2007)· (Mills et al., 2007)· (Saidi & Al-Mahrooqi, 2012)· (Sunderland, 2000)· (Wright, 1999).

The second finding detected that the score of p was higher than 0.005 (0.652). The count of $p > 0.005$ confirmed that there was no distinction between females' and males' English achievement. It was suitable for the gap between female and male students' scores (1,63), which is very low so that it deduced that there was no significant distinction between them in language achievement. It was in concert with Fakeye (Fakeye, 2010) found that students' gender did not affect students' progress significantly. Elkhafifi (Elkhafaifi, 2005) reported that there is no discrepancy between female and male learners, especially in listening.

The third finding confirmed that the score of sig (2-tailed) more significant than 0.005 (0.652). It indicated that students' gender and students' language achievement did not correlate. This invention was in line with Fakeye (Fakeye, 2010) finding, no different English achievement between male and female learners. However, it was in contrast with the previous study, which reported that gender had significantly influenced students' language achievement (Carr & Pauwels, 2005)· (Woolfolk, 2014)· (Glenberg et al., 2009).

Conclusion

The current study was inspired by the contradiction of the previous studies which discussed the language learning based on the gender. This study aims were to explore the relationship between students' gender and their language achievement in the junior high level. Ex-post-facto design and quantitative analysis were used in this study which involved 48 students and an English teacher.

Based on the findings, the researcher summed up that female students had better language achievement, motivation, and attitude. Although language scores of female students were higher than males, the distance of their score was small. It indicated that students' gender and students' language achievement did not correlate. The researcher also found that students' language achievement was influenced by some factors such as the students' motivation, attitude, and teacher's comfort in teaching in the classroom.

This study might be helpful for the English teachers in Indonesia with to develop the teaching strategy and classroom activities. However, the little number of the participants and the participants' demographic becomes the limitation of this study. Moreover, the findings of this study were not represent the other secondary students and English teachers in East Java. Therefore, it is recommended for the future research to do the similar research with bigger participants from several areas and fields.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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