

Elementary school students' difficulties in reading at the beginning of English learning

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ABSTRAK

Khususnya untuk siswa kelas rendah, keterampilan membaca permulaan sangat penting dan merupakan pondasi awal dalam keterampilan berbahasa, pemahaman semua pelajaran, dan kemampuan menyampaikan informasi (dalam bentuk tulisan dan lisan). Ada siswa yang mengalami kesulitan dalam membaca permulaan saat melakukannya. Pembelajaran membaca selanjutnya terhambat oleh kesulitan membaca ini. Penelitian analisis kesulitan membaca awal ini dilakukan pada peserta didik kelas III SDN larangan slampar 2. Penelitian ini dilakukan melalui pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Wawancara, catatan lapangan, observasi, dan adalah metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa membaca permulaan termasuk kesulitan mengenali huruf, penghilangan atau penggantian huruf, membaca setiap kata, membedakan huruf vokal dan konsonan, menggabungkan huruf dan suku kata menjadi satu kata, dan mengabaikan tanda baca.

ABSTRACT

Especially for lower grade students, initial reading skills are very important and are the initial foundation for language skills, understanding all lessons, and the ability to convey information (in written and oral form). There are students who experience difficulty in reading the beginning when doing so. Learning to read is further hampered by this reading difficulty. This initial reading difficulty analysis research was carried out on class III students at SDN Ban Slampar 2. This research was carried out using a qualitative descriptive approach. Interviews, field notes, observations, and data collection methods were used. The results showed that beginning reading included difficulty recognizing letters, omitting or replacing letters, reading individual words, distinguishing between vowels and consonants, combining letters and syllables into one word, and ignoring punctuation..

INTRODUCTION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it hit almost all countries around the world, having a significant impact on the education sector. In the end, face-to-face learning will be replaced by online virtual learning. Students' language skills, one of which is the ability to read, are most affected. By grade 2, students can usually master decoding phonemes based on their responses. However, different phenomena make improving reading fluency problematic. Language is an unlimited skill, meaning it can absorb a lot of information, which can be learned throughout life (Paris, 2005). Students begin to develop these parts at different rates from the start. Learning spelling and phonetics really helps



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improve students' decoding skills (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019). Decoding skills, in turn, build students as active readers. This is not surprising considering the level of disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Numerous studies have now documented the impact of COVID-19 on student test scores (Betthäuser et al., 2022; Hammerstein et al., 2021; Thorn & Vincent-Horn, 2021; West & Lake, 2021; Zierer, 2021). Dyslexia can also cause reading disorders or delays in children. When faced with the demands of printed language, most dyslexic children dislike or avoid reading and writing. These losses directly impact their classroom learning; they are often unable to complete lessons (Boland et al., 2022).

With increasingly advanced developments, students are encouraged to have knowledge and skills in various aspects of life and fields. According to Yusuf and Fulva Zorlu (2021), "It is extremely important to examine 21st century skills from multiple directions, and consequently, 21st century learner skills are "Cognitive Skills", "Autonomous Skills", "Cooperation and Flexibility Skills", and "Innovation Skills." By mastering various abilities, it is hoped that students will be able to develop skills and knowledge, communicate effectively, and socialize with society. "In the future, students must be able to compete with the times and must race with their thoughts or brains. "They themselves have the idea that every individual does not just have one skill, but is multi-skilled/multidimensional (not just having one skill or ability, but having various skills or abilities)" (Susilo, 2018).

Learning that provides skills or experience to students must include the development of students' attitudes, values and skills, not just knowledge. This is important considering the importance of acquiring a variety of skills and abilities. One way is to learn a language. According to Benati (2020), "Language is a tool for human communication, and the formal features of language lexical items, morphology, syntax, etc., all work together to encode meaning. So, as learners work out the meaning of the input they are exposed to, they are also making connections between the meaning of the input and the linguistic form."

Language learning is very important because it is one way to communicate between teachers and students or students and their environment. It is also a tool for conveying concepts or ideas, feelings, and messages, and helps learning success. According to Oktaviani (2021), "Indonesian is a means of accessing various information and scientific advances." For this reason, the ability to communicate verbally and in writing in Indonesian must be truly possessed and improved during learning.

Beginning reading skills are one component of Indonesian language skills. Beginning reading is very important as a basis for successful learning, according to Pramesti (2018), "Reading learning in elementary schools is carried out in accordance with the distinction between early grades and high grades. Learning to read in the early grades is called beginning reading and in the early grades -High class is called advanced reading." The initial classes consist of classes I to III, and the high classes consist of classes IV to VI. "Beginning reading is knowledge and an initial stage process in learning to read, especially for elementary school students," said Munthe (2018). At this stage, students are trained to recognize letters and the sound of each letter. By mastering this ability for initial reading, students can use this ability for the next stage, advanced reading. By knowing the letters and sounds of each letter, students will have initial experience in mastering their reading skills. Initial reading ability has a big influence on further reading ability.

After learning letters and their sounds, students are trained to change letters into meaningful sounds. Anggraeni (2020) explains that "Preliminary reading is a process of reading activities given to lower grade students." This activity aims to help students who cannot read become good at reading. Early reading is a process of learning to read that introduces letters or sounds, with the aim that

students can change written symbols into meaningful sounds or sounds. Agustalin (2021) explains "the process of initial reading activities, especially in elementary schools, is more oriented towards basic or initial level reading abilities." In this process, it is hoped that students will master literacy skills, namely the ability to change and pronounce written symbols into meaningful sounds. In this way, students will have the basis to get used to reading activities and be ready to move on to the next phase, namely advanced reading.

This understanding shows that reading skills, especially early reading skills, are very important for early or elementary grade education. The goal is for students to be able to change written symbols into meaningful sounds or sounds, so that they can learn literacy as a basis for awakening.

The results of observations and interviews showed that five students experienced initial reading difficulties at SD Negeri Larangan Slampar 2, especially in class III. One type of beginning reading difficulty is difficulty recognizing letters. Students have difficulty recognizing some letters when reading, need help to put letters together, continue to have difficulty recognizing letters from A to Z, and still have difficulty distinguishing between the letters p and q, m and n, u and v, v and w, and i and l.

Failure to achieve learning goals and the impact on student achievement can occur if students experience difficulties when studying or during the reading process. According to Munirah (2018), learning difficulties are a situation where students are unable to face the demands that must be made in the learning process, so that the process and results are unsatisfactory. This happens because students' ability to perform tasks is not balanced with learning demands. "Students' success in achieving completeness and improving their reading skills, especially the initial reading process, is influenced by several factors," said Hidayah (2017). These include physiological factors, intellectual factors, environmental factors, and psychological factors. Teachers and parents in this situation must help and accompany students who have difficulty reading immediately.

Analysis of initial reading difficulties is one of the efforts made. To determine the level of reading difficulty of each student, it is necessary to analyze initial reading difficulties. Therefore, the aim of this research is to identify various initial reading problems faced by students in class III of SD Negeri Larangan Slampar 2 and to determine what factors can cause these initial reading difficulties.

METHOD

Research design

This study conducted descriptive qualitative research. Creswell (2016) explains that "qualitative research is research that attempts to create a complex picture of a problem or issue being researched. This involves efforts to report perspectives, identify factors related to a particular situation, efforts to create a sketch or big picture that appears, illustrating the researcher's efforts in processing data while still relying on data in the form of text or images until the researcher succeeds in achieving the desired results. According to Sugiyono (2015), "Primary data sources are data sources that directly provide data for data collection, while secondary data sources are data sources that do not directly provide data to data collection, for example through other people or documents."

In collecting data, various methods were used, including observation, interviews, field notes, and documentation. Observation is a data collection method in which researchers go into the field to observe the behavior and actions of everyone involved in the research, by asking a number of questions that the researcher wants to know and allowing participants to provide their own comments (Creswell, 2016). One way to collect research data is interviews. These interviews can be conducted directly with participants, by telephone, or with certain groups. In qualitative research, written notes

about what is heard, seen, experienced, and thought during data collection are called field notes (Moleong, 2007). According to Creswell (2016), documentation is someone's notes or work about something related to a collection of documents. This type of document can be a public document, such as a book, magazine, newspaper, or office report, as well as a private document, such as a diary, diary, letter, and email.

Interview guides, observation guides, field note sheets, and documentation are the data collection tools used. To test the validity of the data, this research uses source triangulation and data acquisition techniques. Sugiyono (2010) states that "In data collection techniques, triangulation is defined as a data collection technique that combines various existing data collection techniques and data sources."

According to Miles (1994), Miles and Huberman's data analysis method is used consistently, focused during the process in the field along with data collection, and carried out interactively continuously until the data is saturated. Analysis includes collection, reduction, delivery, and drawing conclusions and verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of observations and interviews conducted with class III students at SD Negeri Larangan Slampar 2, it was discovered that there were five class III students who experienced initial reading difficulties. These initial reading difficulties are described as follows.

The results show that there are several types of reading difficulties experienced by third grade students at SD Negeri Larangan Slampar, including difficulty recognizing letters, omitting or replacing letters, difficulty reading each word, difficulty distinguishing between vowels and consonants, difficulty combining letters and syllables into one words, and the inability to remember punctuation while reading.

Students only recognize a few letters when reading and are able to name the sequence of letters from A to Z when spoken orally. However, when presented in written form, they have difficulty distinguishing between the letters p and q, m and n, u and v, v and w, i and l, and still have difficulty distinguishing the letters in question when reading texts or passages containing the letters /ng/ and /ny/. According to Westwood (2001), recognizing words (understanding or recognizing words), a child or reader is said to be able to read if they can sound out letters and then produce words, recognize and pronounce letters. Children who have difficulty recognizing letters will face several problems in the future, such as difficulty explaining information from sources or reading materials, difficulty distinguishing letters, and taking more time to identify.

Students spell or read letters with omissions or replacements. When reading, they spell quickly and pay less attention to the letters, so sometimes they pronounce the letters wrong. For example, the words i-b-u change to i-d-u and b-o-l-a change to b-o-b-a. According to Muammar (2020), "Omission of letters or words during the reading process, especially beginning reading, is because students don't even know letters, don't know or master language sounds (phonics), and don't know the form of words or sentences. Usually, this is occurs in the middle, end of a word or sentence." Among the difficulties students face in reading syllables is when they pronounce words that contain the letters /ng/ and /ny/. They also face difficulty in reading syllables consisting of three or more letters. They also fail to connect letters into syllables because they haven't quite memorized the sounds of some syllables, which causes them to read less fluently. Westwood (2001) explains that support in texts for word identification (identifying words in a text) helps children or readers get information and identify words quickly and precisely. If a child or reader has difficulty identifying words in text,



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they will then have difficulty confirming the words, lose understanding of what is read, or be unable to use redirection.

When reading, students have difficulty distinguishing vowels whose shape is similar to capital letters: u (small), i (small), e (small), and O (small). In the consonant letters t which contains f, m which contains n, p which contains q, m which contains w, b which contains d, and f which contains v. "Difficulty reading consonant letters, vowel letters in reading will tend to choose letters that students know or like, difficulty reading or spelling syllables consisting of consonant letters and vowel letters," said Christianti (2013).

One of the difficulties faced by students is combining letters and syllables into one word. They have to spell letter by letter to read words, and if they stop reading after reading one word, they can't read the next word. They are also unable to form one word pronunciation. Westwood (2001) explains word identification: developmental stages (identifying and developing words), namely the child's or reader's ability to identify and understand words and understand or understand words. If children or readers have difficulty identifying and developing words or sentences, this will result in a vocabulary that is not developed or developed, which has an impact on the communication process and on the reading or comprehension process.

When students do not pay attention to punctuation while reading, they should be guided or reminded about it. Students continue to read, such as question marks, exclamation marks, and commas that should stop. Don't ignore commas and periods in the middle of paragraphs. Muammar in 2020 does not pay attention to punctuation. This happens because students do not understand the meaning of main punctuation marks such as periods and commas. The students face problems with intonation. Voicing each piece of writing causes difficulty reading this intonation. Errors can affect reading comprehension, change intonation, and change the meaning of sentences. Several factors that can cause students to experience reading difficulties include a lack of interest or motivation to learn to read, difficulty expressing opinions orally or in writing, and believing that reading is a difficult task.

Reading success depends on low interest in reading. Lestari et al. (2021) explains that "the interest factor includes children not wanting to learn and children not being interested in learning (this is formed because the guidance of teachers and parents at home is not in line, learning is only done at school, while at home, children do not receive guidance) Gradually, children will not be interested because interest in learning is only developed at school, while at home there is no guidance.

If students experience reading difficulties at an early stage, their understanding or knowledge becomes limited during the learning process. This reduces the desire to read. According to Pramesti (2018), "students' understanding or knowledge abilities are related to intellectual factors." Inability will cause slow understanding in the reading process and difficulty for students to participate in learning activities.

Students' inability to read at the beginning causes them to experience difficulties in the process of conveying an opinion orally or in writing. This is the result of a lack of vocabulary and poor comprehension. According to Westwood (2001:23), appreciation of text structure is the attitude shown by students when they understand instructions about an event described in the text, master the words or sentences in the text, and then convey their opinions or statements about the topic orally or in writing. It is very clear that students who have difficulty reading are different from students who can already read fluently. Those who read fluently feel relaxed and try to understand the text or reading, while students who cannot read fluently seem confused and face difficulties. According to Harmer (2002), negative expectations (negative expectations or thoughts) have an impact on students'



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low motivation. Before they start reading, they already have negative thoughts (thinking they will not understand part of the lesson taught by the teacher because they previously thought the material given was too difficult, making them frustrated and not motivating).

Reading is an important academic skill for children. This is related to brain function in the left perisylvian and left occipitotemporal regions (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In this study, it was found that fatherhood was associated with reading problems in high-risk groups. Educational attainment is also associated with other factors related to reading problems. Genetic and environmental factors that add to each other to cause reading problems or dyslexia can be seen as the level of paternity education (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020; Thapar et al., 2015). Heredity and environment are correlated. According to research results showing that dyslexia is genetically linked, fathers of children who have difficulty reading may suffer from dyslexia, which hinders their learning and leads to lower academic achievement. The father's education level influences the family's socio-economic status and his attitude towards children's literacy (Boon Yasidhi, 2021).

In another country, studies showed that high-quality classroom instruction along with additional intensive group instruction helped reduce the number of students with impaired basic skills in elementary schools by 6%. Therefore, the next stage is intensive, additional, and small group teaching. The results of this research work will be monitored in the future to see if it helps reduce reading problems in the various affiliated schools. Male gender, whether the child has been diagnosed with a developmental or genetic disorder, the father's education level, and the child's school type are the following risk factors for reading problems in individuals at high risk for dyslexia. The boy-to-girl ratio for dyslexia is 2.3–4:1 (Altarac and Saroha, 2007; Roongpraiwan et al., 2002). This study not only used gender as a factor, but also found an association between developmental disorders or genetic disorders and the risk of suffering from dyslexia in children. Previous data also show that children with developmental disorders, such as attention deficit disorder or autism spectrum disorders, often have comorbidities (Piyasil & Wangtan, 2015; Shah et al., 2019). This new discovery is in line with previous findings. Male gender, whether the child has been diagnosed with a developmental or genetic disorder, the father's education level, and the child's type of school are the following risk factors for reading problems in people at high risk for dyslexia. They found that the boy-to-girl ratio was 2.3.4:1 (Altarac and Saroha, 2007; Roongpraiwan et al., 2002). This study not only used gender as a factor, but also found an association between developmental disorders or genetic disorders and the risk of suffering from dyslexia in children. Previous data also show that children with developmental disorders, such as attention deficit disorder or autism spectrum disorders, often have comorbidities (Piyasil & Wangtan, 2015; Shah et al., 2019). This new discovery is in line with previous findings.

CONCLUSION

The results of research on initial reading difficulties in class III students at SD Negeri Larangan Slampar 2 show that several causes of initial reading difficulties include the inability to recognize letters, omitting or replacing letters, distinguishing between vowels and consonants, combining letters and syllables into one word, and not Pay attention to punctuation.

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