

ANALYSIS OF EARLY READING DIFFICULTIES REVIEWED FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRAK

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesulitan membaca permulaan siswa sekolah dasar melalui tinjauan literatur. Metode yang digunakan adalah *systematic literature review* yang menganalisis 10 artikel yang dipublikasikan di jurnal nasional yang terindeks Sinta antara tahun 2019 hingga 2024. Komponen yang direview meliputi latar belakang, hasil penelitian, dan kesimpulan pada setiap artikel. Berdasarkan analisis data, kesulitan yang paling sering dialami siswa adalah kesulitan dalam mengenal huruf. Selain itu, kesulitan lainnya meliputi kesulitan merangkai huruf menjadi suku kata dan kata, kesulitan membedakan huruf yang hampir identik, kelancaran membaca dan pemahaman, serta kesulitan dalam membaca kata berimbuhan dan kalimat sederhana. Solusi yang disarankan untuk mengatasi kesulitan tersebut antara lain dengan memberikan bimbingan profesional bagi siswa, metode pengajaran yang efektif, penggunaan media pembelajaran yang menarik, penciptaan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung, dan penguatan motivasi belajar siswa.

Abstract: This study aims to analyze early reading difficulties among elementary school students through a literature review. The method used is a systematic literature review that analyzes 10 articles published in national journals indexed by Sinta between 2019 and 2024. The components reviewed include the background, research results, and conclusions from each article. Based on the data analysis, the most common difficulty experienced by students is in letter recognition. Other challenges include difficulties in combining letters into syllables and words, distinguishing nearly identical letters, reading fluency and comprehension, as well as difficulties in reading words with affixes and simple sentences. The suggested solutions to address these difficulties include providing professional guidance for students, effective teaching methods, the use of engaging learning media, the creation of a supportive learning environment, and enhancing students' learning motivation.

A. INTRODUCTION

Learning is an activity in which teachers and students participate together to provide positive and meaningful learning experiences for students (Khotimah et al., 2021). Thus, the close involvement between teachers and students can create a comfortable and productive learning environment. In this context, the school environment becomes an important interactive space for students to engage in effective learning processes (Ngazizah et al., 2021). A conducive environment also plays a vital role in facilitating the exchange of ideas and experiences among students. Learning is not just about providing teaching materials; it also involves creating and organizing an environment that encourages active

student participation in the learning process (Ingtyasningsih et al., 2022). This creates opportunities for students to explore various different ways of learning. In the collaborative learning process, the relationship between teachers and students is crucial. Two-way integration fosters the development of social and emotional skills. Through positive interactions, students learn communication, collaboration, and mutual respect—skills essential for daily life. These skills will help students socialize and contribute to society in the future.

Literacy is an aspect of learning provided to meet current educational needs. The importance of literacy is increasingly felt in an ever-evolving information era that requires critical thinking skills.

Literacy learning can bring about changes that make the education system more productive and innovative, prioritizing creativity in developing existing potentials (Hasanudin et al., 2024). Additionally, literacy involves the ability to analyze and synthesize information from various sources. Students should develop literacy skills early on in school by learning to recognize letters, words, and sentences. A literacy-centered learning approach not only enables students to understand the subject matter but also allows them to adapt to the increasing information needs. This equips students with the necessary abilities to succeed in a constantly changing environment.

Reading comprehension is a receptive language skill that students must acquire from a young age to support other language skills later on (Islamiyah et al., 2022). Reading is the process of interpreting the content of a text and understanding the meanings of words within that text (Idris & Ramdani, 2015). Finding and remembering facts, as well as understanding the meaning of what is read, are the primary purposes of reading (Ahmad, 2017). In reading activities, students use the skill of recognizing letters or sequences of letters as sounds in language (Bintoro et al., 2022). This skill is foundational and will assist in more complex learning processes later on. Reading comprehension is a phase of learning that must be mastered in the early grades (Suyadi & Sari, 2021). Early reading comprehension plays a crucial role in developing students' basic literacy skills, particularly in early grades. At this stage, students not only recognize letters and associate them with sounds but also understand the structure and meanings of words and sentences. The accurate input received by students at this stage significantly affects their ability to tackle more advanced reading tasks. This process requires attention and patience from both teachers and students because understanding the basic concepts of reading is acquired at varying levels.

The limitation of human resources in Indonesia currently creates a crucial educational condition for national development (Khusnudin et al., 2022). According to research (Suryaningsih, 2019), many surveys indicate that Indonesian society has a low reading interest. This condition poses one of the greatest challenges in improving the quality of

education in Indonesia. The low literacy levels among elementary school students have raised concerns among many stakeholders (Permatasari & Nuroh, 2024). Based on the 2018 PISA study (Fitriani et al., 2021), Indonesia ranked 74th out of 79 participating countries. This ranking reflects the need for serious attention to strengthen motivation and reading skills. It shows that although literacy learning is very important, there are still significant challenges in enhancing reading interest.

The challenges of early reading comprehension are not easy for all students to overcome. The barriers include difficulties in recognizing and grouping letters into syllables and words (Halimah et al., 2021). Low intelligence, lack of interest from students in starting to read, and low motivation for early reading skills (Ain, RN & Ain, SQ 2024) are also contributing factors. These difficulties can impact students' academic development, particularly in their early school years. This impact often continues to the next levels if not addressed promptly. If early reading skills are not developed well, students may lack confidence in academic settings and may not actively participate in the learning process.

Concerns about early reading can negatively affect children's future learning outcomes if not identified promptly. Students with poor reading skills often struggle to understand the subject matter. In turn, this can hinder their overall cognitive and academic development. Therefore, teachers and parents need to understand the causes of reading difficulties and seek appropriate solutions. This research examines early reading difficulties through a literature review and aims to identify factors that influence students' reading skills in elementary school. This literature review also plays a crucial role in providing insights into the best approaches to address learning issues. It will help to gain a deeper understanding of prior research and find effective solutions. By examining early reading difficulties, this research aims to provide appropriate strategies to improve students' reading skills.

B. METHODS

The chosen research method is a systematic literature review, a research activity aimed at reviewing several theories sourced from scientific references, such as theses or articles published in research journals (Setiawan et al., 2023). This

method is selected because of its ability to provide a comprehensive overview of previous findings related to the topic being discussed, while also assisting researchers in identifying research gaps that have not been extensively addressed. The analysis method involves descriptive qualitative analysis, which includes identifying, assessing, explaining, and interpreting the research found by the researchers.

The systematic literature review process includes the identification of various journals compiled according to established procedures. The collected articles are sourced from nationally accredited journals found in Sinta, accessible through the Google Scholar database. The reviewed articles include publications from 2019 to 2024. Researchers conduct a thorough review and analysis of these articles, with a particular focus on the research findings presented in the background, research results, and conclusions.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research results in this article are based on the analysis of journals selected by the researchers, focusing on the difficulties in early reading. Based on the research by Bella Oktadiana (2019), several obstacles in early reading instruction were encountered by second-grade B students in the Indonesian language subject. These obstacles include: (1) difficulties in converting letters into syllables, (2) challenges in combining syllables into words, and (3) struggles in distinguishing the letters b and d, as well as p and q. Additionally, Cerianning Putri Pratiwi (2020) stated that the main issue in early reading for students is their inability to compose letters into words. Meanwhile, Husni Fita Akda and Febrina Dafit noted several reading difficulties experienced by students, including: (1) recognizing letters, (2) reading meaningful words, (3) reading nonsensical words, (4) difficulties in reading aloud, and (5) understanding reading and listening skills.

Research conducted by Subakt et al. (2021) revealed several factors causing students to experience difficulties in reading, such as: (a) delays in word comprehension, (b) lack of focus and motivation to learn, (c) challenges in forming words into sentences, (d) minimal parental attention, (e) inability to connect words into sentences, (f) vision problems and speech limitations, and (g) inadequate

support from parents. Furthermore, Halimah et al. (2021) reported that students in early grades often face challenges in recognizing letters and combining them into syllables and words. Mustika (2022) also noted difficulties faced by students in pronouncing and recognizing the letters b and d, as well as reading words with affixes and simple sentences.

Subsequent research by Resti et al. (2023) indicated that students experience difficulties in letter recognition, inability to read simple texts, and challenges in properly listening to sentences. Erlina & Iswara (2023) explained that students encounter difficulties in recalling the shapes and sounds of letters, distinguishing similar letters, unclear pronunciation, as well as omitting letter sounds and words, which lead to mistakes due to hurried reading, and a lack of understanding of proper reading attitudes. Ain, RN, & Ain, SQ (2024) identified various difficulties faced by students, including challenges in distinguishing similar letters, difficulties in reading consonant combinations, and struggles to read fluently. Meanwhile, Nisa Umami SY and Febrina Dafit (2024) found that students who are still unable to differentiate between letters A-Z often struggle with understanding the spelling of simple texts and have not yet been able to read simple story texts fluently.

Based on various studies, the main difficulty frequently experienced by students in early reading is letter recognition. Oktadiana (2019) and Halimah et al. (2021) found that many students face obstacles in letter recognition, syllable pronunciation, and assembling letters into words and sentences. Additionally, research by Akda & Dafit (2021) and SY & Dafit (2024) also indicates that students' inability to differentiate letters A-Z and combine words into simple story texts is a common issue. The difficulty in distinguishing nearly identical letters, as noted by Ain, R.N. & Ain, S.Q. (2024), is also a significant challenge in the early stages of reading. Furthermore, students often experience poor reading fluency and comprehension, which hampers their ability to read aloud correctly (Akda & Dafit, 2021; Erlina & Iswara, 2023). Other issues include challenges in reading words with affixes and simple sentences (Mustika, 2022) as well as difficulties in listening (Resti et al., 2023). External factors, such as minimal parental attention, and internal factors like delays in understanding and low motivation to learn,

contribute to the worsening reading difficulties experienced by students (Subakt et al., 2021).

Based on the data analysis, the main difficulties identified in the reading process are primarily related to letter recognition, which is the foundational issue. Without strong letter recognition skills, students will struggle with subsequent steps, such as combining letters into syllables and words. This statement aligns with previous research indicating that letter recognition is a crucial foundation in the reading learning process. Additionally, the ability to combine letters into syllables and words is also a significant obstacle. Students who cannot perform this process well will feel hindered in reading. Furthermore, the difficulties in distinguishing nearly identical letters, such as b and d, p and q, contribute to frequent reading errors. There are also issues related to reading fluency and comprehension. Students who cannot read fluently tend to struggle with understanding the text they read, which could lead to decreased interest in learning and feelings of frustration. On the other hand, difficulties in reading words with affixes and simple sentences indicate that students still need more assistance in understanding more complex language structures.

To address these various difficulties, comprehensive strategies are required. One of the most important is to enhance students' early reading skills through professional guidance. This includes training teachers to use effective teaching methods. In this context, models of direct instruction aided by media such as illustrated word cards have proven effective in the early reading learning process, as these media help students associate words with images, making it easier for them to understand and remember new vocabulary (SY, N. U., & Dafit, F. 2024). Additionally, regular monitoring of student progress is essential to adjust teaching to meet each student's needs. The use of engaging learning media is crucial to capture students' attention. A conducive learning environment can provide a comfortable atmosphere, helping students to focus and feel less stressed. Finally, it is important to enhance students' learning motivation so that they remain enthusiastic and interested in learning to read.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the analysis of the literature review regarding early reading difficulties in elementary school students, this study found that the main challenge faced by students is letter recognition. Additionally, other common difficulties include combining letters into syllables and words, distinguishing similar letters, and problems with reading fluency and comprehension. Difficulties in reading words with affixes and simple sentences are also significant concerns.

To address these issues, a comprehensive approach is necessary, which includes professional guidance for students, effective teaching methods, the use of engaging learning media, the creation of a supportive learning environment, and the enhancement of student motivation. The implementation of these solutions is expected to improve students' reading skills, strengthen their literacy foundation, and enhance overall learning outcomes.

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