



## Improving the Early Reading Ability of Children with Down Syndrome Through Contextualized SAS Method

Yury Ulandary✉, and Endang Rochyadi

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

✉[yuryulandary@upi.edu](mailto:yuryulandary@upi.edu)

**Abstract:** The ability to read children with Down Syndrome is relatively lower than that of children in general. This is because in reading there are aspects of thinking such as remembering, understanding, comparing, distinguishing, finding, analyzing, organizing, and applying what is contained in the reading. This is difficult for children with Down Syndrome to do so that in the reading process special methods that are not abstract are needed. The purpose of this study was to improve the pre-reading skills of Down Syndrome children through the contextual SAS (Structural Analytic Synthetic) method. The method used in this study is literature research. Based on the results of studies conducted from relevant theories and sources, it shows that the contextual sentence method provides a great opportunity to improve the beginning reading ability of children with Down Syndrome.

**Keywords:** reading the beginning, SAS method, contextual, down syndrome

**How to Cite:** Ulandary, Y., & Rochyadi, E. (2021). Improving the Early Reading Ability of Children with Down Syndrome Through Contextualized SAS Method. *The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Elementary Education*. 3(1), 119-125.

---

### INTRODUCTION

Reading is very important for a child to have, as a provision to achieve his goals in adulthood. Children learn to read to complete various tasks in the learning process. As stated by Lerner (in lisnawati, 2018, p.82) that reading ability is a basis for mastering various fields of study. If at school age the ability to read is not possessed or has difficulty in reading, the child will experience many difficulties in learning various fields of study in the next class.

However, some children have difficulty reading compared to children in general, one of which is Down Syndrome. But all children have the right to education, including children with Down Syndrome. Down Syndrome or better known as trisomy genetic disorder, in which there is an additional chromosome on chromosome 21. Mental Down Syndrome in children results in developmental abnormalities. This occurs due to the failure of a pair of chromosomes to separate from each other when it occurs in the division process. In learning, children are required to be able to

read, write, and count, including children with special needs because they are needed in everyday life. Reading is an important part of the educational process because everything to obtain information or knowledge is obtained through reading. According to Hughes (2006, p.4), the benefits of reading for Down Syndrome children are to improve language skills and oral memory or communication skills by reading to and form instructions. Children with Down Syndrome benefit from learning to read through sentence learning strategies. In the process of reading, there are aspects of thinking such as remembering, understanding, comparing, differentiating, discovering, analyzing, organizing, and applying what is contained in the reading. This is difficult for Down Syndrome children to do so that in the learning process, in particular, special interesting methods are needed so that Down Syndrome children can receive material easily (Sarah, 2013). The ability to read children with Down Syndrome is relatively lower when compared to children in general. Down Syndrome children can speak well but at a minimum in vocabulary, they have difficulty thinking abstractly, but they are still



categorized as children who can follow academic learning both in school and in special education schools (Amin, 1995, p. 37).

According to Kemis (in Efendi 2019 p. 83), the learning principles of Down Syndrome children are the principles of motivation, context, direction, social relations, learning while working, individualism, discovery, and problem-solving. So, the solution to this problem is to use the SAS method which is contextual, namely a method that teaches children to learn to read starting from sentences, words, syllables, and letters. Using functional words that are often used and performed by children in everyday life. In other words, it is using the child's personal experience of language which is rewritten for the child to read. The personal language experience of children with Down Syndrome will help develop an awareness of meaning in writing because lessons see a direct relationship between pictures and writing, this helps teachers explain sentence structure because the help of pictures can help teachers break down sentence structures (Gonzalez & Amanti, 2006).

Based on the understanding and description of these problems, a learning method is needed that is by the characteristics of the child, which is abstract, and makes it easier for Down Syndrome children to learn to read, namely the contextual SAS method. According to Lisnawati (2018, p. 85), the SAS method is a method that begins as a whole, which then searches for and finds certain parts of the whole. Meanwhile, contextual is a learning concept that helps teachers link the material being taught with students' real-world situations and encourages the knowledge they have and its application in their daily lives. So, the contextual SAS method is a method of learning to read that begins with a whole sentence and is broken down into certain parts using functional sentences (words that are often spoken by children) in the school environment or sentences used in everyday life based on language experience. children who are deemed suitable to improve the reading ability of children with Down

Syndrome.

Based on the phenomena that can hinder the reading of Down Syndrome children, one of which is the monotonous learning method, namely lectures and questions and answers, so that it makes children bored and lazy to learn, seen from the results of children's learning using the lecture and question and answer method will make children confused and have difficulty memorizing and distinguishing all the letters of the alphabet so this method is not suitable for learning to read beginners. Thus, we need a reading method that begins with not recognizing letters, namely using sentences. Besides, the lecture and question and answer methods are methods that are commonly taught to children in general in learning to read the beginning, the researchers chose to use the contextual SAS method to increase the ability of Down Syndrome children to read. This method was chosen because it can improve the ability to read quickly and easily for children with Down Syndrome.

## **METHOD**

This article was written using the literature study method by examining articles related to contextual SAS methods. The results of the literature review will be used as a reference in analyzing the increase in early reading through the contextual SAS method in children with Down syndrome.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Concept of Down Syndrome**

According to Cuncha (in Rahim, 2005, p.2), "Down syndrome is a condition of underdeveloped physical and mental development in children due to chromosomal development disorders." Chromosomes are formed due to the failure of chromosomes to complement each other during the uterine division. Chromosomes are special fibers found in every cell of the human body.

### **How to learn Down Syndrome children**

The learning method for down syndrome children is adjusted to the classification of the



level of their mental retardation. Where these levels describe the limitations of the abilities possessed by each child. According to Bricker, D. Dennison, L. & Bricker, WA A (in Rahim, 2005, p. 4) says that Down Syndrome children's learning is as follows: 1. On Task Behavior, in this case, the teacher instructs the child. to sit on a chair for a while, then the teacher asks the child to pay attention to the teacher, and the teacher gives direct

### **Concept of Reading**

According to Dalman (2013, p. 5) that reading is an activity/thought process that seeks to find and present various information contained in a piece of writing. According to Prasetyono (2008, p. 59-60), reading is not just reading, but this activity has a purpose, namely to get some new information. Language skills reading activities that aim to understand ideas, ideas, and feelings in the text. The process of reading someone will experience a thought process to understand the ideas and ideas broadly. The reading process is closely related to the development of thinking factors, based on the underlying experience

### **Reading Stages**

Cochrane Efal (in Dewi, 2018, p. 25) explains that there are at least five stages of children's reading development.

1. Magical stage. At this stage, the child will turn the book into a fun toy medium. The children looked together, turned the pages of the book.
2. Self-concept stage at this stage the child has started reading activities by pretending to read a book and understand the pictures based on the experiences gained. From here the child will use language that is not by the writing according to the book.
3. bridging the reading stage. At this stage the child begins to develop an awareness of writing in books and finds words that have been encountered before, the child has also begun to recognize the letters of the alphabet.

assignments to the child, 2. Imitation, in this case, the child imitates what the teacher says, 3. Discriminatory use of objects, in this case, the child learns through systematic interaction with the environment. Environmental interactions produce the ability to distinguish objects and events, 4. Word recognition, in this case, the child learns to recognize words from objects that children see directly.

4. take off the reader stage or reading recognition stage. At this stage, the child begins to become interested in reading, can remember writing in a certain context, tries to recognize environmental signs, and reads various kinds of signs, for example, billboards, milk boxes, traffic signs, and so on.
5. independent reader stage or the stage of reading fluently. At this stage, the child can read writing fluently without the help of the closest person. Even children are also able to understand and think critically about the results of their reading experiences.

### **Concept of Early Reading**

According to Steinberg (Susanto, 2011: 83) reading early is reading programmed preschool children. This program is attention to complete speech, interactions in the personal context of children, and the materials provided through games and interesting activities as a medium for learning.

### **Steps to Read**

Ritawati (1996, p.51) states that there are five steps in starting reading, namely recognizing sentences, recognizing word elements, recognizing 12 letter elements, arranging letters into syllables, arranging syllables into words. reading teaching is more than a necessity for developing reading skills. Children are required to be able to voice letters, syllables, words, and sentences presented in written form into the oral form of Sabarti a Khadiyah (in Antara, 2019, p.223)



### Concept of the SAS Method

According to Eliastuti (2018, p. 84), The SAS method is a method developed by PKMM (Curriculum Renewal and Teaching Methods) based on child psychology, structural linguistics, synthetic phonics. This method was mainly developed in teaching reading and writing in primary schools although it was developed at the later levels and in other subjects. Puspita (in Eliastuti, 2018 p. 34) states that the SAS method is one type of method commonly used for the reading learning process for beginner students. Learning to read with this method begins learning in two stages, namely displaying and introducing a complete sentence.

### SAS Method Steps

The SAS method has steps in the following order: (a) structure, displaying the whole, (b) analysis, carrying out the decomposition process, (c) synthesizing, performing recombination of the original structure. At first, the child is treated to a structure that gives a complete meaning, namely the sentence structure. Learning to read using the SAS method includes: (1). sentences become words, (2), words become syllables, and (3) syllables become letters

### Benefits of the SAS Method

According to Mulyati (2011, pp. 22-23) Some of the benefits that are considered as advantages of this method, including the following.

1. This method is in line with the principles of linguistics (linguistics) which view the smallest language unit used to communicate its sentences. Sentences are formed by the language units underneath, namely words, syllables, and finally phonemes (letters).
2. This method considers the language experience of the child. Therefore, teaching will be more meaningful for children because it starts with something known and known to children. This will have a

positive impact on children's memory and understanding.

3. This method is by the principle of inquiry (find yourself). Children know and understand something based on their findings. Attitudes like this will help children achieve success in learning.
4. The teaching materials for learning to start reading with this method look like the following. *ini mama*

*i - ni ma - ma*

*i-n-i m-a-m-a*

*i - ni ma - ma*

*ini mama*

This description concludes with the conclusion that "there is neither the best method nor the worst method". Each method has advantages and disadvantages the best method is the one that suits the wearer.

### Concept of Contextual

According to (Ningrum, 2009, p. 1), the word contextual is taken from English, namely contextual then absorbed into Indonesian to become contextual. Contextual means related to context or in context. Context refers to circumstances, situations, and events. In general, contextual means: 1. Concerning, relevance, there is a direct relationship or form, following the context; and 2. Carrying intent, meaning, and importance. This means that the contextual approach is pragmatic. The contextual approach is a student-centered learning approach that emphasizes full student interaction in learning through activities of linking learning material with the appropriate context in the real world. According to Muslich's opinion (201, p. 41), contextual learning is a learning concept that helps teachers relate learning material to students' real-world situations, and encourages students to make connections between their knowledge and its application in their daily lives. Application in everyday life. Johnson (2007, p. 67) argues that the Contextual Teaching and Learning system is an educational process that aims to help



students see meaning in the academic material they make by connecting academic subjects with the context in their daily lives, namely: personal context, their society, and culture.

### Contextual Advantage

According to Ningrum, (2009, p. 4) the advantages of a contextual approach are:

1. Students who are actively involved in the learning process (student center)
2. Students not only receive information passively (teacher center)
3. Learning real or based on problems
4. Changes in student behavior are built on the awareness of each student
5. Acquire skills developed from understanding
6. Awards are given in the form of self-satisfaction
7. Students do not behave badly because of awareness
8. The language conveyed is communicative
9. Learn from what students already know
10. The process of having the ability to learning
11. Existing knowledge is built and developed independently
12. Be based on the student experience
13. Learning outcomes are based on process
14. Learning is not limited to classrooms
15. The existence of problem management

Based on the theoretical review above, a review of previous research was obtained based on the results of data analysis related to the SAS method and contextual, namely research conducted by Antara (2019, p. 230) it can be concluded that learning with a contextual learning model has a positive effect on early learning. Reading skills of group B children in Kindergarten Group I, South Kuta District, 2018/2019 academic year. Devi (2014) The application of a contextual approach can improve reading comprehension skills. Dwimayanti (in Eliastuti, 2018 p.35). The results that have been carried out on the pre-reading ability with the SAS method in the first cycle obtained an average of 69.9 and an increase in the increase in the second cycle was 78.6. So,

learning to read prefix was quite successful. Completeness in cycle I 64 increased in cycle II 72.4. So, learning to read early has been successful. Nurjanah (2011, p. 1) concluded that the effectiveness of the alphabet method in the pre-reading teaching and learning process was 10.2%, the effectiveness of the global method was 8.2%, the effectiveness of the SAS method was 17%, and the effectiveness of the method. 3% was used in the control group. From the research above, the SAS method can improve reading skills.

Lubis (2018, p.106) The SAS method is considered the best method in improving pre-reading activities. The results of the study stated that the application of the contextual teaching and learning (CTL) learning model can educate students to have concrete thinking patterns, practice critical and creative thinking habits for students, increase cooperation among students Pratiwi (2014, p. 9). Through the SAS method using audio-visual media used can improve children's early reading skills in the aspects of reading images, reading pictures and letters, reading pictures and words, and reading sentences Aida (2018, p. 61).

### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of studies conducted from relevant theories and sources, it shows that the contextual SAS method provides a great opportunity to improve the early reading skills of children with Down Syndrome.

### REFERENCES

- Aida, Siti., Suprapti, Anni., Nasirun. (2018). Improving Initial Reading Skills through Synthetic Analytical Structural Methods Using Audio-Visual Media. *Potencia Scientific Journal*, 3(2), 56-63
- Amen, Moh. (1995) *Orthopedagogics of mentally retarded children*. Jakarta: Department of education and culture
- Antara, Putu Aditya. (2019). Implementation of Early Childhood Character Development with a Holistic Approach.



- VISION Journal of PGTK PAUD and Dikmas,14(1)
- Dalman, (2013). *Reading Skills*. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo
- Devi, K., Kristiantri, R., & Ganing, N. (2014) Application of Contextual Learning Approaches to Improve Reading Comprehension Skills in Indonesian Language Content for Grade IV Students of SD Negeri 9 Padang Academic Year 2013/2014. *E-journal at the PGSD University of Pendidikan Ganesa Department of PGSD*. 2 (1).
- Dewi, A.C., Purwani, A., Nisa, F. (2019). Efektivitas Metode *Fun and Stimulation Technique (Fast)* Terhadap Kemampuan Membaca Anak Usia Dini di Taman Kanak-kanak Kartika 1-54 Padang. *Prosiding-Open Access Journal*, 1(1), 25-28
- Eliastuti, M., & Irwansyah, N. (2018). The effectiveness of reading using the Synthetic Analytical Structural Method (SAS) in Students who have difficulty *Reading Deixis*, 10(1), 33-42
- Gonzalez, N., Moll, LC, & Amanti, C. (Eds.). (2006). *Funds of knowledge: theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*. Routledge.
- Hughes, J. (2006). Teaching reading skills to children with Down Syndrome. *Down Syndrome News and Update*, 5(2), 62-65.
- Lisnawati, L., & Muthmainah, M. (2018). The effectiveness of the SAS (synthetic analytical structure) method in improving reading skills for slow learners (Slow Learner) at SDN Demangan. *Journal of Integrative Psychology*, 6(1), 81-100
- Lubis, SSW (2018). Development of Sas Methods in Improving Student's Beginning Reading Skills. *PIONIR: Educational Journal*, 7(1)
- Masnur, Muslich. (2011). *KTSP Competency-Based and Contextual Learning*. Jakarta: Earth Literacy
- Mulyati, Yeti. (2011). *Learning to Read and Write Beginning*, FPBS, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
- Ningrum, Ep. (2009). *Approach Contextual (Contextual Teaching and Learning)*. Paper Presented at Training and Workshop Learning Models in RSBI Preparation in Karawang Regency
- Nurjanah, N. (2011). Comparison of the Effectiveness of the Alphabetical Method, Global Method, and SAS Method in the Teaching and Learning Process of Beginning Reading in Elementary Schools (Quasi-Experimental Study at Banjaran Public Elementary School). *Education Pulse Journal*, 2(1), 1-13
- Prasetyono. (2008). and Challenges during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia. accessed through <http://journalregister.iainsalatiga.ac.id/index.php/register/49> accessed on 24 August 2019
- Pratiwi, Putu, Ida., Ganing., Abadi, Surya. (2014). Application of Image Media Assisted Contextual Approach to Improve Reading Skills Pregnancy of Class II Students Sd No. 6 Dalung 2013/2014 Academic Year. *e-Journal of PGSD Mimbar Ganesha University of Education Department of PGSD*, 2(1)
- Rahim, Farida. (2005). *Teaching Reading in Elementary Schools*. Jakarta: Earth Literacy
- Ritawati, W. (1996). *Teaching Materials for Indonesian Language Education in Low Grades of SD*. Padang: IKIP.
- Sarah, D. (2013). *The Effect of Pictorial Puzzle Card Media in Improving Early Reading Ability in Children with Down Syndrome*. (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia)
- Susanto, Ahmad. (2011). *Early Childhood Development: An Introduction to Its*



*Various Aspects.* Jakarta: Kencana  
Pranada Media