

Learning Strategies for Beginning Reading in Class 1 Primary School

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Abstract. Early reading is a reading skill for children aged 5-6 years starting with recognizing letters or letter sounds, including vowels and consonants, then children learn to read words as a unit and focus more on the pictures around them, at this stage children begin to understand the meaning of words. The goal of beginning reading at the lower grade level is to give students the ability to read simple words and sentences fluently and accurately. The ability to read fluently and precisely at this stage is influenced by the activeness and creativity of teachers who teach in lower grades. In other words, teachers have a strategic role in improving students' reading skills. This research aims to describe the factors inhibiting students from beginning reading and determine the teacher's efforts in overcoming students' difficulties in beginning reading. Data collection techniques in this research are interviews and observation. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The subject of this research was 1 grade 1 elementary school teacher. The results of this research show that teachers have used various strategies in beginning reading learning, including using the alphabet method, sound method, syllable method, and SAS method. Based on the results of this research, good cooperation between teachers and parents is needed to ensure that initial reading learning runs smoothly. Parents and teachers need to regularly provide stimulation to train children's early reading skills, both at home and at school.

Keywords: early reading, obstacle factor, learning strategy, elementary school.

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INTRODUCTION

Language skills are very necessary in everyday life. For teachers, mastering language skills will make their tasks easier. That is why an elementary school teacher needs to master various concepts related to children's development and language acquisition in order to absorb and disseminate knowledge to their students. Learning Indonesian has similar goals to other learning, namely to gain knowledge, skills, creativity and attitudes. Pramesti (2018) states that language learning is an important aspect of human life, especially in the elementary school environment. Learning at this level students will be given basic knowledge in the field of calistung, which includes reading, writing and arithmetic. This ability is very relevant in everyday life. (Ali, 2020). Indonesian acts as the main language used in various school activities in various fields of science. This shows how important the role of Indonesian is in the education process in Indonesia (Hidayati, 2018).

In connection with learning Indonesian in the educational process, Indonesian is very important, both for practical daily life and for continuing school purposes. Learning Indonesian at school is expected for every student to achieve the best learning outcomes according to their abilities. But in reality not all students can achieve the expected learning outcomes. Children have different abilities, namely gifted children, children with normal academic abilities, children who are slow learners, and children who are less able to learn. The diversity of children's abilities in one class can be an obstacle to the smooth teaching and learning process. The entire educational process in schools is the teaching and learning process which is the most important activity.

Apart from learning activities in the school environment, the family also has an important role in the development of children's reading and writing abilities. A child's level of readiness in receiving formal education turns out to have a significant impact on a child's reading ability. Therefore, the role of the family becomes very crucial before children begin the formal education

process. Parents are expected to actively support their children to be ready to read before any formal experience in the world of Eke education (in Lena et al., 2023).

Language learning emphasizes four aspects of language skills, namely listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills and writing skills. These four aspects of language skills have a very important role. However, in everyday life, reading skills are often more necessary. Reading is an action taken to obtain information from a text, with the intention of understanding the reading content as a whole. Reading is one of the skills taught to students at school and plays a crucial role in various communication situations. Reading ability is considered the main foundation for gaining knowledge (Satrijono et al., 2019).

Learning to read is a major part of education at the next level (Aida et al., 2018). Reading is important for children, because it provides significant support in exploring and understanding a new world for them. Children learn to recognize the world around them through pictures and books. The information they get in reading helps improve their vocabulary and reading skills (Widyana, 2017). Reading is a thinking activity that includes understanding, telling stories, and interpreting the meaning of written symbols by involving the use of sight, eye movements, inner reflection, and memory capacity (Harianto, 2020). Aspects of reading skills in elementary school include the ability to read fluently, understand technically, read carefully without saying it, read at speed, read critically, and the ability to read thoroughly (Rahman et al., 2019).

The reading process begins with the interpretation of visual symbols obtained through revealing these symbols through the sense of sight. The sequential aspect of the reading process involves the action of following a series of texts arranged sequentially. Experience plays a key role in the reading process. Children who have a lot of experience tend to have wider opportunities to develop vocabulary understanding when reading. Concrete experiences and indirect experiences help improve children's conceptual development. The affective aspect of reading is related to the child's ability to focus attention (Rahman et al., 2020).

Pramesti (2018) states that learning to read in elementary schools follows the differences between low class and high class. Learning to read in low grades is referred to as beginning reading learning, while in high grades it is referred to as advanced reading learning. At the first grade elementary school level, initial reading learning is the initial stage where students develop their abilities and learn reading techniques and the ability to understand reading content well.

Beginning reading has a significant impact on advanced reading. If students' reading abilities in grade 1 are not optimal, this can hinder the development of their reading skills and make it difficult to understand written educational material. Nowadays, more and more parents are choosing to teach their children to read from an early age, either through participation in reading courses or by accompanying them directly before entering elementary school. Parents' motivation for doing this is so that children can achieve good results at school. However, there are also parents who only choose to rely on their children's learning to read in elementary school. This may be due to the low level of parental education, so that many children only learn about letters, writing and reading after they enter elementary school (Lena et al., 2023).

Early reading begins with the child's ability to develop eye movements from the left to the right, associate letters with the language sounds they represent, and then read simple words and sentences (Herlina, 2019). Beginning reading is a reading skill for children aged 5-6 years starting with recognizing letters or letter sounds, including vowels and consonants, then children learn to read words as a unit and focus more on the pictures around them, at this stage children begin to understand the meaning of words (Marlina et al., 2022).

Early reading learning in elementary schools has strategic value in terms of developing students' personalities and abilities. Personality development can be instilled through reading materials such as discourse, sentences, words, syllables, letters/sounds of language which contain moral messages, educational values, social values, emotional-spiritual values, and other messages which act as a basis for forming a positive personality in students. Ability development can also be taught in an integrated manner through reading material that contains a variety of new knowledge and experiences, which in the end can have an impact on the development of students' abilities. The initial reading process is related to the elements of written language that are learned

and combined into words. The main focus of beginning reading is on understanding the process of learning sounds and elements of written language, syllables and letters (Suastika, 2019).

The initial reading phase focuses on correspondence between text and pronunciation, fluency and clarity of sound, and understanding content or meaning. Reading preparation is supported by literacy experiences, such as reading books or using writing and symbols regularly during learning. Reading materials for the initial reading stage should be appropriate to the child's language and experience. The goal of beginning reading at the lower grade level is to give students the ability to read simple words and sentences fluently and accurately. The ability to read fluently and precisely at this stage is influenced by the activeness and creativity of teachers who teach in lower grades. In other words, teachers have a strategic role in improving students' reading skills (Wardiyati, 2019).

Beginning reading lessons in first grade are very important to prepare students for more advanced reading stages. Difficulties in reading skills in first grade need to be addressed immediately, because they can have significant and detrimental impacts on students, teachers and schools. These impacts will be felt when students continue to higher levels, considering that reading skills are needed for almost all more complex subjects (Astia, 2020). The same thing was also expressed by Rofi'i & Susilo (2022) that beginning reading has a very important role and is the main foundation in developing language skills, understanding subject matter, and the ability to convey information both orally and in writing, especially among class students. In its implementation, it was found that a number of students experienced difficulties in mastering initial reading skills. This reading difficulty becomes a significant obstacle in the next stage of the reading learning process.

Some students experience challenges in understanding the basic concepts of reading, so their ability to understand all subjects and convey information through written and oral forms is limited. Reading difficulties at the initial level have a negative impact on the development of students' literacy skills, requiring special attention and appropriate approaches to support them in overcoming these obstacles. The importance of reading comprehension at an early level as a basis for later success in learning highlights the need for an inclusive approach to ensure each learner can overcome their difficulties. Therefore, teachers and educators need to understand the variations in reading ability levels among students and provide appropriate support to ensure optimal reading skill development for each individual.

Even though it has relevance as a basic ability in the academic field, there are many elementary school students in Indonesia who have not been able to master reading skills. The results of several studies reflect a trend of low reading ability among elementary school students today. This indicates that there are significant challenges in efforts to improve beginning reading skills in Indonesia. Effective solutions are needed to overcome this problem and improve literacy standards at the basic level (Muhyidin et al., 2018)

Based on the explanation above, researchers are interested in conducting research on the initial reading strategies implemented by grade 1 teachers. The aim of this research is to see how the initial reading process is in grade 1 elementary school students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. This research involved 1 grade 1 elementary school teacher. The research will be carried out in the odd semester of 2022, at a public elementary school in Bogor district. This descriptive research aims to clearly describe the strategies used by teachers in implementing beginning reading in grade 1 elementary school with a systematic approach. Data was collected through observations and interviews containing questions regarding the strategies used by teachers in teaching reading at the beginning level. Data analysis in this research is carried out during the ongoing data collection process and also after the data collection phase is completed in the final research. Data analysis in this research is interactive and takes place continuously until all data is considered complete. Stages in data analysis include data reduction (data analysis), data presentation (data display), and conclusion drawing or conclusion drawing.

RESULTS

Factors that Influence Beginning Reading Skills

Based on findings from research that has been conducted, teachers face problems in implementing beginning reading learning for students because they face problems originating from internal and external factors. Based on the results of the interview, the teacher stated that the problems faced were related to the students themselves, namely:

- a. Students who have a level of intelligence below average
- b. Students' difficulties in understanding letters
- c. Students are lazy in learning to read, they feel that reading is a heavy burden. They read when it is interesting to read.
- d. Low student learning motivation. Students prefer playing rather than studying, and along with the development of technology it has an impact on the way students learn (for example: playing with gadgets, watching television and playing Play Station which are very popular with children nowadays)
- e. Low level of student concentration when studying
- f. Lack of family attention and support (parents do not provide study guidance at home)
- g. Children never get the opportunity to study in PAUD units

Strategies applied by teachers in applying beginning reading to students

Teachers use various strategies to implement beginning reading, so that teachers can successfully teach children beginning reading. The strategies that teachers use greatly influence students' success in learning to read. Based on the results of interviews and observations, there are various strategies implemented by teachers, namely:

1. Alphabetical Method

Learning to read using the alphabet method begins with the introduction of letters in alphabetical order. Children learn to recognize these letters and pronounce them according to their sounds in alphabetical order. Letters that have similar shapes like the letters: b-d, p-q, n-u, and m-w-v, by giving them different colors on the letter cards. After that, the practice is done repeatedly until the child understands.

The memorized letters are then put together into syllables, the syllables become words, and the words ultimately become sentences. In other words, pronunciation is not phonetic. For example: the letter 'b' is pronounced 'be', 'c' is pronounced 'ce'.

Example:

i n i	n i n a
i n i	ni na
ini	nina

2. Sound Method

The teacher uses the sound method to introduce the letters a to z and how to pronounce them. The teacher introduces letters by singing the letters of the alphabet until they are finished (a-z), after the child can memorize the song, then the teacher points to the letters randomly, until the child has memorized them. After that, the teacher introduces vowels and consonants. Consonant letters are assisted by a pepet sound in front or behind them. For example, the letter 'b' or 'eb', the letter 'd' is pronounced 'ed', or 'de', the letter 'p' is pronounced 'ep', thus the word paddy is spelled: 'ep-a' (pa) 'ed -i' (di) read (pa-di)

Example:

i n i	n a n i	
i e n i n i	ini	e n a n a e n i n i n a n i
ini	nani	

3. Method of Peeling a Series of Syllables

The teacher starts the lesson by introducing syllables such as ba, bi, bu, be, bo, ca, ci, cu, ce, co, da, di, du, de, do, and so on. Next, these syllables are combined to form words that have meaning using hyphens, such as: ba-bi, ca-ci, da-da. Next, the syllables are broken down into letters. reassembled into syllables.

For example:

bu	ku			bu - ku
ba	pak			ba - pak
bu	ku	ba	pak	
b u k u	ba	pak		
bu	ku	ba	pak	

4. Institutional word method

The teacher starts the lesson with words that are close to the children's experience and understanding, as well as words that they often hear. Teaching material is presented in the form of images accompanied by the name of the image below. For example, a picture of a boy named Didi or a picture of a ball, as well as other pictures. The name "Didi" is written under the child's picture, and the word "bola" is written under the picture of the ball. The steps taken by the teacher are as follows:

- Separate the selected words into syllables
- Breaking syllables into letters
- The letters are connected back into syllables
- These syllables are combined to form words
- These words are arranged into sentences

5. Structural, Analytical, Synthetic (SAS) Method

Based on the results of the interview, the implementation of this method was divided into two stages, namely 1) without books, 2) using books. At the bookless stage, learning is carried out in the following ways:

- The teacher chooses sentences that are easy to understand and often said by students, for example: this is a ball
- The teacher shows a picture of a picture telling a story
- Read pictures with sentence cards
- Arrange sentences, for example: this is a ball
- Students analyze sentences into words, words into syllables, and syllables into letters
- Students re-arrange letters into syllables, syllables into words, and words into complete sentences

At the stage of using books, children will read texts taken from the material they have learned when understanding letters when reading without books. Teachers use supplementary books and textbooks. Teaching activities are carried out with the following steps:

- Read together aloud.
- Read each line in turn.
- If there are children who don't know letters well, the teacher returns to using sentence, letter and word cards.
- The teacher pays attention to the pronunciation of vowels, consonants and punctuation.

Apart from these methods, the teacher also said that the strategies applied to teach reading to grade 1 elementary school children were:

- Try to implement learning methods that direct students to be active in reading, one of which is through the assignment method, where students must carry out assignments from the teacher, both at school and at home, regarding learning to read
- Conduct an evaluation at the end of each reading lesson to determine the level of success of the reading lesson
- Always provide pictures that attract students' attention in every initial reading lesson. So that students are interested in reading sentences accompanied by pictures

4. Provide songs to raise the enthusiasm of students, the teacher writes down several sentences contained in the lyrics of the song, with the teacher's guidance the students read them
5. Provide reading material whose content is quite interesting, meaning it does not cause students to feel bored
6. Carrying out enrichment (additional learning) outside the classroom, this is done as a step to instill motivation that learning can be done anywhere and anytime
7. Always give homework related to reading skills
8. Provide a study schedule outside school hours.
9. Apply the peer tutoring method to improve beginning reading skills. In this way, students who are already fluent in reading help their friends to read the sentences given by the teacher.

DISCUSSION

Factors that Influence Beginning Reading Skills

Reading is an activity that involves physical and mental aspects, each person has varying skills. Certain factors influence differences in the reading abilities of each individual. Lamb & Arnold (in Rahman 2011, in Rahman et al., 2020) suggest that the factors that influence initial reading skills are as follows:

a. Physiological Factors

Physiological factors, such as physical health, neurological considerations, gender, and level of fatigue, have a significant impact on each individual's reading ability. Some experts claim that neurological disorders, such as brain defects, and physical immaturity, can lead to failure in children's reading skills. Aspects of physical health, including the condition of speech, vision and hearing, are key factors in determining a person's reading ability. Neurological limitations and physical deficiencies can be influential obstacles in the development of children's reading skills. Optimal function of speech, vision and hearing play a crucial role in supporting reading ability. Fatigue is recognized as an unfavorable condition, especially in the context of learning to read, and capable of affecting students' overall performance.

b. Intellectual Factors

Intelligence is a person's overall ability to behave in accordance with goals, think rationally, and act effectively towards the environment. The higher a person's intelligence level, the easier it is for them to develop themselves through training and learning from experience.

c. Environmental factor

Reading skills are influenced by environmental factors, including students' background and experiences at home, as well as the socio-economic conditions of their families. Students' backgrounds and experiences have a significant impact on their reading abilities. Students will face fewer obstacles in reading if they grow and develop in a harmonious, loving home environment, where parents understand their children and prepare them with a high sense of self-esteem. This is also related to students' socio-economic factors. If students live in families with a high socio-economic level, this can affect their verbal skills, supported by the facilities provided by their parents who have a high socio-economic level. In contrast, students living in low socioeconomic families may experience difficulties because their parents cannot meet their needs and their children may lack self-confidence.

d. Student Background and Experiences at Home

The environment has a big role in shaping a child's personality, attitudes, values and language skills. Conditions at home also affect a child's ability to adjust to the social environment. A harmonious home atmosphere and parental support for education contribute to children's learning efforts. Parents who are active in reading, have a collection of books, and like reading stories to their children, tend to encourage children's interest in reading, creating positive experiences in reading. On the other hand, disharmonious home conditions, where parents are not interested in reading and do not have a book collection, can have a negative impact on children's reading skills. The quality and breadth of children's experiences at home also play an important role in their learning progress.

e. Socioeconomic Factors

Parents' socio-economic factors and surrounding environmental conditions play an important role in shaping the home environment for students. The higher the student's socio-economic status, the higher the possibility of having good verbal skills. Children who live in homes that provide reading materials and frequently hold reading activities tend to have higher reading skills.

f. Psychological Factors

Psychological factors consist of three aspects, namely motivation, interest and social maturity, as well as emotions and personal maturity. Regarding reading motivation, having high motivation will make someone always consider reading as a crucial element in life, and this will encourage them to become effective readers.

Beginning Reading Learning Method

In the process of teaching beginning reading, there are various methods that can be applied so that learning Indonesian becomes effective, enjoyable, and can achieve learning goals easily (Rahmadini et al., 2020), including:

a. Alphabetical Method

The alphabet method is a way of reading that has a long history, but is now rarely used. The main concept of this method is teaching through the introduction of letters that must be memorized by pronouncing them in alphabetical order. The Alphabet or Alphabetical method introduces memorized letters by stating their sounds in alphabetical order. After the letters are memorized, the next step is to arrange them into syllables, the syllables into words, and finally the words form sentences. It should be noted that in this method, pronunciation does not follow phonetic principles. For example, the letter /b/ is pronounced as /be/, /c/ is pronounced as /ce/, /d/ is pronounced as /de/, and so on (Marlini & Rismawati, 2019).

b. Sound Method

The sound method is an initial approach to learning to read that involves pronouncing consonant letter sounds, using a middle vowel sound such as [ə] or a middle front vowel [e]. In grapheme representation, these two types of sounds are marked with the same letter, namely /e/, which can be placed in front of or behind the consonant letter. In traditional grammar rules, consonant letters are often referred to as consonants. For example, the consonant /b/ is pronounced as /eb/ or /be/, /ed/ or /de/, /es/, /ek/, and so on. Because it focuses on the spelling process, this method is also known as the spelling method (Marlini & Rismawati, 2019).

c. Syllable stringing method

The syllabic parsing method is a learning approach that begins by introducing words that have been broken down into syllables. Next, the syllables are connected to form words, and finally, it involves combining words to form sentences with complete meaning (Muhidin, 2014).

d. Institutional Word Method

The word agency method is an approach that functions as a bridge between the sound method and the global method in learning to read. Learning begins with words that are familiar to children, that they can understand and hear often. In this concept, teaching material is presented in the form of pictures, where words are written under the picture. For example, there is a picture of a girl with the name Lusi or Meri, as well as other pictures such as balls. Under each picture, there is writing with the name Meri or Lusi. Likewise, under the image of the ball, there is writing that says the word "ball" (Marlini & Rismawati, 2019).

e. SAS Method

The SAS method is a learning approach that begins by introducing words that have been broken down into syllables. Next, the syllables are connected to form words, and finally, it involves combining words to form sentences with complete meaning. Some techniques that can be used in this method involve recorded conversations to be used as reading material, showing pictures while telling a story, reading pictures with sentence cards, and reading sentences structurally. Media such as flannel boards, sentence cards, word cards, syllable cards, letter cards, and picture cards can be used to make it easier to decipher and combine words. For example, the teacher can show a picture of a child sweeping while saying the phrase "Nino sweeps the class." This technique

can be done by removing the image after students are able to read the writing under the image without visual assistance (Hasibuan, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Beginning reading ability is one of the important aspects that must be taught to students when they enter the world of education, especially in elementary school. To handle the problem when students often forget letters and are not yet proficient in reading, teachers apply various strategies in the form of regular repetition, from recognizing letters to reading syllables.

Teachers use various methods, such as the alphabet method, sound or spelling method, syllable parsing method, institutional word method, and SAS method to teach beginning reading to students. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure teacher success in teaching beginning reading skills to students.

Teachers face various obstacles in their efforts to teach beginning reading to students. The research results show that these obstacles can come from various factors, both internal and external. Factors originating from the students themselves include: low level of intelligence, difficulty in understanding letters, low level of laziness and motivation, as well as parental factors. Based on the results of this research, good cooperation between teachers and parents is needed to ensure that initial reading learning runs smoothly. Parents and teachers need to regularly provide stimulation to train children's early reading skills, both at home and at school.

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