

Research Article

Problems in learning to read for the lower grades: A case study of class II elementary school students

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ABSTRACT

Many students experience learning difficulties, one of which is learning to read. The purpose of this study was to analyse the problems of learning to read in class II students of SD Negeri 2 Pengadegan. This type of research is qualitative research. Data collection techniques used observation, interview, and documentation methods. They are checking data validity using triangulation. The results showed that several children still had difficulty in learning to read, which was influenced by two factors, namely internal factor and external factor. The internal factor is the student's lack of interest and lazy behaviour in learning to read. External factors influencing students' reading difficulties can be grouped into the family, school and community environment. From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the learning difficulties experienced by many class II elementary school students are reading learning difficulties. The implications of this research are expected to help teachers provide actions to overcome various learning difficulties experienced by students.

Keywords: learning to read; learning problems; primary school

1. INTRODUCTION

Education will continue to be one of the interesting topics of conversation because, in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution, one of the goals of Indonesia's national education is to educate the nation's life (Nugraheni, 2019; Nuraini & Abidin, 2020). To achieve these national education goals, sustainable, comprehensive and integrated development efforts are carried out (Dilamsari & Hendratno, 2021; Septiana Soleha et al., 2021). National education development is one of the efforts to educate the nation's life and improve the quality of Indonesian people in realising an advanced, just, and prosperous society based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, which allows citizens to develop as full Indonesian human beings. Therefore, education has a very important role in the progress of a nation. These educational goals can be achieved through learning (Apriliani & Radia, 2020; Wulanjani & Anggraeni, 2019).

Learning is a process of effort that a person makes to obtain a new change in his overall behaviour due to his own experience interacting with the environment (Handayani & Koeswanti, 2020; Prawiyogi et al., 2021). The learning process can be seen from a change in a person, namely a change in human personality, which is characterised by an increase in quality and quantity in terms of knowledge, attitudes, skills, habits, understanding and others. However, at present, many children experience learning difficulties, one of which is students' reading problems. In general, not only low-ability students experience learning difficulties, but also high-ability students. In addition, students with average (normal) abilities may also experience learning difficulties due to certain factors that hinder the achievement of expected academic results. Other references also explain the definition of learning difficulties. Learning difficulty is a condition of the learning process characterised by certain obstacles to achieving academic results (Amalia et al., 2021; Wahyuni, 2019).

This learning difficulty is not always caused by low intelligence (other than mental) factors but can also be caused by non-intelligence factors. One factor is that students with a high IQ do not necessarily guarantee success in learning. To provide appropriate guidance to each student, educators need to understand issues related to learning difficulties (Iskandar et al., 2021; Meirisa, 2021; Susanti, 2018). The phenomenon of learning difficulties of a student is usually seen in the decline in academic results or learning outcomes. However, learning difficulties can also be evidenced by student misbehaviour, such as shouting in class, disturbing friends, fighting, frequent absences, and frequent truancy. The learning outcomes achieved by students are influenced by two main factors, namely factors contained within the students themselves called intrinsic factors and those outside the students called extrinsic factors.

Teachers must pay attention to student development. Teachers have the role of instilling reading skills in students, and they must know the difficulties experienced by students, especially at the beginning of the reading, because the difficulties experienced by students are different (Ernalis et al., 2016; Sumira et al., 2018). Each student may experience different difficulties from other students. It would be better if students' difficulties in reading were detected at an early stage. Some studies show that reading proficiency is very important in an educated society because children's learning activities begin with how people read. Reading books will be very important for children's future life (Nuraini & Abidin, 2020; Siregar et al., 2020). If there are problems with reading skills, which are part of language proficiency, it will affect other learning processes (Dilamsari & Hendratno, 2021; Nugraheni, 2019).

One mistake teachers often make waiting for students to behave negatively. Not a few teachers ignore the development of their students. Teachers only pay attention to students when they are noisy, not paying attention, or making trouble. Teachers intervene when students have difficulty learning to read (Apriliani & Radia, 2020; Wulanjani & Anggraeni, 2019). This study aims to analyse the learning difficulties of class II students in primary schools. Hopefully, this research can overcome the learning difficulties experienced by students.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach in line with the research methods and problems previously described. Research with a qualitative approach emphasises the process analysis of the inductive thinking process regarding the dynamics of the relationship between observed phenomena using scientific logic (John W. Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In qualitative research, the research instrument is the researcher himself (Miles et al., 2014). The research instrument is not external or objective but internal or subjective, namely the researcher himself, without using tests, questionnaires or experiments. Therefore, the direct presence of the researcher is a must in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This research observation was carried out at SD Negeri Pengadegan 2 on class II students. This research was conducted for one month in the odd semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. The data collection techniques used were observation, interview, and documentation (J.W. Creswell et al., 2007; Merriam, 2009). The participants in this study were class II students at SD Negeri 2 Pengadegan. Researchers used to source and data triangulation techniques to test the validity of the data obtained.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that some children still have difficulty learning to read. From the observation results, the teacher has used several methods to hone students' reading ability. Firstly, the teacher uses the individual reading method, which the teacher guides. Usually, this method is used independently, separate from the designated learning hours. Then, the reading method with picture media. This method is used by teachers who prepare pictures with certain letters to attract students. However, some of these methods, for a limited period, have not been able to improve students' ability to read. This phenomenon can be seen in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1. Use of multiple reading methods Image source: research documentation

Reading problems in class II students at SD Negeri 2 Pengadegan are caused by internal and external factors. The internal factor that makes it difficult for students to learn to read is the lack of interest from the students themselves, which makes them lazy to learn to read. External factors that influence students' reading difficulties can be divided into three factors: family, school, and social environment. **Firstly**, the family environment influences students' learning difficulties. This is because parents' attention to reminding their children to learn is very important, such as completing assignments given by the teacher or accompanying children while learning to read. This parental attitude strongly influences children's motivation to learn and thus improves their academic performance. Students who experience difficulties in learning due to a less harmonious relationship between parents and children, as research has done before (Amalia et al., 2021; Ernalis et al., 2016; Iskandar et al., 2021; Sumira et al., 2018; Susanti, 2018; Wahyuni, 2019). So, parents must be able to motivate children because this motivation will make children learn well at school (Siregar et al., 2020). In some interviews, students stated that if their parents did not care much or did not remind them to study, they were usually busy with their work, and some were victims of separation from their parents. Therefore, motivation to learn provided by parents at home will greatly impact children's learning; most children feel more enthusiastic about learning if there is parental motivation.

Second is the school environment. The school environment also affects students' ability to learn to read. Adequate facilities and infrastructure at school allow children to get the most out of the learning process. Good teaching methods make it easier for students to understand the material. Learning methods are one of the components that help the success of teaching and learning activities. A pleasant and clean school environment can create a sense of comfort in learning because students can concentrate better and show their creativity, increasing their motivation to learn to read. In addition to the use of good methods for learning at school, conducive conditions can also affect their motivation to learn (Dilamsari & Hendratno, 2021; Nugraheni, 2019; Nuraini & Abidin, 2020). School facilities and infrastructure must support and provide services in the learning process for students and teachers (Apriliani & Radia, 2020; Wulanjani & Anggraeni, 2019). So it can be said that the greater the influence of the school environment and teacher methods, the greater the learning motivation. Conversely, the less influential the school environment and the teacher's incompetence, the lower the motivation to learn.

The third is the social environment. The post-pandemic environment that requires learning at home also affects students' ability to learn to read. During class I, students are focused on learning online at home (stay at home), so the control from school is not optimal. In addition, there was no motivation from other friends to study in groups because they lived far from school friends. Students' poor social interaction and way of hanging out do not encourage learning to read, which means that environmental factors in the community cause students' reading to be inhibited. Society is an external factor that also affects student learning, and this influence is realised due to students' presence in society (Handayani & Koeswanti, 2020; Prawiyogi et al., 2021).

Most students are still careless in socialising and choosing friends, which makes them preoccupied with bad company and lazy learning. This result is supported by previous findings, which show that environmental factors in the family, school, and community have a strong influence on students' interest in learning to read (Amalia et al., 2021; Ernalis et al., 2016; Sumira et al., 2018; Wahyuni, 2019). The results show that most of the learning problems experienced by class 2 students at SD Negeri 2 Pengadegan are learning disabilities in reading, and the factors that influence learning disabilities in reading can be divided into two factors, namely internal factors (from students) and external factors (from outside). External factors specifically include the family environment, school environment and social environment. It is hoped that the implications of this study will help schools to take action to overcome various learning difficulties experienced by students.

4. CONCLUSION

There are still class II students at SD Negeri 2 Pengadegan who have difficulty learning to read, according to the behaviour that indicates that some children have difficulty learning to read. This is caused by two influencing factors, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include low interest in learning to read, laziness and slowness in understanding the material. At the same time, external factors are a lack of attention and motivation from parents/environment. Therefore, suggestions that can be given are that teachers should be able to pay more attention to their student's ability to assimilate material, especially in learning to read. And parents should be able to pay more attention and motivate their children to take an interest in learning and take the time to help children study at home.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author discussed the results and contributed to from the start to final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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