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ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AND STRATEGIES IN OVERCOMING READING DIFFICULTIES IN ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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ABSTRAK

This study aims to analyze in higher grades of elementary school have trouble reading and explores ways to help them improve. This study used a qualitative descriptive method and included 20 students, with 10 being in fourth and the other 10 in fifth grade. Data was gathered by talking to teachers and students, giving out questionnaires, and looking at written records. The data were looked at using methods for understanding qualitative information, which included simplifying the data, organizing it in a way that's easy to see, and then coming up with the main ideas or conclusions. The results show that students who have trouble reading often read slowly, make mistakes when identifying letters and sounds, and don't understand the texts they read very well. These problems come from inside and outside the situation. Internal factors can include things like not being very motivated to learn, having a small vocabulary, trouble remembering things, and students' mental or emotional states. External factors include parents, poor learning conditions, and teaching that doesn't work well. To deal with these challenges, several approaches were used. These included using technology to teach phonics, giving extra time for reading practice, improving teamwork between teachers and parents.

Keywords: *Reading Difficulties, Learning Motivation, Reading Interest*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesulitan membaca pada siswa kelas atas sekolah dasar dan mengeksplorasi cara-cara untuk membantu mereka meningkatkan kemampuan membaca. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan melibatkan 20 siswa, dengan 10 siswa kelas empat dan 10 siswa kelas lima. Data dikumpulkan dengan berbicara kepada guru dan siswa, memberikan kuesioner, dan melihat catatan tertulis. Data tersebut dianalisis menggunakan metode pemahaman informasi kualitatif, yang meliputi penyederhanaan data, pengorganisasian data agar mudah dipahami, dan kemudian merumuskan ide atau kesimpulan utama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang mengalami kesulitan membaca seringkali membaca lambat, membuat kesalahan saat mengidentifikasi huruf dan bunyi, dan tidak memahami teks yang mereka baca dengan baik. Masalah-masalah ini berasal dari dalam dan luar situasi. Faktor internal dapat mencakup hal-hal seperti kurangnya motivasi belajar, kosakata yang terbatas, kesulitan mengingat sesuatu, dan kondisi mental atau emosional siswa. Faktor eksternal meliputi orang tua, kondisi belajar yang buruk, dan pengajaran yang kurang efektif. Untuk mengatasi tantangan-tantangan ini, beberapa pendekatan digunakan. Ini termasuk penggunaan teknologi untuk mengajarkan fonetik, memberikan waktu tambahan untuk latihan membaca, dan meningkatkan kerja sama tim antara guru dan orang tua.

Kata Kunci: Kesulitan Membaca, Motivasi Belajar, Minat Membaca

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a basic language skill that is important in school. Reading is also very important for students because it helps them get information and understand what they are learning. According to (Hamalik, 2011), reading is an activity where people get information and knowledge by looking at written text. By reading, students can understand better, learn more things, and think more deeply about what they read. So, being able to read well is a key part of helping students do well in school and grow as people. But some some students still experience difficulties in developing reading skills.

Reading is more than just saying words out loud. It requires the brain to do several things at once, like recognizing words by sight, understanding what they mean, and thinking about them carefully. Some other researchers say that reading is like turning written symbols into real language meaning. When students struggle with reading, it can make it harder for them to understand what they're learning, which might cause them to fall behind in school, lose interest in learning, and not develop their ability to think critically.

During the School Field Introduction (PLP) at SD Muhammadiyah 5 Pekanbaru, we noticed that some students have trouble with reading. The results indicate that about 30% of students have trouble reading smoothly, 13% find it hard to understand what they hear during dictation, and 22% have difficulty grasping the meaning of the texts they read. Also, some older students are still learning to spell and have trouble recognizing letters and sounds.

These conditions show that reading problems happen not just with understanding but also with the basic skills needed to read. Some earlier research has talked about problems people have when reading and how these issues affect how well students do in their studies. Many studies mostly look at the different kinds of reading problems but don't thoroughly look at the various factors, both inside and outside, that affect these problems. They also don't look at the methods teachers use to help students in their classes. So, more study is needed to better understand why some people have trouble reading and what methods can help them improve. This study is meant to find out why some students have trouble reading and look into the methods that are used to help them improve, especially in higher grades of elementary school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Ability in Elementary Education

Reading is one of the most fundamental skills that must be mastered by elementary school students because it becomes the basis for acquiring knowledge in various subjects. According to Jeanne S. Chall, children's reading development occurs through several stages, starting from the stage of learning letter recognition, decoding words, and eventually developing reading comprehension (Chall, 1983). If students fail to develop reading skills in the early grades, they often experience academic difficulties in higher levels of education.

Reading ability includes several essential components such as phonemic awareness, vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency, and comprehension. Catherine Snow explains that reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning from written text through interaction between the reader's knowledge and the information presented in the text (Snow, 2002). Therefore, developing reading ability requires systematic instruction and continuous practice both at school and at home.

Factors Causing Reading Difficulties in Elementary Students

Reading difficulties among elementary school students can arise from a variety of internal and external factors. According to Linnea C. Ehri, internal factors include cognitive ability, phonological awareness, language development, motivation, and memory processes involved in recognizing and processing words (Ehri, 2005). Students who have weak phonological awareness often struggle to connect letters with their corresponding sounds, making it difficult for them to decode words effectively.

In addition to internal factors, environmental influences also play a significant role in reading development. Keith E. Stanovich introduced the concept of the *Matthew Effect* in reading, which explains that students who experience early reading difficulties tend to fall further behind their peers because they engage in less reading practice and have limited exposure to vocabulary (Stanovich, 2009). This condition creates a widening gap in literacy achievement over time.

Other external factors include limited access to reading materials, inadequate instructional strategies, and lack of parental support. A learning environment that does not promote reading habits can also hinder the development of students' literacy skills.

Strategies to Overcome Reading Difficulties

Various instructional strategies can be applied to help elementary students overcome reading difficulties. One widely recommended approach is phonics-based instruction. According to Marilyn Jager Adams, phonics instruction helps students understand the relationship between letters and sounds, enabling them to decode unfamiliar words more effectively (Adams, 1994).

Another effective strategy is guided reading, where teachers provide structured assistance while students read texts appropriate to their reading level. Through guided reading, teachers can identify students' specific reading problems and provide targeted interventions.

Repeated reading is also considered an effective technique for improving reading fluency. This method allows students to read the same text multiple times until they achieve greater accuracy, speed, and comprehension. In addition, the integration of interactive reading activities, such as storytelling, shared reading, and reading discussions, can increase students' engagement and motivation.

Parental involvement is another crucial factor in improving children's reading ability. When parents read together with their children and provide access to books at home, children tend to develop stronger literacy skills and a positive attitude toward reading.

Previous Studies on Reading Difficulties

Previous research has emphasized the importance of early intervention in addressing reading difficulties among elementary students. According to Richard L. Allington, providing students with increased access to books and effective reading instruction significantly improves reading achievement (Allington, 2012). Schools that implement structured literacy programs and promote reading habits tend to produce better literacy outcomes among students.

Furthermore, collaborative efforts between teachers, parents, and educational institutions are essential in addressing reading difficulties. Effective literacy programs not only focus on teaching reading skills but also create supportive environments that encourage students to read regularly and develop lifelong literacy habits.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive method to look into the reading challenges faced by elementary school students and the ways they used to deal with those challenges. A qualitative method was selected because reading problems are complicated and happen in different situations, so it's important to understand how students learn naturally in real-life settings.

The study took place at SD Muhammadiyah 5 in Pekanbaru. The study took place in February 2026. The people involved in this study were students and teachers. The student participants were 20 upper-grade elementary students, with 10 in fourth grade and 10 in fifth grade who had trouble reading. The participants were chosen using a purposive sampling method, which lets researchers select people based on certain criteria that are important for the study's goals. The homeroom teacher also acted as an informant to give more details about the students' reading skills and their learning environment.

Data was gathered using different methods like talking to people, watching what happens, asking questions in forms, and keeping records. Interviews were done with the homeroom teacher and some students to get detailed information on why reading is difficult and what methods are used during the learning process. Observations were done to see how students read during class activities, looking at how smoothly they read, their ability to recognize letters, how focused they were, and their feelings while doing reading tasks. Questionnaires were given out to collect more information about students' reading habits and their learning experiences. Documentation like student worksheets and other school records was used to support the data.

The data were looked at using methods for understanding qualitative information, which involve simplifying the data, organizing it in a clear way, and then coming up with conclusions or checking if those conclusions are correct. To make sure the data was accurate, the study used data triangulation by looking at information from interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Forms of Reading Difficulties

Based on the field observations and interviews conducted with teachers and students at SD Muhammadiyah 5 Pekanbaru, several forms of reading difficulties were identified among fourth and fifth grade students. The most common difficulty observed was slow and hesitant reading. Several students required more time to pronounce words and often paused in the middle of sentences. This condition affected their reading fluency and made it difficult for them to understand the overall meaning of the text.

Another form of difficulty was problems in recognizing letters and phonetic sounds. Some students were still confused when distinguishing between letters with similar shapes, such as b and d or p and q. This problem indicates that several students have not yet mastered the basic phonological awareness required for reading development.

In addition, reading comprehension difficulties were also identified. Some students were able to read the text aloud but struggled to explain the meaning of the text or identify key information from the reading material. This indicates that reading difficulties occur not only at the mechanical level but also at the comprehension level.

These findings are consistent with previous studies which explain that reading difficulties among elementary school students can occur in several forms, including problems in reading fluency,

letter recognition, and reading comprehension (Lena et al., 2023; Julianty et al., 2023). Therefore, reading difficulties need to be addressed not only through technical reading exercises but also through activities that strengthen comprehension skills.

Factors Causing Reading Difficulties
1. Internal Factors

The study shows that many factors inside the school or classroom can cause students to have trouble reading. One key point noticed from classroom observations and interviews was that students had low motivation to learn. Some students weren't very interested in reading activities and often tried to avoid doing the reading tasks that the teacher gave them.Another factor is limited vocabulary mastery. Students with a limited vocabulary find it hard to understand new words they come across in the text, which makes it difficult for them to grasp the overall meaning of what they are reading.

Also, mental factors like worry and lack of confidence were noticed as well. Several students looked unsure and worried when they were asked to read aloud in front of the whole class. This feeling can make students less interested in reading and cause their reading skills to improve more slowly.

2. External Factors

Besides things that happen inside the school, some outside factors were also found to affect students' trouble with reading. One key thing is that there isn't much help from parents at home. Some students don't get much help or praise from their parents to read at home outside of school.Another thing is that there aren't enough books and learning places available. Students who don't have much access to books or literacy materials often miss out on chances to improve their reading abilities.

The ways teachers teach in the classroom can also affect how well students learn to read. If the teaching methods aren't changed to fit what students can do and how they learn, students might have trouble keeping up with the reading lessons.These results match earlier studies that show how a family's environment, the tools available for learning, and the way lessons are taught all help kids develop their reading and writing skills (Windiasari et al., 2021).

Strategies for Overcoming Reading Difficulties

By talking to teachers and watching classes, some methods have been used to help students who have trouble reading. One good approach is using technology to teach phonics, which helps kids see how letters connect to sounds better. Interactive learning materials can help students stay more involved and make the process of learning to read more enjoyable.Another way to help is to give students more time to practice reading, especially if they have trouble with reading. By reading a lot and getting help during reading lessons, students slowly get better at reading smoothly and easily.

Working together with parents is also seen as important for helping students improve their reading skills. When students get steady help from both school and home, they often become more motivated and confident in reading. These methods match the idea of scaffolding introduced by Vygotsky, which focuses on using teaching help to guide students toward better learning outcomes.

Theoretical Implications

The study's results support the idea that reading is more than just seeing letters; it's also a thoughtful process that includes understanding, making sense of the text, and thinking carefully about what is read. Students' ability to read well comes from many different factors, including how their brain works, their feelings and thoughts, and the surroundings they grow up in.

So, good reading teaching should not just focus on the skills needed to read words, but also take into account how interested students are, the setting they're learning in, and their feelings during learning. Using the right teaching methods and creating a helpful learning setting can greatly help students develop their reading and writing skills.

CONCLUSION

This study tried to find out the different types of reading problems, the reasons behind these problems, and the methods that help students overcome them in higher grades of elementary school. The study shows that reading problems can show up in different ways, like reading slowly and stumbling over words, having trouble recognizing letters and sounds, and not understanding what is read. These challenges originate from both internal and external factors. Internal factors like low motivation to read, not knowing enough words, trouble remembering things, and feeling unsure or shy when reading out loud can all affect someone's ability to read well. External factors like not enough support from parents, poor learning conditions, and teaching methods that don't match what students need can all affect their education.

To help with these challenges, some methods were used, like offering extra reading time for students who have trouble reading, working more closely with parents and teachers, and using fun and engaging ways to teach reading to help students improve their skills. The results show that having support from teachers, parents, and schools all together is very important for helping students improve their reading and writing skills.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer useful insights that can help enhance students' reading skills. Teachers can create extra reading plans outside of regular class time for students who still have trouble with reading. These sessions offer more directed help and chances to practice, which can help students become better at reading smoothly and understanding what they read.Parents also help children learn to read better at home. Parents can join their kids during reading time, help them read together at home, and create a good environment for learning to read. In addition, parents might think about signing their kids up for reading tutoring groups where they can learn with other children of the same age to help improve their reading abilities.

From the school's point of view, it's suggested that schools offer more help by having special teachers or reading experts who can work with students who have trouble reading, especially those who find it hard to recognize letters and build basic reading abilities..

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations. The study took place at just one elementary school and involved 20 students, which might make it hard to apply the results to other schools or educational settings. Second, the study took place during the School Field Introduction period, which means that the time spent collecting data was not very long. So, future research should include more schools and

students, and take longer to observe, in order to get better and more complete results about students' reading problems and what works best to help them.

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