



An Analysis of Indonesian Young Learners' Reading Ability in Remote Area

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Reading Ability, Young Learners, Remote Area

Received : 3, June

Revised : 18, July

Accepted: 18, August

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the reading ability of Indonesian young learners in remote area. This research applied descriptive quantitative method by using EGRA (Early Grade Reading Assessment) test instrument. The researcher used first-grade students at SDN Ngolo as sample. The researcher measured all the students from first-grade students at SDN Ngolo which consist of 14 students. The result of this research showed that the reading ability of 1st grade students in SDN Ngolo is on very poor category with the score 53,6. From 14 students of 1st grade who followed the test, 1 student is categorized as very good, 3 students are categorized as good, 4 students are categorized as fair, 0 student is categorized as poor, and 6 students are categorized as very poor. The most dominant reading ability of 1st grade students in SDN Ngolo is the ability to recognize the letter with 70,2857 (fair) score. The lowest reading ability of 1st grade students in SDN Ngolo is the ability to read fluently and the ability to comprehend the text with 28,5714 (very poor) score.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an activity frequently carried out by humans, especially students. According to Tarigan (2013:7), reading is a process used by readers to extract the message conveyed by the writer through written words or language. Meanwhile, Dalman (2017:5) argues that reading is a cognitive process performed to acquire various information and insights. Reading lessons should have a purpose because individuals who read with a purpose tend to have a better understanding compared to those who lack a purpose. Reading is a process that involves not only uttering words, but also various visual, thinking, psycholinguistic, and metacognitive activities (Rafika, 2020). Reading essentially demands students to focus more on the text they are reading in terms of their abilities and comprehension.

Reading is a skill that elementary school students must possess and understand as reading is related to the entire learning process of students (Rahim, 2011). Students can be categorized as ready to read when they are able to understand the meaning of words for objects mentioned by others. For example, when a teacher says "table," the student can point to a table. According to Ariyati (2014), the low reading ability of students can have negative impacts on their mental well-being and academic achievement. Students' inability to read can affect their self-confidence, leading to a decrease in their learning motivation.

First-grade elementary school students fall into the concrete operational stage according to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which occurs from the age of 7 to 11 years. Santrock (2011:331) argues that during this stage, most children show dramatic progress in maintaining and controlling attention. Attention is one of the cognitive functions involved during the reading process. Additionally, at the age of 7, children experience an increase in short-term memory, although it is not as extensive as the next stage, the preoperational stage (ages 2-7). In the context of reading, short-term memory is useful in remembering sequences of letters and their sounds. Therefore, in line with their development at this age, students can master reading skills effectively.

In reality, researchers have found facts that contrast with Piaget's theory of cognitive development in the context of reading, especially concerning first-grade students at SDN Ngolo. The researchers found students who struggled with reading fluency, were unable to read certain words, and even unfamiliar with specific letters. Therefore, the researchers are interested in delving deeper into the reading abilities of first-grade students at SDN Ngolo.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

This research employs a quantitative descriptive method. According to Sukmadinata (2010:54), descriptive research aims to describe or provide an overview of the researched object as it is. Meanwhile, Arikunto (2006) suggests that the quantitative descriptive research method aims to create a numerical or descriptive representation of a condition objectively, starting from data collection, interpretation of the data, and presentation of the results.

The research variable is anything in any form designated by the researcher to be studied in order to obtain information about it, which is then drawn to a

conclusion (Sugiyono, 2013:38). The variable in this research employs a single variable approach as it only focuses on one variable, which is the reading difficulty of first-grade students.

To collect data, the researcher utilizes a test instrument called EGRA (Early Grade Reading Assessment). This instrument is suitable for early grade students such as first-grade students. EGRA can diagnose the difficulties experienced by students and measure their reading abilities. EGRA instrument has been used to assess reading abilities in various countries. The researcher adapts the EGRA instrument framework to assess the reading ability of Indonesian students, as used by (Rizkiana, 2016).

Table 1. Indicator and aspects of EGRA Instrument

Aspect	Indicator	soal
Knowing Alphabet	Students can name letters	50
Reading meaningful words	Students can read words	25
Reading meaningless words	Students can read words without meaning	15
Fluency in reading aloud and reading comprehension	Students can read a paragraph and answer questions	5
Listening	Students can listen and answer oral questions	5

The data collection procedure for this research is as follows:

1. Enter the first-grade classroom after obtaining permission to conduct the research.
2. Conduct the first test by providing 50 randomly selected letters, both uppercase and lowercase. Students have 60 seconds to name each letter.
3. Conduct the second test by providing 25 meaningful words. Students have 60 seconds to read the words.
4. Conduct the third test by providing 15 meaningless words. Students have 60 seconds to read the words.
5. Conduct the fourth test by providing a paragraph. Students are asked to read the paragraph and answer 5 questions related to it.
6. Conduct the fifth test. The researcher reads a paragraph aloud and then asks the student 5 questions related to the paragraph.
7. The researcher records the scores obtained by the students.

Afterwards, the average results will be categorized using the assessment categories from Arikunto (2010), as follows:

Table 2. Score Category

Range	Category
86-100	Very Good
71-85	Good
56-70	Fair
41-55	Poor
0-40	Very Poor

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the data collection and analysis, data on reading abilities of the first-grade students at SDN Ngolo were obtained. The data is presented as follows:

Table 3. Result

Student	Score					Average (Final Score)
	Aspect 1	Aspect 2	Aspect 3	Aspect 4	Aspect 5	
AT	76	80	76	20	60	62,4
BD	100	100	88	60	60	81,6
BL	80	84	68	60	80	74,4
FR	84	76	60	40	40	60
LO	92	96	80	60	60	77,6
MA	84	88	72	40	60	68,8
MF	36	24	12	0	60	26,4
MH	88	92	64	40	60	68,8
PR	52	44	36	0	20	30,4
RA	44	20	16	0	40	24
RR	64	48	32	20	40	40,8

SP	100	100	92	60	80	86,4
UR	40	36	8	0	40	24,8
YD	44	24	12	0	40	24
Mean	70,2857	65,1428	51,2428	28,5714	52,8571	53,6

Explanation:

Aspect 1: recognizing letters

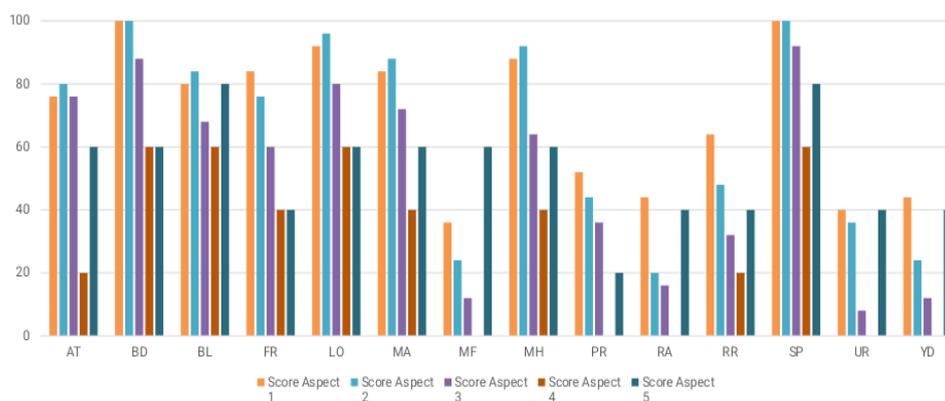
Aspect 2: reading meaningful words

Aspect 3: reading words without meaning

Aspect 4: fluency in reading aloud and reading comprehension

Aspect 5: listening comprehension

Diagram 1. Result



Based on the result above, it can be observed that the ability to recognize letters has an average score of 70.2857, falling within the category of "sufficient." The ability to read meaningful words has an average score of 65.1428, also categorized as "sufficient." The ability to read words without meaning has an average score of 51.2428, which falls into the "poor" category. The ability to read aloud and comprehend passages has an average score of 28.5751, categorized as "very poor." The ability to listen has an average score of 52.851, categorized as "poor."

If the average scores of the five aspects for each student are calculated, it results in the overall reading ability of the students based on the EGRA instrument test. From the table and diagram above, it can be observed that out of 14 students, 1 student falls into the "excellent" category, 3 students fall into the "good" category, 4 students fall into the "sufficient" category, 0 students fall into the "poor" category, and 6 students fall into the "very poor" category. The overall average score, when calculated, indicates that the general reading ability

of the students at SDN Ngolo is 53.6. Therefore, it can be concluded that the reading ability of first-grade students at SDN Ngolo is poor.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The reading ability of first-grade students at SDN Ngolo is poor with a score of 53.6. Out of the 14 first-grade students assessed for their reading abilities, 1 student falls into the "excellent" category, 3 students fall into the "good" category, 4 students fall into the "sufficient" category, 0 students fall into the "poor" category, and 6 students fall into the "very poor" category. The most dominant reading ability possessed by first-grade students at SDN Ngolo is the ability to recognize letters, scoring 70.2857 in the "sufficient" category. On the other hand, the lowest reading ability among the students is the ability to read aloud and comprehend passages, scoring 28.5714 in the "very poor" category.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to the successful completion of this research study titled "An Analysis of Indonesian Young Learners' Reading Ability in Remote Area."

First and foremost, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to our academic advisors and mentors for their guidance, support, and valuable insights throughout the research process. Their expertise and dedication have significantly shaped the direction and quality of this study.

We are also deeply thankful to the school administration, teachers, and staff members of SDN Ngolo for their cooperation and assistance in facilitating the data collection process. Their enthusiasm and commitment to education have been crucial in ensuring the smooth progress of this research.

Furthermore, our heartfelt thanks go to the students who willingly participated in the study. Their cooperation and willingness to be part of this research have provided valuable insights into the reading abilities of Indonesian young learners in remote areas.

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