



Classroom Teacher Strategies in Overcoming Early Reading Difficulties in Second Grade Students

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Abstract. This study aims to describe the classroom teacher strategies in overcoming early reading difficulties in second grade students at SDN 4 Rindingallo, North Toraja Regency. This research adopts a qualitative approach. The data collection techniques employed in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis techniques utilized in this research are data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of this study indicate that the classroom teacher strategies in overcoming early reading difficulties involve the use of teaching methods, repetitive reading techniques, an integrated approach to learning by integrating early reading with other activities such as reading and writing, a school-based literacy system, creating a schedule of activities within the instructional procedures, and professional development of teachers through active participation in seminars and training programs organized by the government. These strategies have proven effective in improving the early reading abilities of second grade students at SDN 4 Rindingallo.

Keywords: Difficulties · Early Reading · Overcoming · Strategy

1 Introduction

One of the aims of education in elementary school is to build an academic foundation that primarily helps students acquire fundamental knowledge and skills in subjects such as mathematics, Indonesian language, English, science, social studies, arts, and others. Early reading is the initial stage in reading instruction in elementary school. During this stage, students learn to recognize letters, understand the relationship between letters and sounds, and develop initial comprehension of reading simple words [1]. Early reading often involves letter recognition, letter sounds, and blending sounds into words. The main objective of early reading is to develop basic reading skills, such as letter recognition, phonetic reading of words, and understanding the meaning conveyed by those words. This stage also helps students build initial vocabulary, enhance understanding of language structure, and expand their ability to read independently.

In the lower grades, it is crucial for students to be taught early reading, as reading difficulties can be experienced by students with limited reading abilities. These difficulties can hinder their ability to absorb and understand information in various subjects

and supporting materials. Early reading proficiency is highly important for students as it plays a key role in their academic development and life skills. The reasons why students need to have early reading skills are as follows:

- a) Literacy foundation: Early reading is the initial step in building students' literacy foundation. Early reading skills enable students to recognize and understand letters, sounds, words, and phrases, which are essential building blocks for gaining a deeper understanding of language and reading proficiently in the future.
- b) Effective communication: Early reading skills help students develop effective communication skills. They can comprehend written texts, interpret conveyed messages, and respond to them verbally or in writing.
- c) Learning in school: Early reading enables students to access information across various subjects. Early reading skills assist students in participating in lessons, completing assignments, and acquiring new information.
- d) Improved thinking skills: Early reading also contributes to the development of students' thinking skills.

When reading, students must comprehend the content of the text, make connections, identify patterns, and make inferences. In teaching early reading, teachers can employ various appropriate methods and strategies, such as providing specialized reading materials for practice [2].

The difficulties in beginning reading include reading fluency issues, making frequent reading errors, difficulty in recognizing comparison letters, limited visual memory, and struggling to grasp sound-picture associations [3]. Strategies encompass a series of planned and organized actions with the aim of supporting the achievement of learning goals. Strategies are a key element in helping teachers enhance students' interest in learning [4].

The use of appropriate strategies is essential for educators, given that education is an evolving process of communication between teachers and students in a learning environment. A classroom teacher must be able to decide on the methods to be used in the learning process, and these strategies will depend on the students' mental development [5].

Some elements of learning strategies include: teacher factors, student factors, infrastructure factors, and environmental factors [6].

Classroom management strategy is a deliberately chosen and employed approach by a teacher to deliver instructional materials, thereby facilitating students in achieving specific goals [7].

Indicators of classroom management strategies include: Ability to implement teaching methods, Selecting learning techniques, Choosing patterns of teaching and learning activities, Selecting a learning system, Choosing an appropriate teaching approach, Creating a schedule of activities within the instructional procedure, Developing teaching professionalism with rules of teaching skills, Aligning the curriculum with learning development procedures [8].

Based on the initial observations conducted at SDN 4 Rindingallo, it is evident that the strategies employed by the classroom teacher in overcoming early reading difficulties among second-grade students are effective. Out of the 17 s-grade students, 15 students have achieved fluency in early reading. Based on this information, the objective of this

research is to determine the strategies employed by the classroom teacher in overcoming early reading difficulties among second-grade students at SDN 4 Rindingallo, North Toraja Regency.

2 Methods

This research is descriptive in nature, employing a qualitative research approach to depict and understand social phenomena in depth [9]. In this study, the researcher is an important instrument involved in the data collection and interpretation process. The researcher plays an active role in analyzing and understanding the data. The data collection procedures include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is conducted to directly observe the events and record the observations in the form of notes. The observation activities in this research are carried out at SDN 4 Rindingallo, aiming to obtain information about the teacher's strategies in overcoming early reading difficulties among second-grade students. The interviews in this research are structured interviews. Structured interviews are conducted based on interview questions prepared by the interviewer [10].

The informants in this study are the classroom teacher and second-grade students at SDN 4 Rindingallo. Documentation in this research includes field notes, photos taken during the research process, and other relevant documents related to the research topic.

The data analysis used in this research is descriptive analysis. Its purpose is to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the facts and relationships to be studied. The data analysis techniques used in qualitative data analysis encompass three stages: 1) data reduction, which involves simplifying the classification and discarding unnecessary data to obtain easily understood information for drawing conclusions. In this research, data reduction is performed by selecting and focusing on relevant and significant data. 2) data presentation, which aims to visualize the findings and present the data in a form that can be understood by others. Data presentation in this research uses narratives or descriptions that comprehensively portray the findings. 3) drawing conclusions, which involves interpreting the reduced and presented data.

The researcher conducts further analysis of the emerging findings and attempts to understand the meaning and implications of the data. The steps taken in drawing conclusions are: connecting the findings with relevant theory or conceptual frameworks used in the research, comparing the findings with existing literature to strengthen or evaluate the conclusions, and formulating appropriate conclusions based on data analysis while providing relevant implications or recommendations. Data validity checking is performed to demonstrate the accuracy of the collected data to a certain extent. In this research, data validity is examined using technical triangulation. Technical triangulation is a method used to verify the accuracy of data by comparing it with data from different sources using various methods [11].

The research stages in this section outlines the research process, which consists of four stages:

- a) Pre-Field Stage: In this stage, the researcher formulates the research problem and objectives, determines the theoretical framework, develops a research plan including the research method, data collection techniques, timeline, and gathers relevant literature and studies related to the research.
- b) Field Activities Stage: In this stage, the researcher collects data according to the established research plan, conducts observations, interviews, and documentation, ensures data validity using triangulation techniques, and carefully records the data for further analysis.
- c) Data Analysis Stage: The data analysis stage involves data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The initial conclusions drawn at this stage are temporary and subject to change as additional supporting evidence is found during subsequent data collection.
- d) Report Writing Stage: The report writing stage includes the introduction, theoretical framework, research method, research findings, and conclusions.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

The research was conducted in Class II of SDN 4 Rindingallo, with the research subjects being the Class II teacher and students, to determine the strategies used by the teacher to overcome students' difficulties in early reading. Data regarding the teacher's strategies were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation.

The observation results regarding the teacher's strategies in overcoming students' difficulties in early reading showed that the teacher employed several strategies in teaching early reading to address the students' difficulties. The strategies used by the teacher included: Demonstrative Method: The teacher demonstrated the steps or techniques of early reading directly to the students.

Repeated Reading Technique: Students read early reading materials repeatedly to improve their comprehension and fluency.

Paired Reading Technique: Students took turns reading texts with their peers to enhance participation and engagement.

Integration of Reading Activities: The teacher integrated early reading activities with other activities such as writing and speaking to create a comprehensive learning experience.

Practice: The teacher emphasized the importance of practice to enhance students' reading abilities.

Furthermore, the observation results indicated that the teacher employed a student-centered learning approach in teaching early reading. The teacher prioritized the needs and interests of the students in early reading instruction. Another strategy used by the teacher was implementing a school-based literacy system. The teacher applied an integrated and comprehensive approach to develop reading and writing skills throughout the school curriculum.

The observation results also showed that the teacher created a specific weekly schedule for early reading activities. This schedule was designed to optimize the available time for delivering lessons, providing practice, and engaging students in relevant activities.

In addition to the mentioned strategies, the teacher actively participated in professional development activities organized by the government to enhance their professionalism as an educator.

Here is the translated version of the interview data with the Class II teacher:

1) Use of teaching methods.

The teacher's ability to implement appropriate teaching methods aligned with the lesson content is essential. This is evident in the case of the Class II teacher at SDN 4 Rindingallo, who has implemented effective teaching methods using the demonstration method, where the teacher directly shows the steps or techniques of early reading. According to the interview with Ms. RT, she stated, "I have been using teaching methods such as introducing letters to students by writing them on the board and asking the students to name the letters I point to."

2) Selection of teaching techniques.

The selection of teaching techniques should align with the specific teaching methods used by the teacher. This is evident in the case of the Class II teacher at SDN 4 Rindingallo, who uses the repeated reading technique, where students read early reading materials repeatedly to improve their comprehension and fluency. Additionally, the teacher also employs the paired reading technique, where students take turns reading texts with their peers to enhance participation and engagement. Through ample reading practice, students' reading abilities can improve. According to the interview with Ms. RT, she stated, "Regarding teaching techniques, I usually ask students to read repeatedly and take turns."

3) Selection of teaching approaches.

The appropriate teaching approach greatly aids students in achieving maximum learning outcomes. This is evident in the case of the Class II teacher at SDN 4 Rindingallo, who utilizes an integrated and comprehensive approach to develop reading and writing skills across the entire school curriculum. According to the interview with Ms. RT, she stated, "The teaching approach used is an integrated and comprehensive approach to develop reading and writing skills across the entire school curriculum."

4) Selection of an appropriate teaching system.

Choosing a teaching system that suits the students' situation and condition is crucial to ensuring their comfort and focus during the learning process. The teaching system used by the Class II teacher at SDN 4 Rindingallo is a school-based literacy system. According to the interview with Ms. RT, she stated, "Our teaching system is a school-based literacy system."

5) Creating a schedule of activities in the teaching process

In the teaching process, it is important for the teacher to create and implement a schedule of activities to ensure that the teaching and learning process runs smoothly. This is what the Class II teacher at SDN 4 Rindingallo does by creating a lesson schedule, allowing students to know what will be taught next. With a well-structured schedule, the learning objectives can be easily achieved, and students can prepare themselves for the upcoming lessons. According to the interview with Ms. RT, she stated, "Yes, we have created a lesson schedule so that students are aware and can prepare their books for the next lesson and complete their homework."

6) Developing teacher professionalism in teaching using teaching skills and protocols.

This strategy has been developed by the Class II teacher at SDN 4 Rindingallo through participation in meetings, seminars, and training sessions on teaching skills and protocols. These activities aim to enhance the teacher's knowledge and teaching abilities, as well as promote independent learning to acquire knowledge for better teaching. According to the interview with Ms. RT, she stated, "Yes, it has been developed through participation in training sessions or seminars on teaching skills and protocols to enhance the teacher's knowledge and teaching abilities for better teaching."

4 Discussion

The main role of a teacher as an instructor in learning is to deliver subject matter to students in a clear, systematic, and easily understandable manner [12].

One of the teacher's tasks in learning is to act as a learning facilitator. The teacher must create a conducive learning environment, provide necessary resources, and organize learning activities that actively engage students [13].

The Class II teacher's strategies in addressing early reading difficulties in students at SDN 4 Rindingallo, North Toraja Regency, are as follows:

1) Use of teaching methods.

The observation and interview results indicate that the early reading lessons in Class II at SDN 4 Rindingallo use the demonstration method. The demonstration method is an effective teaching method for teaching early reading skills to students. This method involves the teacher showing and describing the correct and effective reading process to the students. The teacher takes concrete actions in reading, either by reading alone or involving the students in reading together. In the lesson, the teacher provides examples by writing on the board and asking the students to read the letters that are written. In line with Triutami's research findings, the strategy used to overcome reading learning difficulties is by employing varied teaching methods and incorporating guided learning activities. With this strategy, teachers will be able to address reading learning difficulties effectively [14].

2) Selection of teaching techniques.

The appropriate selection of teaching techniques in teaching early reading can enhance students' early reading abilities. The observation and interview results show that the teacher uses the technique of repeated reading in teaching early reading. The teacher provides opportunities for students to practice continuously and improve their reading skills. By reading the same text repeatedly, students can develop speed, fluency, comprehension, and confidence in reading.

3) Selection of teaching approaches.

The Class II teacher is expected to choose an appropriate approach to make students more enthusiastic and motivated in learning, especially in reading. The teaching approach used by the teacher is an integrated approach that integrates early reading with other activities such as reading and writing. The goal is to develop students' comprehensive language skills, both in written and spoken forms. An integrated teaching approach also allows students to see the connection between various aspects of language and enhance their understanding of language context and usage in everyday life.

4) Selection of an appropriate teaching system.

Choosing a teaching system that is tailored to the students' situation and condition is essential to ensure that students feel comfortable and focused on the taught material. The teaching system used at SDN 4 Rindingallo is a school-based literacy system. The school-based literacy system aims to create a learning environment that enables students to develop strong literacy skills and become effective readers, writers, and communicators.

5) Creating a schedule of activities in the teaching process.

In the teaching process, it is crucial for the teacher to create and follow a schedule of activities to ensure the smooth implementation of teaching and learning. This is what the Class II teacher at SDN 4 Rindingallo does by creating a lesson schedule, allowing students to know what will be taught next. With a pre-planned schedule, learning objectives can be easily achieved, and students can prepare themselves for the upcoming lessons.

6) Developing teacher professionalism.

Developing teacher professionalism is an ongoing process to enhance the teacher's knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies in carrying out their tasks effectively. The Class II teacher at SDN 4 Rindingallo actively participates in seminars and training sessions organized by the government to develop their teaching knowledge and skills.

The use of strategies in teaching early reading has several benefits, including: a) Improving reading comprehension. Effective early reading teaching strategies help improve students' comprehension of the texts they read. b) Enhancing reading skills. Early reading teaching strategies help students develop fundamental reading skills, such as recognizing letters and sounds, understanding phonics, expanding vocabulary, and improving reading fluency. c) Increasing interest and motivation. The use of engaging and interactive strategies in teaching early reading can enhance students' interest and motivation in reading.

The strategies used by the Class II teacher in addressing early reading difficulties in students at SDN 4 Rindingallo, North Toraja Regency, align with the research findings. As mentioned by Sani and Ridwan, teaching strategies are ideas that are created and used to achieve learning objectives, and teaching strategies encompass methods, approaches, and techniques [15].

5 Conclusion

Based on the research conducted on the topic "Class II Teacher's Strategies in Addressing Early Reading Difficulties in Students at SDN 4 Rindingallo, North Toraja Regency," it can be concluded that there are several strategies used by the Class II teacher in addressing early reading difficulties in students. These strategies include using teaching methods, employing the technique of repeated reading, utilizing an integrated teaching approach by integrating early reading with other activities such as reading and writing, implementing a school-based literacy system, creating a schedule of activities in the teaching process, and developing teacher professionalism by actively participating in seminars and training sessions organized by the government.

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