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The Alphabet and Syllable Method as a Teacher Strategy in Improving Beginning Reading in Phase A Class I Students at Sekolah Dasar Negeri Kalipucang Kulon Batang

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ABSTRACT

One of the learning difficulties experienced by students, especially phase A, is difficulty in initial reading. If initial reading difficulties can be overcome well, it will be easy for students to take the next stage of reading. This research aims to describe the alphabet method as a teacher's strategy in improving initial reading skills in phase A class I students at the Kalipucang Kulon State Elementary School, to outline the teacher's strategy in improving initial reading skills using the syllabic method for phase A class I students in elementary school. Kalipucang Kulon State, and to explain the factors that influence initial reading difficulties in phase A class I students at Kalipucang Kulon State Elementary School. The type of this research is field research, namely research carried out directly to obtain data with a qualitative approach namely the approach used to gather information from reasonable conditions. Meanwhile, the data sources used are primary data sources and secondary data sources. Meanwhile, the data collection techniques used were observation, interviews and documentation. The data analysis techniques used are data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results of this research show that: (1) The alphabet method as a teacher's strategy in improving initial reading skills in phase A class I students at Kalipucang Kulon Batang State Elementary School, is considered quite successful in improving initial reading skills, there are changes in the students. (2) The teacher's strategy in improving initial reading skills using the syllabic method for phase A class I students at the Kalipucang Kulon Batang State Elementary School has not yet been achieved optimally, but little by little there has been an improvement in the students' reading skills. (3) The factors that influence initial reading difficulties in phase A class I students at Kalipucang Kulon Batang State Elementary School are caused by four factors, namely physiological factors, intellectual factors, environmental factors and psychological factors.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are people who provide knowledge to their students. Many parties have high hopes for teachers to improve the quality of education (Yohamintin, 2023). Teachers have a crucial role in forming students' basic skills in calistung (reading, writing and calculating). They help students through the learning phases, both smoothly and through difficulties. With teacher guidance, students can turn inabilities into abilities and overcome ignorance into knowledge. Teachers not only teach, but also play the role of second parental figures for students in the school environment. (Maemunawati & Alif, 2020).

Reading is the main skill that students must master because it allows them to understand writing and access information that is essential for understanding science. The ability to read not only supports individual development in their education, but also contributes to increasing vocabulary and language mastery in general (Muntazori, 2020). Reading skills in the initial phase of class I SD/MI have a crucial role as a foundation for students' learning success. This fact is reinforced by arguments in Jagiello's (2016) research in Warsaw, Poland, which explains that teachers have a duty to instill reading readiness in students from an early age. Not knowing how to read at an early stage can make it difficult to understand later areas of study. Therefore, students need to learn to read to avoid difficulties in subsequent classes (Faridah, 2016).

Reading difficulties in the initial phase (classes I and II) are the main problem that affects students' learning abilities. This can have a negative impact on their academic performance. Students who have difficulty reading need extra support from teachers, parents, or close companions to get the help they need. Teachers in this phase need to be patient and painstaking in helping students acquire good reading skills. One effective strategy is to conduct an analysis of initial reading difficulties to identify which aspects are obstacles for each student. By understanding the factors that cause reading difficulties, teachers can adjust teaching strategies appropriately to help students overcome their problems. Apart from that, the use of various teaching methods that are interesting and relevant to children's experiences is very important to help them in the process of learning to read (Idrawati, 2013).

This requires an alphabetic method and a syllabic method. The alphabet method is a teaching method that introduces letters that must be pronounced according to the sounds in the alphabet (Bahrun, 2023). Meanwhile, the syllable method is a method for learning to read at the beginning by presenting syllables (Agusalim et al., 2022). So, the use of these two methods is very suitable, because it is adjusted to the ability level of each student.

There are many learning problems in class, including difficulty reading at the beginning in class I at SD Negeri Kalipucang Kulon Batang. This difficulty varies for each student due to differences in intellectual abilities and intelligence. Phase A teachers have used the alphabet and syllable method to overcome this problem, such as Mrs. Intan Badarini, a class I teacher who applies this method. Students experience different initial reading difficulties. Some still don't fully know the letters A-Z, have difficulty spelling, and have difficulty distinguishing between letters like 'd' and 'b'. They also have difficulty pronouncing words and lack concentration when studying. According to Mrs. Intan Badarini, solutions to reading difficulties can be done using methods adapted to each student's abilities. The alphabet method is suitable for those who do not yet know letters, while the syllable method is suitable for those who already know letters. This combination of methods suits children's ability levels, helping them overcome reading difficulties and acquire reading skills.

Previous research by (Awaluddin, 2021) using alphabet cards and (Aji et al., 2022) using the syllable method has shown an increase in reading skills in students. Researchers are interested in examining whether the application of the syllable and alphabet method can improve beginning reading skills at Kalipucang Kulon State Elementary School. Early reading difficulties in grade I are very important to research because they require extra attention and handling from the teacher to avoid difficulties at the next level. Therefore, researchers are interested in conducting research on "The Alphabet and Syllable

Method as a Teacher Strategy in Improving Beginning Reading in Phase A Class I Students at Sekolah Dasar Negeri Kalipucang Kulon Batang."

METHODS

This research is a type of field research carried out in a systematic way by collecting data directly in the field (Arikunto, 2013). In this case, this research uses a descriptive approach with data collected in the form of words, images and numbers (Yusriani, 2022). Information was obtained from interview scripts, field notes, memos, and other documents. The focus of the research is the use of the alphabet and syllable method in overcoming initial reading difficulties in phase A class I students at Sekolah Dasar Negeri Kalipucang Kulon Batang.

The research method used is qualitative. This qualitative approach emphasizes descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior. In the context of this research, the focus is on the problem of initial reading difficulties faced by phase A class I students at Kalipucang Kulon State Elementary School. Data is obtained through interviews, observation and documentation which allows researchers to obtain accurate information from the research object.

The research was conducted at Kalipucang Kulon Batang Elementary School during the period January to October 2023. Data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews with the principal, class I teachers, and phase A students. Meanwhile, secondary data came from documents such as the vision, mission, school organizational structure, institutional achievements, and several photos.

Several data collection techniques used include observation, interviews and documentation. Observations were carried out to obtain a direct picture regarding the application of the alphabet and syllable method in class I learning. Interviews were conducted with the school principal, class I teacher and students to obtain more in-depth information. Documentation is used to support primary data with information from documents related to school and learning.

The data analysis technique used is descriptive with an interactive approach. The data analysis model adopted is the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana interactive model which consists of parallel activities, namely data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation is carried out to sort relevant information, data presentation aims to organize information, and drawing conclusions to develop a complete picture based on the collected data (Fiantika, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of the Alphabetical Method in Beginning Reading Skills at SDN Kalipucang Kulon Batang

Understanding the role of teachers in the transformation of students is an important foundation in the world of education. Teachers are not only teachers, but also mentors who shape character and have a significant influence on the growth of students. The journey from ignorance to success, from confusion to expertise, often begins with the interaction of teachers and students.

When talking about the learning process, teachers often face various challenges, including overcoming difficulties in early reading or early reading in phase A students. For example, at the Kalipucang Kulon State Elementary School, efforts were made to collect data about the strategies used by teachers in improving skills. reading in this early phase, especially in grade I.

One of the methods used is the alphabet method, which is an initial approach to reading that introduces the letters in the alphabet from A to Z. Through the results of research conducted at the Kalipucang

Kulon Batang Elementary School, it was revealed that the alphabet reading method was used for students who had not yet master or memorize the letters of the alphabet, for example as experienced by Rizki.

The application of the alphabet method in learning to read has special steps. Teachers first introduce the alphabet to students, then through demonstrative questions, they teach the recognition of certain letters. After that, if students can do it well, the letters are arranged into syllables, such as MA and TA. The next step is to arrange these syllables into more complex words, such as "MATA".

In the class 1 phase A learning environment at Kalipucang Kulon State Elementary School, teachers face big challenges related to reading skills for several students. Mrs. Intan Bandarini, class I teacher, highlighted that out of 9 students consisting of 6 boys and 3 girls, 4 students had difficulty reading. Of that number, 3 men and 1 woman have not yet mastered the letters A-Z and arranging letters in words or sentences.

Each child's abilities are different, and observations during the learning process show that there are still children who have difficulty memorizing the alphabet, especially Maulana Rizki Putra. Maulana himself admits that he cannot read fluently because he has not yet mastered all the letters of the alphabet.

The alphabet method is very suitable for students who do not yet know the alphabet, because it helps overcome initial difficulties in reading. However, the advantage of using this method is that students will memorize the alphabet and know the sound of each letter. On the other hand, there are shortcomings where if learning is not repeated consistently, students can easily forget the shape and sound of letters.

According to Mrs. Intan, class 1 teacher and Mrs. Inswide, as the school principal, using the alphabet method is the main approach to overcome reading difficulties, especially for students who have not memorized the letters of the alphabet. Mrs. Intan explained that alphabet teaching was carried out during Indonesian language class hours or at a special time before returning from school. Using this alphabet method, as explained by Mrs. Intan, involves recognizing and memorizing letters first before learning to read words or sentences. He also emphasized that this strategy requires patience and persistence from teachers and students. However, in using the alphabet method, Mrs. Intan admits that there are obstacles. One of them is the risk of children becoming bored due to monotonous techniques. However, the advantage is that students tend to memorize letters better, although there are also weaknesses if they are not repeated continuously.

The results of this approach show good development in students. For example, Maulana Rizki Putra, who initially had difficulty memorizing the alphabet, gradually showed improvement. Even though he has not yet fully mastered it, he shows high enthusiasm and has been able to recognize most of the letters. This alphabetical method approach provides positive results. Mas Rizki showed improvement in recognizing alphabet letters even though there were still errors. However, the enthusiasm for learning shown by students like Mas Rizki gives hope for their progress in reading skills in the future.

The results of the research regarding the steps for using the alphabet method are in accordance with the explanation in the book "Preliminary Reading at School" by Muammar. Another perspective that supports the results of this research is the view of Anggini Tyas Palupi in the book "Innovative Methods and Media: Make Students Extraordinarily Skilled in Languages", which explains the advantages and disadvantages of the alphabet method.

In this context, it can be concluded that the alphabet reading method is an effective approach in overcoming the initial reading difficulties faced by phase A students. However, it needs to be considered that consistent repetition will be the key to ensuring a strong understanding of the shapes and sounds of these letters. This finding is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Luoni, et al., (2015) published in the Hindawi journal on elementary school students in Italy. Luoni, through his data and analysis, explains that the pronunciation of letters when beginning reading is correlated with students' advanced reading abilities.

The Syllable Method and Its Contribution in Initial Reading Learning at SDN Kalipucang Kulon Batang

The theme of using the syllable method in initial reading learning in class I at Kalipucang Kulon State Elementary School is crucial in efforts to improve students' reading skills. The learning process often encounters various obstacles, especially in the reading aspect in phase A of class 1. Based on observations made during the learning process, several students, such as Adiyaksa Lokananta, Anindita Salsabila Arsyifa, and Bimantara Dwi Rayendra, have difficulty starting to read or reading at the reading level. beginning.

Teachers are one of the important elements in education. They not only act as teachers, but also as figures who play a role in shaping the character and skills of students. A professional teacher not only has adequate qualifications in his field, but also a good personality and the ability to help students in facing difficulties. The quality of a teacher can be seen from his ability to provide effective and efficient understanding to students. They also have an important role in helping students who experience difficulties in initial reading or beginning reading. To deal with this, teachers' strategies for improving initial reading skills need to be considered, as is the case at Kalipucang Kulon State Elementary School.

One of the methods used is the syllable reading method, which is an approach to initial reading without introducing students to letters one by one. The results of research conducted at the Kalipucang Kulon Batang Elementary School showed that the syllable method was used by teachers for students who already knew letters and could read. The steps for applying the syllable method in the learning process involve several stages. The teacher will introduce syllables by writing them on the board, arranging the syllables into words, then making these words into simple sentences. For example, the teacher teaches the syllables BA and JU which are then arranged into BAJU, or the syllables BA-RU which form the word BARU.

Class I teacher, Mrs. Intan Bandarini, highlighted this problem by identifying students who had difficulty reading. Adiyaksa Lokananta (Loka) can string together syllables but is not yet fluent, Anindita Salsabila Arsyifa (Salsa) also has similar abilities to Loka but her voice is not as loud when reading, while Bimantara Dwi Rayendra (Bima) has memorized the letters of the alphabet but cannot fully string the syllables together say.

The responses from the three students also become part of understanding their difficulties in reading. Adiyaksa Lokananta stated that he was not as fluent in stringing syllables as his friends without needing to spell, Anindita Salsabila Arsyifa felt that he was not very fluent in reading and was not as fluent when reading it, while Bimantara Dwi Rayendra often confused the letters b and d when reading syllables.

To overcome initial reading difficulties, the class I teacher uses the syllabic method. This method does not involve the stage of recognizing the letters of the alphabet one by one, but goes directly to recognizing syllables and reading the syllables. This approach is implemented by writing simple syllables, words and sentences on the blackboard for the teacher to read, which is then continued with the students reading it together. Apart from that, the teacher also combines letters to form syllables and practices reading these syllables.

The syllable method brings benefits to students in overcoming initial difficulties in reading. The time spent in reading is no longer for spelling letter by letter, but rather for a series of syllables. However, using the syllable method also has obstacles, advantages and disadvantages. The obstacles include the fact that students need a long time to read syllables, while the advantages lie in the students' ability to know various kinds of words. The disadvantage is that students tend to focus only on the syllables being taught and have difficulty in stringing letters into syllables.

The strategy adopted by teachers in implementing the syllable method also includes the use of games with letter cards as learning aids. This is done so that students do not feel bored and are more enthusiastic in practicing reading.

In the observation results, it was seen that there was progress in Adiyaksa Lokananta, Anindita Salsabila Arsyifa, and Bimantara Dwi Rayendra in reading using the syllable method. They showed progress from the start of class to the end of the semester, although not as smoothly as their classmates. The teacher also expressed the high enthusiasm of these three students in learning to read with the hope that they will be more fluent in the future.

The journey of using the syllable method shows positive changes in the three students, even though they have not yet reached the expected level of reading fluency. This shows how important an appropriate approach and the use of appropriate methods is in helping students who experience reading difficulties in the initial phase of learning.

The results of this research are consistent with existing theories, especially in syllable recognition, word formation, simple sentences, and repetition to strengthen understanding. Each learning method has its own strengths and weaknesses, as explained in the theory presented by Mutmainnah and Lalu Muhammad.

Thus, the syllable reading method is proven to be a suitable approach to overcome initial difficulties in reading for students. The success of this method also depends on the teacher's consistency in providing guidance and patience in the learning process every day. This method of learning syllables that is successfully carried out in elementary schools is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Nandhini and Balasundaram (2013). In his research, the author in an international journal called the Egyptian Informatics Journal concluded that beginning reading lessons in India using the syllable method are very effective when applied to students at the elementary level. Because elementary level students are certainly still limited in understanding complex syllables and only understand simple words.

Factors that Influence Initial Reading Difficulties in Phase A Class I Students at Kalipucang Kulon Batang Elementary School

Reading is an important foundation in the learning process for early phase students (phase A). At the basic education or madrasah ibtidaiyah level, initial reading learning aims to help students recognize and master written reading skills. At SD Negeri Kalipucang Kulon Batang, research was conducted to explore the factors that influence reading difficulties at an early stage.

To provide a deeper understanding of students' initial or initial reading difficulties, many factors need to be considered. At Kalipucang Kulon Batang State Elementary School, several factors include physiological, intellectual, environmental and psychological aspects which have a crucial role in determining the reading ability of students in phase A of class I.

1. Physiological Factors

These factors are related to physical health problems such as the health of the eyes, ears, speech organs, body condition and fatigue. The results of the research show that eye health problems or blurry eye conditions can hinder students' reading ability. Impaired eye health can make it difficult for students to differentiate between letters that are similar in shape, such as the letters b and d, p and q. Apart from that, students' physical condition also influences their interest in learning to read. For example, physical fatigue can reduce motivation to learn, as stated by Adiyaksa Lokananta, one of the students.

2. Intellectual Factors

The intellectual intelligence of each student influences the development of reading abilities. This intelligence covers various aspects, including cognitive intelligence related to

reading ability. However, not all students have high intellectual intelligence in reading. This intelligence does not always directly influence reading success, because teaching methods and teacher abilities also play an important role in overcoming reading difficulties.

3. Environmental factor

Environmental factors, including students' experiences and home situations, have a significant impact on reading ability. Lack of support and attention from parents can be the cause of students having difficulty reading. When parents are less active in supporting the process of learning to read, students do not receive optimal stimulation to develop their reading skills.

4. Psychological Factors

Psychological factors, such as motivation, emotions and level of self-confidence, also influence students' reading difficulties. High motivation in learning to read tends to increase students' interest and reading ability. However, unstable emotions or lack of self-confidence can also hinder their ability to learn to read.

Through various interviews with class teachers and students, it can be seen how each of these factors is interrelated and influences students' reading abilities. Support from family and a conducive environment plays a very important role in forming children's interest and ability to read. Therefore, the teacher's role is not only as a teacher, but also as a facilitator who understands and accommodates the needs and challenges faced by students in the learning process.

The findings regarding influencing factors in initial reading learning at the elementary school level are different from the results of research conducted by Sukovieff and Kruk (2020) which was conducted in a school in Canada. Sukovieff and Kruk's findings enrich the findings of this research where social and emotional aspects are also other factors that influence early reading learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The alphabet method as a teacher strategy in improving initial reading skills for phase A class I students at Kalipucang Kulon Batang State Elementary School, is considered quite successful in improving initial reading skills. In its implementation, the alphabet method is used for students who do not know the alphabet at all. There are changes in students after using the alphabet method, such as being able to memorize or recognize the letters of the alphabet.

The teacher's strategy in improving initial reading skills using the syllabic method for phase A class I students at the Kalipucang Kulon Batang State Elementary School has not yet been achieved optimally, but little by little there has been an improvement in the students' reading skills. The syllable method is used for students who are not yet fluent in reading but have memorized or recognized the letters of the alphabet. The change after using the syllable method is that students are increasingly able to read fluently so that the difficulties they experience can be resolved well.

The factors that influence initial reading difficulties in phase A class I students at Kalipucang Kulon Batang Elementary School are caused by four factors, namely physiological factors which include physical health (eye health and body condition), intellectual factors which include students' intelligence, environmental factors which include students' background and experiences at home, and psychological factors which include motivation, emotions, and adjustment/self-confidence.

The conclusions of this analysis highlight several important things that all relevant parties need to pay attention to. School principals need to be active in creating an environment that supports reading learning to help teachers overcome students' reading difficulties. Educators are expected to be patient and remain

persistent in teaching students who have difficulty reading, while creating greater interest in reading. Students need to maintain enthusiasm for learning to read to avoid difficulties in the next stage of education. Meanwhile, the role of parents is very important in providing support and encouragement so that children remain enthusiastic about learning to read, including accompanying them during the learning process at home. Synergy between schools, educators, students and parents is the key to improving reading skills and supporting a better educational process for students.

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