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AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN OVERCOMING STUDENT DIFFICULTIES IN READING AND WRITING

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This study aims to identify and analyze the learning difficulties in reading and writing faced by first-grade students at SDN 2 Tente. The research uses a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that students struggle with letter recognition, spelling words, and writing simple sentences. Factors contributing to these difficulties include lack of learning motivation, inappropriate teaching methods, and insufficient environmental support. To address these issues, teachers need to apply more varied and engaging teaching strategies and involve parents in the learning process. This study recommends schools to enhance teacher training and provide adequate learning facilities. Consequently, it is expected that students' reading and writing abilities will improve significantly.

Keywords: learning difficulties, reading, writing, first-grade students, SDN 2 Tent

INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool that uses a system of sound symbols produced by the human speech apparatus, either orally, in writing, or through gestures, which can be understood by others. Language plays a vital role in the exchange of thoughts, information, and emotions in daily life (Amri, 2015). In the context of education, language has a central role in the cognitive, social, and emotional development of students. Therefore, every child is required to have good language skills. Children's language abilities develop in line with their cognitive and mental growth.

Kasiyun (2015) identifies four main aspects of language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and speaking are part of oral language skills, while reading and writing are written language skills. Reading is one of the basic skills taught in the Indonesian language subject in schools. Reading is inseparable from the world of education because it serves as the primary means of transferring knowledge through the comprehension of written texts (Nugraha et al., 2018). Utami (2018) adds that reading is an interaction process between the reader and the text, where the reader tries to grasp the message or information conveyed by the author through written language.

Reading activities play an essential role in enhancing critical thinking skills, broadening perspectives, strengthening beliefs, and providing aesthetic experiences. Reading instruction at the elementary school level is crucial, as this skill not only supports language mastery but also significantly affects academic achievement in other subjects (Samniah, 2016 in Mardhatillah & Trisdania, 2018). In addition to reading, writing skills are also crucial for acquiring and conveying knowledge.

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According to Bukhari (2010), writing is a communication activity using written media. Nafiah (2017) explains that writing is a process of expressing ideas or thoughts in written form through systematic stages. With good writing skills, students can more easily absorb information from various sources and express it in writing. In elementary schools, reading and writing are foundational competencies that students must master as prerequisites for progressing to the next level of education. These skills are not acquired naturally but through a planned learning process, where the teacher plays a vital role in helping students master them.

However, based on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, Indonesia ranks 62nd out of 70 countries, indicating a low level of national literacy. In the field, many elementary school students are still found to struggle with reading and writing. Amaris (2015) mentions that these difficulties include the inability to process information, recognize letters, and pronounce letter sounds. Meanwhile, Abdurahman (2012) states that reading difficulties are often closely related to writing difficulties, as the two are interconnected.

Initial observations conducted at SDN 2 Tente, a public elementary school in Bima Regency, revealed that many lower-grade students are still struggling with reading and writing. This affects their academic performance and learning motivation. One of the contributing factors is the use of ineffective teaching methods, where teachers mostly ask students to read or copy texts without giving special support to those with difficulties. Ideally, teachers should act as both learning designers and facilitators by creating interactive and engaging classroom environments that encourage students to actively learn to read and write. The right strategy can help students overcome difficulties in recognizing letters, syllables, words, and sentences—both orally and in written form.

Although several studies have examined teaching strategies to improve literacy, there is still a lack of research that specifically explores the strategies implemented by teachers in under-researched areas such as SDN 2 Tente. This gap presents a significant opportunity for investigation and contribution to the field of literacy education. Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze the strategies used by teachers at SDN 2 Tente in overcoming reading and writing difficulties among lower-grade students.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design aimed at understanding and describing the strategies implemented by teachers to address reading and writing difficulties among lower-grade students. The research was conducted at SDN 2 Tente, located in Woha District, Bima Regency. Data collection commenced after formal authorization was obtained from the school. The subjects of this study were lower-grade students in Grades 1 and 2, totaling 32 learners. Most of these students come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and demonstrate varied literacy abilities, with many still experiencing basic difficulties in recognizing letters, decoding syllables, and composing simple words and sentences. Their academic background indicated that a significant proportion had low to moderate reading and writing proficiency, based on teachers' initial assessments and school records.

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A descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because this method is appropriate for exploring phenomena in depth and capturing complex processes, behaviors, and contextual factors related to literacy instruction. Unlike quantitative methods, which focus primarily on measurement and statistical analysis, qualitative research enables the researcher to gain detailed insights into teacher strategies, perceptions, and classroom dynamics. Classroom action research (PTK) was not selected because the aim of this study was not to implement and evaluate an intervention cycle but rather to describe existing practices and understand how teachers address students' literacy difficulties in their natural classroom setting.

The data sources consisted of both primary and secondary materials. Primary data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving teachers and students. Secondary data were gathered from official documents, academic journals, books, and other relevant literature. Data collection methods included classroom observations to monitor teaching and learning activities, semi-structured interviews with key informants (teachers), and documentation of school profiles, lesson plans, and samples of students' work. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants with relevant experience and insight into early-grade literacy instruction.

To ensure data validity, triangulation techniques were applied. These included source triangulation (comparing information from different informants and techniques), method triangulation (employing multiple data collection methods), and theoretical triangulation (relating the findings to existing literature). Data analysis followed the model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), comprising three main stages. The first stage was data reduction, where relevant information was selected and simplified. The second stage was data display, in which data were organized into matrices or narrative forms to facilitate understanding. The final stage was conclusion drawing, where patterns were identified and interpretations were formulated based on the analyzed data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

SDN 2 Tente, located in Woha District, Bima Regency, serves a diverse group of students. Although the school is equipped with relatively adequate facilities, it continues to face significant challenges in fostering basic literacy skills, particularly among students in Grades I to III. Based on field observations and interviews with teachers, it was discovered that several students exhibited various literacy difficulties. These included issues such as letter recognition problems affecting six students; word decoding difficulties among eight students, who often hesitated or stammered while reading; slow and inaccurate copying observed in seven students, who required considerable time and made frequent errors; and reading anxiety experienced by five students, who showed reluctance and lacked confidence in reading aloud. One teacher remarked, "*Some students can recognize letters in isolation but cannot combine them into words without prompting,*" while another noted, "*When asked to read aloud, several children look down and whisper that they are afraid of making mistakes.*" A student also shared, "*I get nervous when the teacher asks me to read because the letters sometimes look mixed up.*" These narratives illustrate how foundational literacy problems often overlap, with many students exhibiting more than one type of difficulty.

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Several internal and external factors were identified as contributing to these challenges. Internal factors included a general lack of interest in learning, insufficient school readiness upon enrollment, and wide variations in students' literacy backgrounds. External factors encompassed inconsistent support from parents, limited exposure to reading materials at home, and a lack of instructional variety in classroom teaching methods.

To address these issues, teachers at SDN 2 Tente adopted several targeted strategies. Individualized support was provided through one-on-one assistance for students experiencing persistent difficulties. Visual and game-based learning approaches, such as flashcards, storytelling tools, and educational games, were used to reinforce literacy concepts in an engaging way. One teacher explained, *"When we use picture cards and games, the students seem more relaxed and willing to try reading."* These observations align with findings by Ningsih (2017), who reported that play-based and visual strategies significantly improve early literacy engagement and reduce anxiety among reluctant readers. Similarly, research by Fitriyani et al. (2019) highlights that integrating games into literacy instruction can help sustain students' attention and improve decoding skills over time.

Teachers also collaborated with parents by maintaining regular communication and providing take-home activities to support learning at home. Additionally, literacy enrichment activities were introduced, including shared reading sessions and the integration of reading and writing into daily class routines. These strategies have shown promising initial results, particularly when applied consistently and adapted to meet the specific needs of each student. This study contributes to the broader practice of basic education, especially in remote or underserved areas. The experiences at SDN 2 Tente demonstrate that even in contexts with limited resources, creative and responsive teaching strategies can address persistent literacy challenges. The lessons learned from this school can serve as a valuable reference for other educators facing similar issues in comparable settings.

Based on findings, researcher also hope that this result of research not only contribute for teacher and students but also for next researcher who conduct research relate to reading and writing skill. From this researcher they can gain many resources and some references to find out solution for solving students problem in writing and reading. In addition this research not only for teachers but also for lecturer who teach students of university. As we know in some university there is faculty of language especially English program. In English program there are many subjects that should be taught by lecturer. There are general English courses and specific English courses. English language skills consist of four skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Lecturers must be able to improve students' abilities in each of these skills, especially reading and writing. Many lecturers experience difficulties, requiring solutions in the form of effective learning methods or models for students. Therefore, it is hoped that the research results can help lecturers find appropriate learning methods or models to improve students' reading and writing skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted at SDN 2 Tente regarding teacher strategies in addressing reading and writing difficulties among lower-grade students, several key conclusions can be drawn. A considerable number of early-grade students struggle with basic literacy skills, particularly in letter recognition, reading fluency, and accurate text copying. These challenges result from a combination of internal factors, such as low motivation and insufficient school readiness, and external factors, including inconsistent parental support and monotonous teaching practices. To respond to these issues, teachers at SDN 2 Tente have implemented a variety of targeted strategies. These include offering individualized support tailored to each student's specific needs, utilizing visual aids and literacy games to increase engagement, collaborating with parents to reinforce learning at home, and incorporating shared reading and writing activities to strengthen foundational literacy competencies. These approaches have demonstrated promising results, especially when applied consistently and adapted to each student's learning profile.

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