ANALYSIS OF READING DIFFICULTIES AMONG THIRD GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AT UPT SDN 060886 MEDAN

Reflina Sinaga[1], Betty Agatha Sihombing[2], Rey Brema Tarigan[3], Ranti Alvionita Sihombing[4], Rahel Girna Br Surbakti[5], Dewi Clara Damanik[6], Triani Lovriyanti Surbakti[7]

[1,2,3,4,5,6,7] Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas, Medan, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: _reflinasinaga@gmail.com_

Abstract

Reading is a fundamental skill that significantly influences students' academic achievements. However, some students face challenges in developing their reading abilities, which can impact their learning outcomes. This study aims to analyze the reading difficulties experienced by third-grade students at UPT SDN 060886 Medan.Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research focuses on identifying specific types of reading difficulties, including word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension. Data were collected through direct observations, interviews with teachers, and assessments of students' reading performance.The findings reveal that the primary difficulties among third-grade students include a limited vocabulary, poor decoding skills, and struggles with reading comprehension. Factors contributing to these issues include inadequate exposure to reading materials, lack of parental support, and insufficient instructional strategies tailored to individual needs.Based on these findings, the study highlights the importance of implementing targeted interventions, such as phonics-based teaching methods, engaging reading activities, and consistent support from parents and teachers. These efforts are essential to improving students' reading abilities and fostering their overall academic development.

Keywords

Reading Difficulty; Third Grade Student; Teaching Reading

Introduction

Reading is a fundamental skill that serves as the foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. In elementary school, particularly in the early grades, the ability to read effectively is crucial for understanding content across all subjects. However, many students face challenges in acquiring reading proficiency, which can hinder their academic progress and personal development (Solehah et al., 2022).

This study focuses on analyzing reading difficulties among third-grade students at UPT SDN 060886 Medan. Third grade is a critical stage in students' literacy development, where the transition from learning to read to reading to learn takes place. Identifying and addressing reading difficulties at this stage is essential to ensure that students are equipped with the skills necessary for academic achievement and to prevent the widening of learning gaps.

The factors contributing to reading difficulties are multifaceted, involving cognitive, linguistic, and environmental aspects. Poor phonemic awareness, limited vocabulary, and insufficient exposure to reading materials are common challenges faced by students. Additionally, teaching strategies and classroom environments may also influence students' reading development.

This research aims to identify the types of reading difficulties experienced by third-grade students at UPT SDN 060886 Medan, analyze the underlying causes, and provide insights into effective interventions (Wehbe et al., 2021). By understanding these difficulties, educators and policymakers can develop targeted strategies to enhance students' reading skills and overall learning outcomes.

Through this study, it is hoped that the findings will contribute to the body of knowledge in literacy education and offer practical recommendations for addressing reading difficulties among elementary school students.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the reading difficulties experienced by third-grade students at UPT SDN 060886 Medan. The research aimed to identify the types of reading difficulties, their causes, and possible interventions to address them. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue (Prayuda, Gultom, et al., 2024).

The participants of this study were third-grade students, their classroom teacher, and parents. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 students who demonstrated significant reading challenges based on their academic performance and teacher assessments. The teacher and parents were included as key informants to provide additional insights into the students' reading behavior, learning environment, and external influences (Snowling, Hayiou-Thomas, et al., 2020).

Data collection was conducted over a period of four weeks. Observations were carried out during reading lessons to capture real-time student difficulties, focusing on aspects such as pronunciation, comprehension, and fluency. Interviews were conducted with teachers and parents to explore their perceptions of the students' challenges and the support provided at school and home. Document analysis included reviewing students' reading assignments, test results, and progress reports to triangulate the findings (Scanlon & Vellutino, 2021).

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes related to reading difficulties. The analysis process involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Observational data were categorized into recurring themes, such as decoding challenges or comprehension issues. Interviews were transcribed and coded to extract key points, while document analysis provided a quantitative perspective to support qualitative findings.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, methodological triangulation was applied by cross-checking data from multiple sources. Peer debriefing with educational experts and member checking with participants were conducted to confirm the accuracy of the findings. Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the study, including obtaining informed consent from parents, maintaining participant anonymity, and ensuring that the data collection process did not disrupt the students' learning activities.

This methodological approach provided a holistic understanding of the reading difficulties faced by third-grade students, forming the basis for designing effective interventions to address these challenges.

The results from this methodological process were expected to yield insights into the specific types of reading difficulties encountered by the students, such as phonological processing issues, limited vocabulary, or a lack of comprehension strategies. Moreover, the study aimed to identify external factors contributing to these difficulties, including the teaching methods employed, the availability of learning resources, and the level of parental support at home (Prayuda, Purba, et al., 2024).

Through classroom observations, the study sought to pinpoint critical moments where students exhibited confusion or disengagement during reading activities. These observations not only provided a real-time understanding of the students' struggles but also revealed potential gaps in instructional practices that could be addressed (Ketaren et al., 2022). For example, recurring patterns of mispronunciation or skipping words could indicate phonetic decoding problems, while a lack of response to comprehension questions might reflect challenges in retaining or interpreting text.

Interviews with the classroom teacher provided contextual insights into the instructional strategies currently used and their effectiveness. Teachers' accounts of their experiences with students who face reading difficulties were vital in understanding how instructional methods either supported or hindered student progress (Moats, 2020). Likewise, interviews with parents

highlighted how home environments influenced reading development, shedding light on the availability of books, time spent reading, and parental involvement in literacy activities.

Document analysis offered additional layers of understanding by examining students' written outputs and assessment results over time. This helped to identify whether reading difficulties were isolated incidents or part of a broader pattern of academic struggles. Combined with observational and interview data, the document analysis helped to confirm or challenge initial assumptions about the root causes of reading difficulties.

By integrating these multiple data sources, the study aimed to construct a comprehensive picture of the reading challenges faced by third-grade students at UPT SDN 060886 Medan. The findings were anticipated to provide actionable recommendations for teachers, parents, and educational policymakers, enabling the implementation of targeted interventions to enhance reading proficiency among elementary school students.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight several critical aspects of reading difficulties faced by third-grade students at UPT SDN 060886 Medan. One of the most significant issues identified is the students' limited ability to decode words, which is a foundational skill in reading. This difficulty is primarily linked to a lack of phonemic awareness, wherein students struggle to recognize and manipulate the individual sounds in words. Without this essential skill, students find it challenging to connect letters with their corresponding sounds, leading to struggles in reading fluency and comprehension.

Another contributing factor to reading difficulties is the insufficient vocabulary knowledge among the students. Many participants demonstrated a limited range of vocabulary, which affects their ability to understand texts, especially those with more complex or unfamiliar words (Snowling, Hulme, et al., 2020). This gap may be attributed to a lack of exposure to diverse reading materials both at school and at home. The absence of a print-rich environment hampers students' opportunities to encounter and learn new words in context, further compounding their reading challenges.

The study also reveals the impact of inadequate instructional strategies in addressing reading difficulties. Teachers often rely on traditional, one-size-fits-all approaches that fail to cater to the diverse needs of students with varying levels of reading ability (Grigorenko et al., 2020). This practice results in some students falling behind their peers, as they do not receive the individualized support necessary to overcome their specific reading barriers. Furthermore, limited access to remedial programs or interventions exacerbates the situation, leaving struggling readers without the targeted assistance they require to progress.

Parental involvement also emerges as a significant factor in the discussion of reading difficulties. The data suggest that students with active parental support, such as being read to or engaged in discussions about books, tend to perform better in reading tasks (Snowling et al., 2022). Conversely, those with minimal parental involvement often exhibit lower reading

proficiency. This finding underscores the importance of fostering a collaborative effort between schools and families to promote a reading culture and provide consistent support for students' literacy development.

Additionally, the study identifies a lack of motivation as a key barrier to reading success. Many students expressed a disinterest in reading activities, often citing them as unengaging or challenging. This lack of motivation can hinder their willingness to practice reading, which is crucial for skill development. Teachers and parents play a vital role in addressing this issue by creating engaging, student-centered learning experiences that make reading enjoyable and relevant to the students' interests and lives.

In conclusion, the discussion underscores the multifaceted nature of reading difficulties among third-grade students. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening phonemic awareness, enriching vocabulary, employing diverse instructional strategies, fostering parental involvement, and enhancing students' motivation to read. Collaborative efforts among educators, parents, and policymakers are essential to creating a supportive environment that empowers students to overcome their reading difficulties and achieve literacy success.

To address the challenges identified, it is crucial to implement targeted interventions that focus on the specific needs of struggling readers. One effective approach is the incorporation of phonics-based instruction to enhance phonemic awareness. By systematically teaching the relationship between letters and sounds, students can develop the skills necessary to decode words with greater accuracy and confidence. This method, when integrated into daily classroom activities, can help bridge the gap for students who struggle with basic reading mechanics.

Furthermore, the provision of diverse and engaging reading materials is essential in building students' vocabulary and fostering an interest in reading. Introducing a variety of texts, such as storybooks, informational texts, and culturally relevant materials, can provide students with meaningful contexts to encounter new words and ideas (Prayuda et al., 2023). Encouraging the use of classroom libraries and implementing reading programs that allow students to choose books according to their interests can also significantly boost their motivation to read.

Another important strategy is professional development for teachers to equip them with the skills and knowledge to address reading difficulties effectively. Training programs should focus on differentiated instruction techniques, formative assessments, and strategies for identifying and supporting students with specific literacy needs. Additionally, teachers should be encouraged to create an inclusive classroom environment where all students feel supported and motivated to improve their reading skills.

Parental involvement can be strengthened through workshops or community programs that emphasize the importance of literacy development at home. Schools can collaborate with parents by providing resources such as reading guides, suggested book lists, and strategies to

engage children in reading activities. Regular communication between teachers and parents regarding students' progress and areas for improvement can foster a stronger partnership and shared commitment to enhancing reading skills.

Lastly, incorporating technology in literacy instruction can provide innovative solutions to address reading difficulties. Interactive learning platforms, audiobooks, and educational apps can make reading more engaging for students while providing them with additional practice opportunities. Technology can also support differentiated instruction by allowing teachers to assign tailored activities that match each student's reading level and learning pace.

The findings and recommendations of this study call for a collective effort from all stakeholders to prioritize literacy development in elementary education. Through sustained commitment and collaborative action, the barriers to reading faced by third-grade students at UPT SDN 060886 Medan can be overcome, paving the way for improved academic achievement and a lifelong love of reading.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions in this study, it can be concluded that reading difficulties among third-grade students at UPT SDN 060886 Medan are influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Internally, these difficulties stem from limited phonemic awareness, poor vocabulary acquisition, and a lack of interest or motivation in reading activities. Externally, the inadequacy of teaching strategies, lack of parental involvement, and insufficient access to reading materials further exacerbate the problem.The analysis revealed that students with reading difficulties often struggle with recognizing letters, decoding words, and comprehending text. This suggests that foundational skills, such as phonics and fluency, need to be strengthened through targeted interventions (Irkinovich & Izatullaevna, 2022). Additionally, students who lack a supportive reading environment at home or school are more likely to experience persistent challenges in reading development.To address these issues, educators should implement structured reading programs that integrate engaging and interactive teaching methods. Collaborative efforts between teachers and parents are crucial in creating a supportive environment that encourages reading habits. Furthermore, providing adequate learning resources, such as books and digital reading tools, is essential in fostering students' interest and skills in reading.The study underscores the importance of early identification and intervention to mitigate the long-term impacts of reading difficulties (Caglio et al., 2020). Future research could explore the effectiveness of specific intervention strategies and examine how technology can be leveraged to enhance reading skills among elementary school students. By addressing these challenges comprehensively, it is hoped that the literacy levels of students can be significantly improved.

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