

Teacher Strategies in Overcoming Early Reading Difficulties Among First Grade Students at Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Class, SD UMP

Diyah Mardiyanti¹, Ristiana Dyah Purwandari²

¹SD UMP, Kembaran, Banyumas

²Magister Pendidikan Dasar, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto

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ABSTRACT

Difficulties in early reading during the initial stage of elementary education present a significant challenge, considering that reading ability is a fundamental foundation in learning. The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. This research aims to describe the results of the strategies implemented by teachers to overcome early reading difficulties among first-grade students at Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Class in UMP Elementary School. The results of the study show that teachers use several strategies, including the phonetic approach, the use of visual and audio learning media, game-based learning, and providing individual assistance to students experiencing difficulties. In addition, parental involvement and collaboration with support teachers also play an important role in supporting the reading learning process. These strategies have proven effective in gradually increasing students' interest and ability in early reading. The study concludes that the active role of teachers in selecting appropriate strategies is crucial to the students' success in overcoming reading challenges at the early stage of elementary education.

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Corresponding Author:

Diyah Mardiyanti

SD UMP, Kembaran, Banyumas

Email: diahmardianti048@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the essential components in the process of building a civilized society is education. Education is carried out by adults in order to pass down cultural values to the next generation children. Through education, children are able to acquire the knowledge needed to achieve well-being and security, as well as to develop their full range of competencies. By participating in both formal and non-formal institutions, children can obtain a quality education¹. The education provided by teachers can equip children with various skills, including the fundamental abilities of reading and writing.

Reading is one of the primary skills that students need to possess before they can learn other subjects. It is explained that children who have fluent reading abilities will experience a significant impact on their academic performance. Children with good reading skills will have a greater ability to understand the subject matter and will become more active during teaching and learning activities. Early reading is important because

¹ Muhammad Yusron Maulana El-yunusi, "Strategi Guru Dalam Mengatasi Kesulitan Membaca Dan Menulis Di Sekolah Dasar Alami Driyorejo Gresik" 8, no. 3 (2024): 2187–95.

if a child is not yet proficient in reading, they will struggle to keep up with classroom activities or to understand the material or assignments given by the teacher at school.

With the learning process or understanding the material and assignments given by the teacher at school². Teachers are the main figures in interacting with students at school, and therefore they play a central role in the success of children's learning. Teachers must be able to understand the difficulties experienced by children in their classrooms, especially those teaching lower grades or first grade. One of the difficulties faced by first-grade students is learning to read. A major factor contributing to children's difficulties in learning to read in lower grades is that this period marks a transition from the play-oriented environment of kindergarten to the more structured setting of elementary school, along with the developmental limitations of the child³.

Learning difficulties in reading at the elementary school level require special attention. Therefore, teachers need to make efforts or apply strategies to overcome reading difficulties among first-grade students at SD UMP. Several solutions can be implemented by teachers to address these challenges, one of which is by providing a special reading period in between other subject lessons. It is hoped that this research will offer new insights for teachers on strategies to address reading problems among first-grade students at SD UMP.

2. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The type of research conducted in this study is qualitative research. Qualitative research is a type of research that presents data descriptively, using words or sentences to describe the findings⁴. The purpose of qualitative research is to investigate, discover, then describe and explain the qualitative nature or characteristics of social influences that cannot be understood, measured, or explained through a quantitative approach⁵.

The reason the researcher uses this type of qualitative research is to describe the difficulties experienced by students in learning beginning reading in lower grade levels, particularly in Grade 1. This study employs a descriptive qualitative methodology with a case study at SD UMP, Kembaran District, Banyumas Regency. In this research, primary data were obtained through interviews and observations. These interviews and observations involved Grade 1 teachers and students at SD UMP. Additionally, for secondary data, the researcher collected information from supplementary sources such as field notes, documentation, and teacher journals that provided support for the study.

The data collection methods in this study were carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation, resulting in comprehensive data that supports the research. The instruments used by the researcher included interview sheets, observation sheets, and document review instruments. This research was conducted through several procedures, namely: first, determining the research focus on the difficulties in early reading among first grade elementary school students; second, the researcher applied three subsequent techniques—observation, interview, and documentation; third, the researcher carried out data analysis, which involved data reduction, data presentation, and verification or drawing conclusions⁶.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research was conducted at SD UMP, located at Jl. Raden Patah, Ledug, Kembaran District, Banyumas Regency, Central Java, postal code 53182. SD UMP has been accredited with an A rating. The school is led by the principal, Rifqi Maulana, S.Pd., Gr., M.Pd. The research was carried out on Thursday, May 8, 2025. The research was conducted in three stages: observation, interviews, and documentation, to understand the difficulties faced by the first-grade students of Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, as well as the teacher's efforts in resolving these issues.

The primary data source for this research was obtained from the statements of the homeroom teacher of class I Ki Bagus Hadikusumo. Based on the observations conducted by the researcher, data showed that at the beginning of the 2024–2025 academic year, the majority of students 11 out of 15 first-grade students in Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Class at SD UMP were still unable to read. This condition prompted the classroom teacher to implement various strategies to help the students acquire reading skills by the end of first grade. The teaching and learning process that has been carried out over the past year in this class has generally been running well.

However, despite these efforts, many students are still experiencing difficulties in learning to read. Based on the analysis conducted, it was identified that initially, students faced challenges and obstacles that

² Diviky Irmade, Oka;Grahito Wicaksono, Anggit;M.Rizal, "Analisis Faktor Kesulitan Membaca Permulaan Pada Siswa Kelas 1," *Jurnal Inovasi, Evaluasi Dan Pengembangan Pembelajaran (JIEPP)* 4, no. 2 (2024): 303–9, <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiepp.v4i2.503>.

³ El-yunusi, "Strategi Guru Dalam Mengatasi Kesulitan Membaca Dan Menulis Di Sekolah Dasar Alami Driyorejo Gresik."

⁴ Wahyu Budi Utami et al., "Analisis Kesulitan Membaca Permulaan Siswa Kelas 1 SD Muhammadiyah Kemiri," *Wahyu* 3, no. 1 (2024): 724–29.

⁵ Nina Thania, Rasendriya Kirei; Maksum, Arifin; Nurhasanah, "Peran Guru Terhadap Siswa Yang Mengalami Kesulitan Membaca Permulaan Di SD Negeri Abadijaya 3 Depok" 24, no. 7 (2024): 28–42.

⁶ Muhfik Anwar et al., "Kesulitan Membaca Permulaan Siswa Kelas 1 Sekolah Dasar" 06, no. 3 (2024): 77–85.

hindered the development of their reading abilities. The researcher has carried out direct observations and interviews with the classroom teacher and students.

3.1 Beginning Reading Skills

Ability refers to a person's capacity, competence, and strength to strive independently. Ability serves as a foundation for someone, inherently related to the effective or highly successful execution of a task. Ability is defined as a change in energy within a person, marked by the emergence of thoughts preceded by a response to their goals⁷.

The initial stage in the process of learning to read in elementary school is beginning reading. In this stage, students are taught by the teacher how to acquire reading skills and master reading techniques, followed by understanding the content of the text well. Teachers should carefully plan reading activities to help cultivate reading as an enjoyable habit for children. At the elementary level, reading instruction is divided into two categories: beginning reading, which is intended for first and second-grade students, and advanced reading, which is intended for students from third to sixth grade⁸.

Beginning reading is one of the language skills that elementary school students, especially those in the lower grades, need to acquire. According to Akhadiyah, beginning reading takes place over a period of two years, namely when children are in the first and second grades of elementary school. Reading is an activity of recognizing written language, as through writing, students are expected to be able to express or vocalize the symbols of written language⁹.

The purpose of reading is to obtain information, understand the content, and grasp the meaning of a text. Beginning reading aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize various techniques in early reading, enabling them to comprehend reading materials effectively¹⁰.

3.2 Factors Causing Difficulties in Early Reading

There are several factors that can influence students to experience difficulties in reading, including internal and external factors. Internal factors are those that come from within the student, such as low IQ and lack of support from the family environment. Meanwhile, external factors come from outside the student, such as friends, the living environment, and so on¹¹. Below are several factors that cause students to experience difficulties in beginning reading¹².

1. Lack of students' interest in learning to read

One of the common factors causing students to have difficulty reading is their interest in learning. If students do not have the willingness or interest to learn to read, it will be difficult for them to do so. Students' interest in reading can be observed from their enthusiasm during the learning process, as well as their attitude throughout the learning activities.

2. Family Support

Family support is also something that is highly needed by a student for success in learning to read. Parents are a child's first school. Before students are introduced to the world of formal education, they receive their first education from their family environment. Starting from small or basic things, parents teach various skills, including recognizing letters or even early reading. This is where the family's crucial role lies—in providing support for their children in the process of learning to read.

3.3 Teacher Strategies in Overcoming Early Reading Difficulties

Based on the researcher's observations, the learning environment in Grade I at Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Elementary School UMP can be described as orderly and manageable. The teacher must be able to manage the classroom, condition the students who are in a transitional age from kindergarten to elementary school and engage them to stay focused during the learning activities so that the teaching and learning process runs smoothly. Activities such as singing, storytelling, and clapping are some of the strategies used by the teacher to capture the students' attention and maintain their focus.

Students who face difficulties during the learning process require guidance from the teacher and repeated explanations of the material. The strategies that teachers can implement to address first-grade students who

⁷ Zulfi Idayanti et al., "Upaya Guru Dalam Mengatasi Kesulitan Membaca Dan Menulis Siswa Kelas I Dan II Sekolah Dasar," *Ideguru: Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Guru* 9, no. 2 (2024): 689–94, <https://doi.org/10.51169/ideguru.v9i2.817>.

⁸ Markhamah Pertiwi, Monica W;Sutama, "Analisis Kesulitan Membaca Permulaan Pada Siswa Kelas 1 Sekolah Dasar" 08, no. September (2023).

⁹ Idayanti et al., "Upaya Guru Dalam Mengatasi Kesulitan Membaca Dan Menulis Siswa Kelas I Dan II Sekolah Dasar."

¹⁰ Pertiwi, Monica W;Sutama, "Analisis Kesulitan Membaca Permulaan Pada Siswa Kelas 1 Sekolah Dasar."

¹¹ El-yunusi, "Strategi Guru Dalam Mengatasi Kesulitan Membaca Dan Menulis Di Sekolah Dasar Alami Driyorejo Gresik."

¹² AT Septianingsih, K. Sumarno. Damayani, "Analisis Faktor Penyebab Kesulitan Membaca Peserta Didik Kelas Rendah Di SD Negeri Cerme" 09 (2023): 1632–41.

struggle with reading and writing include lesson planning and lesson implementation. Lesson planning is a decision-making process based on logical thinking regarding the objectives of learning. These objectives involve behavioral changes and a series of activities aimed at achieving goals by utilizing available abilities and learning resources.

As a solution to overcome reading difficulties, teachers can prepare learning materials, learning media, teaching methods, and assessment tools. These four components must be tailored to the students' conditions to ensure that the learning objectives are effectively achieved. The second effort is the implementation of learning. The implementation of teaching methods that teachers must use to help students overcome reading difficulties includes letter recognition, syllable recognition, word-by-word construction, and finally, the application of reading skills¹³.

The results of the interview between the researcher and the first-grade teacher at Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Elementary School UMP revealed that various integrated strategies can be implemented to help overcome students' reading difficulties. One of these strategies involves providing additional time specifically for reading activities after school hours, allowing students more opportunities to practice reading in a more relaxed and focused environment. Additionally, engaging students in group story-reading activities can enhance their reading comprehension and interest, as interaction within a group can stimulate enthusiasm and reinforce reading skills.

Writing exercises also serve as an important method, as they help students deepen their understanding of letters, words, and sentence structures through active use. Furthermore, dictation techniques are effective for training listening, writing, and reading skills simultaneously, as students must accurately translate what they hear into written form. By combining these four strategies, it is expected that students' reading abilities will develop comprehensively and sustainably. The teacher applied all of these strategies over approximately one and a half semesters.

At the end of the study, the author conducted an observation of students who had difficulty reading at the beginning of the semester. The results showed an improvement: of the 11 students in Grade 1 Ki Bagus Hadikusumo at SD UMP who were unable to read at the beginning of the academic year, all are now able to read fluently. Below, the author attaches a table of the observation results on the early reading abilities of Grade 1 Ki Bagus Hadikusumo students at SD UMP before and after the implementation of the teacher's strategy, showing the early reading skills before and after the strategy was applied.

Table 1. Observation Results of Beginning Reading Ability Before and After the Implementation of Teacher Strategies

Student Difficulty Criteria	Number of Students	
	Before	After
Not Yet Fluent in Reading	11	1
Already Fluent in Reading	4	14
Total Students	15	15

Based on the Table 1 above, it can be seen that most students experienced a significant improvement. At the beginning of the new academic year, only 4 students were already fluent in reading. However, after the implementation of strategies by the teacher, there has been a significant increase, with 14 students now reading fluently.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research conducted in Grade I Ki Bagus Hadikusumo at SD UMP, it can be concluded that the teacher's strategy in overcoming early reading difficulties has proven to be effective. The teacher was able to create a conducive and structured classroom atmosphere and apply various approaches that were appropriate for the students' age characteristics. The strategies implemented included thorough lesson planning, the gradual implementation of reading methods (from letter recognition to reading application), as well as providing additional reading hours, shared story reading, writing practice, and dictation.

The teacher's patience and diligence in guiding the students also contributed significantly to the success. Observations showed a significant improvement in the students' reading abilities, where out of 11 students who initially struggled with reading fluency, 13 of them managed to achieve reading fluency after the strategy was applied over one and a half semesters. This demonstrates that the application of appropriate and consistent strategies can significantly improve early reading skills in first-grade students.

¹³ El-yunusi, "Strategi Guru Dalam Mengatasi Kesulitan Membaca Dan Menulis Di Sekolah Dasar Alami Driyorejo Gresik."

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