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Problems and Solutions for Literacy Development of 5th Grade Elementary School Students Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic Era in Mandailing Natal Regency

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Abstrak

Literasi adalah kemampuan menyimak, berbicara, membaca dan menulis. Perkembangan literasi siswa kelas V SD di era pandemic covid-19 menghadapi berbagai masalah. Masalah-masalah tersebut menjadi perhatian semua pihak untuk dicarikan solusinya. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengidentifikasi masalah-masalah dan menemukan solusi perkembangan literasi siswa kelas V SD selama era pandemic covid-19. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan metode wawancara semi-terbuka melibatkan 23 guru SD kelas V di 23 kecamatan di Kabupaten Mandailing Natal. Data yang diperoleh kemudian dianalisis secara tematik dengan hasil analisa berbasis tema rinci. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ditemukan 31 masalah literasi siswa kelas 5 SD dengan rincian masalah yaitu 8 masalah menyimak, 8 masalah berbicara, 7 masalah membaca dan 8 masalah menulis. Penelitian ini juga menemukan 32 solusi untuk masalah literasi dengan rincian 10 solusi menyimak, 6 solusi berbicara, 10 solusi membaca dan 6 solusi menulis. Temuan dalam penelitian ini dapat digunakan sebagai sumber rujukan dalam implementasi pengembangan literasi di era pandemic covid-19.

Kata kunci: Literasi, siswa SD, pandemic covid-19

Abstract

Literacy is defined as the ability to listen, speak, read and write. The literacy development of 5th Grade Elementary School students amidst the covid-19 pandemic faces a myriad of problems. Those problems are urgently needed to be solved. The objective of this study is to identify problems and to discover solutions for literacy development of 5th-grade elementary school students during the covid-19 pandemic. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews involving 23 teachers of the 5th elementary school in 23 districts located in Mandailing Natal Regency. The data were afterward analyzed by thematic analysis with the results distributed into the most specific separated themes. The overall results revealed that 31 problems were found. They were consisting of 8 problems of listening, 8 problems of speaking, 7 problems of reading, and 8 problems of writing. Moreover, this study also uncovered 32 solutions for literacy development problems. They were 10 solutions for listening, 6 solutions for speaking, 10 solutions for reading, and 6 solutions for writing. These findings could function as significant sources for relevant problem-solving in the literacy development context amidst the covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: literacy, elementary school students, covid-19 pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

Literacy is very popular nowadays. It covers many issues. It is not only found in the context of education, but it is also found in another context, such as digital literacy, financial literacy, health literacy, media literacy, emotional literacy, physical literacy, numerical literacy, and cultural literacy. Literacy in this study is restricted in terms of education, most importantly in the domain of elementary school students' level which focuses on four basic literacy skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Literacy is getting crucial to be accomplished in the teaching-learning activities and at the same time significantly needed to be researched during the covid-19 pandemic era.

(Harras, 2011) explained that literacy is an activity of reading and writing. (Baynham, 1995) added literacy is the ability to speak, listen, reading and think critically. (Faizah, 2016) asserted that literacy is a skill of understanding, accessing intelligence with a sequence of activities such as reading, writing, speaking. (Lestari et al., 2021) stated that the culture of literacy can function as a tool in the teaching-learning process to broaden students' insights, to enrich vocabulary mastery, to force writing exercise, and to grow reading interest since early childhood. The aforementioned notions can be concluded that literacy is a basic skill for human beings to understand anything by doing several activities for instance listening, speaking, reading, and writing. (Arum Nisma Wulanjani & Candradewi Wahyu Anggraeni, 2019) denoted that the 15 minutes of reading activity before starting the class can increase students' enthusiasm for reading and learning. In other words, (Teguh, 2017) emphasized that literacy activity must be founded on four aspects, namely increasing the intensity of reading activity and counting exercise, utilizing adequate references, maximizing technological tools, and using media and literature sources.

Literacy development is also a big issue in Indonesia. The reality of literacy with low-level ability among elementary school students in Indonesia leads to a serious problem. Based on the result of the survey Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018 which was conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) sub-organization of UNESCO, revealed that Indonesia's literacy rate is in the 62nd rank of over 70 countries in the world. That study was involving 540.000 of 15 years old respondents in 70 countries, including Indonesia. UNESCO also released another fact that the reading interest rate of Indonesians is 0.001% which means on each 1,000 Indonesians, only 1 person loves reading. Puspendik in 2016 showed its study result that the ability of reading of Indonesian students is framed as follows: 46,83% is at the low level, 6,06% at the good level, and 47,11% at the average/middle level or enough (Mursyid, 2016). Data from Perpustakaan (national library of Indonesia) in 2019 mentioned that reading interest rate of Indonesians is 53,84 equals average (Perpustakaan, 2020).

In the smaller scope, literacy problem also occurs in regional area namely Mandailing Natal Regency, in Province Sumatera Utara. Total number of population in Mandailing Natal Regency in 2020 is 472.886 with total number of students 32.402 (Kabupaten Mandailing Natal Dalam Angka, 2021). Referring to the aforementioned national literacy rate between low and average levels, Mandailing Natal regency has the same thing. The problem is that the emersion of the covid-19 pandemic affects many things, including the ecosystem of the educational process and it inevitably gives negative effects on the literacy skills of elementary school students.

The literacy ability of elementary school students in Mandailing Natal Regency during the covid-19 pandemic was paid attention by many parties for instance teachers, schools, academicians, stakeholders, students' parents, and the public community. Therefore the researchers from STAIN Mandailing Natal were motivated to do a study in-depth to identify problems and to find solutions of literacy development of 5th-grade elementary school students during the covid-19 pandemic era. For specific rationale, the researchers find out whether the coming of the covid-19 pandemic era in Mandailing Natal Regency worsen the literacy ability level or otherwise, it gives positive thing makes the literacy ability level increase up. In the process of study, the

researchers team widely collected, identified, and analyzed comprehensively the factors that hinder literacy ability and relevant beneficial solutions to overcome the problems of literacy.

This study was formulated into two objectives of research namely (1) identifying problems of literacy ability of 5th-grade elementary school students amidst covid-19 pandemic era di Mandailing Natal Regency, (2) finding the solutions of literacy problems of 5th-grade elementary school students amidst covid-19 pandemic era di Mandailing Natal regency. This study involved 23 teachers of 5th elementary schools as respondents. The semi-structured interview was done to collect the data. Their responses during the interview were identified and analyzed to identify problems and to determine solutions for literacy development during the covid-19 pandemic.

There are some relevant previous studies had been done under the framework of literacy. (Cahyono, A. H., 2020) had conducted a study on the literacy development of reading and writing at SDIT Ar-Rahmah, Pacitan. Their study focused on literacy development at school. (Tantril, A. A. & Dewantara, 2020) did a study on measuring the effectiveness of literacy culture to increase the reading interest of students at SDN 03 Banjar Jawa. Suyono, et.al (2017) accomplished a study on literacy implementation via thematic learning. Suyono, et.al (2017)'s study limited the focus on describing the pattern of literacy movement implementation at elementary school. Those three studies were focused on one school, one main goal namely how to increase a certain literacy, or only measuring cultural literacy and thematic learning used to grow literacy awareness. Those predecessor studies have the same relevance as this current study namely on literacy. The difference is, this current study is identifying problems of literacy in elementary schools level arising during the covid-19 pandemic and finding out the solutions through interviewing 23 teachers in 23 different elementary schools in Mandailing Natal regency.

(Lestari et al., 2021) did research on the effect of the culture of literacy on science learning results at the elementary school level. (Utami & Desstya, 2021) also conducted a study on analysis of science literacy domain in the textbooks of 5th-grade elementary school, particularly on theme 4 written by Ari Subekti at elementary school. Moreover, (Tahmidaten & Krismanto, 2020) did a study on literacy with focus problems and solutions of reading culture in Indonesia. The earliest two studies, have the same focus namely literacy, and have the same domain namely elementary school, just like in the recent study. The difference is, the earliest first focuses on the effect of the culture of literacy on a certain lesson, meanwhile, the earliest second focuses on the analysis of certain textbooks. Compared to this current study that has focused on problems and solutions by interviewing 23 teachers in 23 different elementary schools. In addition, the third latter previous study has the same focus as the current study on problems and solutions of literacy. The difference is the previous one was conducted based on library research, meanwhile, the current one was based on a direct oral interview with 23 teachers in 23 different schools in 23 different districts.

From the aforementioned notions and literature above, it is inferred that literacy holds a great role and function for humans to broaden, open, and bridge science, insight, and knowledge. This study aimed to identify problems of literacy of 5th-grade elementary school students caused by the covid-19 pandemic era. Moreover, this study is aimed to identify the solutions to literacy.

METHODOLOGY

This study applied a descriptive research design through a qualitative approach, searching to obtain a comprehensive understanding of a very certain social phenomenon or human behavior through a method of naturalistic and contextual inquiry (Creswel & Creswell, 2017). (Emzir, 2018) affirmed that qualitative descriptive covers a pure picture of a particular phenomenon of research subjects and is reported narratively. This study shot and described the phenomena of problems and solutions of literacy development of 5th-grade elementary school students in 23 different schools which spread out in 23 different districts in Mandailing Natal Regency.

The subjects of this study were 23 teachers of 5th-grade elementary schools in 23 elementary schools in 23 districts. In selecting the teachers, a purposive sampling method was employed. The teacher participants were selected based on two criteria; they are homeroom teacher and fifth-grade teacher. In selecting the elementary school, each district was taken 1 elementary school. It means that 23 elementary schools represented a total of 23 districts in the Mandailing Natal regency. By way of explanation, each 1 district was taken 1 teacher-respondent to be interviewed about the problems and solution of literacy in 1 elementary school he or she was working/teaching. The reason for choosing 5th-grade elementary schools students to be objects of analysis in terms of literacy by the teacher respondents was because that level was considered having completed four basic literacy skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing since they had learned in grade 1, grade 2, grade 3 and grade 4 of elementary school. This study took duration from July – October 2021.

The data were collected by applying semi-structured interviews, focusing on the analysis of teachers on problems and solutions of the 5th-grade Elementary School students' literacy during the covid-19 pandemic. The obtained data were organized, identified, analyzed, and categorized into specific themes based on the aforementioned stages of instructional design.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data obtained during the study were analyzed, identified, categorized, and discussed based on particular themes as follows. The findings and discussions are presented to answer the objectives of the research namely (1) identifying problems of literacy development of 5th-grade elementary school students amidst covid-19 pandemic era di Mandailing Natal Regency, (2) finding the solutions of literacy problems of 5th-grade elementary school students amidst covid-19 pandemic era di Mandailing Natal regency.

1.1 Listening Problems

Listening is the first human skill since they were born. Listening to itself is classified into two types: listening and listening comprehension. Listening is two types; (1) listening as a process that demands only listening to the message delivered which does not involve interpretation, response, or reaction to the text, and (2) listening comprehension that requires the meaningful interactive response activity as a token of understanding overall text delivered (Hasan, 2000). In this study, the listening problem is one of the main problems in literacy development and the level is in the middle because of the 5th-grade elementary school students. Interview with the 23 respondent teachers yielded some insightful feedback about the students' literacy problems in listening. Based on the interview result, there are 7 problems of listening identified. The 7 problems are refined from feedback utterances of the interview as follows:

Table 1
Students' Problems in Listening

No.	Identified Problems of Listening
1.	Classroom is noisy
2.	Lack of learning time in classroom
3.	Long holiday caused by covid-19 pandemic policy
4.	Laziness and boredom caused by online learning
5.	Lack of awareness for self-study at home
6.	Sleepy
7.	Restricted access of other learning alternatives caused by low economy

All respondent teachers spoke about students' problems in listening. Some of them fluently stated the problems their students faced as follows:

"Noisy. Other friends in the classroom make a noise" (N.1)

"Learning duration is very short. It is not ideal and it is caused by appearance of covid-19" (N.2)

"The intensity of face to face meeting in the classroom is rare. It is replaced by online learning" (N.3)

“Students’ focus is adverse. Many of them are busy to help their parents working or wasting time for play” (N.6)

Respondent teacher or in Bahasa Indonesia called as *narasumber* with interview identification number 1 (abbreviated=N.1) voiced obviously that students have a problem in listening because of a noisy classroom. Rationally, a voice or sound will be difficult to listen to if the condition around is dominated by other kinds of voices or sounds. It is serious problem to increase students’ literacy in listening, mainly for 5th-grade elementary school students. Respondent teacher (N.2) and respondent teacher (N.3) have almost similar responses. They admitted that lack of learning time in the classroom caused degradation of listening literacy. By the policy of shifting system which puts students into some groups to be allowed to school with low intensity of regular schedule or replaced by online learning system, automatically students are not familiar with their teacher’s voice when explaining the material in a real-life classroom. However, it affects their listening ability especially in listening teachers who are explaining material in the classroom. Another respondent (N.6) noted the other problem of literacy in listening namely students’ focus is adverse. That condition is caused by the students where they are busy doing many jobs helping their parents at home/farm, or students spending much time playing instead of attending to the classroom/online classroom.

“Students are sleepy, bored” (N.7)

“Students face hinders in language mastery. Their Bahasa Indonesia skill is lower that their mother language, namely Mandailing language or Natal language” (N.21)

Respondent teacher (N.7) asserted that sleepiness and boredom contribute to listening skill degradation. That reality is worsened by language obstacles. Most of the students in Mandailing Natal regency use their mother tongue, Mandailing language, in most of the activities. It does not only occur at school but everywhere, at the house, farm, community, etc they fluently use their mother tongue. The problem is that the official language in education is Bahasa Indonesia. When their teacher is explaining by Bahasa Indonesia, most of them do not understand because of low mastery of that language itself.

1.2 Speaking Problems

Speaking problems are also being the main point in enhancing students’ literacy skills. Meanwhile, speaking ability determines the success of communication itself. Speaking skill makes sure whether the message and information are delivered well or not (Suadi, 2020). Based on interview results, respondent teachers expressed eight problems of literacy in speaking. They are summed up into a table as follows.

Table 2
Students’ Problems in Speaking

No.	Identified Problems of Speaking
1.	Hesitation
2.	Nervous or shy
3.	Lazy or timid to speak
4.	Low intensity of conventional class
5.	Class atmosphere is not enthusiastic
6.	Language obstacles
7.	Stolid
8.	Apprehension being verbal bullied

Some respondents replied the interview directly to the main point of students’ problem literacy in speaking. Speaking is a vital skill. The replies are transcribed as follows:

“Students are hesitated” (N.1)

“Students are nervous or shy/timid” (N.2)

“Rare to come to the school. Kids are lazy” (N.3)

“Lack of enthusiasm in the classroom. Students are not confident” (N.4)

Speaking is an activity when someone conveys a piece of certain information or expresses thoughts, ideas, and feelings (Al Nakhlah, 2016). In this context, speaking problems avert someone to express his or her ideas and feelings. Based on the interview result, one of the respondent teachers (N.1) uttered that why students still have a problem in speaking, is because of hesitation. Most students are not used to speaking in front of the public, just like in front of the classroom. Another respondent (N.2) gave a different answer. The reason for decreasing the students' literacy in speaking is caused by feeling nervous or shy to speak witnessed by someone else, in this context, witnessed by entire classmates. Meanwhile, the respondent teacher (N.3) emphasized the problem of speaking for 5th-grade elementary school students is a little number of face-to-face meetings in the classroom. Covid-19 pandemic leads stakeholders to issue the policy for education to not attend the classroom, replaced by online learning, or attending to the school by obeying the shifting system. The factor of lack of enthusiasm is also playing a significant role to overcome the speaking problem. It was narrated by the respondent teacher (N.4) who pointed out that students are not willing to speak in the classroom if the class atmosphere itself is not interesting.

“Language barrier. Low mastery of Bahasa Indonesia. They dominantly speak by using Mandailing Language (N.8)

“Apprehension being verbal bullied”(N.11)

“Language obstacle. Official language still Mandailing language, not Bahasa Indonesia” (N.16)

This is a unique fact where most students are not able to speak Bahasa Indonesia. It does not cause trouble for the teacher to elaborate the lesson in the classroom, but it also stimulates problems for students' speaking ability. In speaking, automatically it is linked to phonological awareness of Bahasa Indonesia which is related to how a student pronounces and uses correct words in speaking, namely Bahasa Indonesia. Phonological awareness and literacy have the link and typically develop together (Hesketh, 2004). That reality was stated by the respondent (N.8) and respondent teacher (N.16). On the other hand, the respondent (N.11) perceived that apprehension being verbally bullied is also great trouble for students to freely express their ideas in the classroom.

1.3 Reading Problems

In the literacy development process at schools, teachers also face students' problems in reading. (Maughan et al., 2009) asserted that developmental reading problems show strong persistence across the school years; less is known about slow learner type - students later progress in literacy skills. Referring to the interview result in this study, there are 7 reading problems for 5th-grade elementary school students. The findings of reading problems are yielded in the following table.

Table 3
Students' Problems in Reading

No.	Identified Problems of Reading
1.	Incorrect pronunciation and punctuation
2.	laziness
3.	Inadequate learning facilities
4.	Low intensity of face to face meeting
5.	Lack of reading practice
6.	Language obstacle
7.	Stammered
8.	Vocabulary limitation

The above students' problems in reading contribute to the literacy degradation. Meanwhile, Harras (2011) noted that literacy is an activity of reading and writing. However, reading is one of the basic literacy skills that students must have. The utterances below are responses of respondent teachers in the interview due to reading problems.

“Incorrect pronunctaion and punctuation.” (N.1)

“At home, lack of practice (reading). Then, school are closed due to covid-19 panemic era only online learning, or attending the class under shifting regulation where each week only 3 days of meeting at school” (N.6)

“Reading skill is lacking and vocabulary is limited” (N.7)

Respondent teacher (N.1) uncovered with a statement that problems in reading are caused by incorrect pronunciation and incorrect punctuation. Those two things are very crucial to reading a text well. Then, the respondent (N.6) said that lack of practice gives a significant effect on reading literacy. Respondent (7) also reminded that students face difficulties in reading because their vocabulary mastery is low.

“Lack of practice at home” (N.8)

“Rare of real classroom setting (online or shifting class). Kids are lazy” (N.9)

“Practice frequency is extremely sparse caused by remote teaching (online or shifting system), then, there is no any control for learning at home” (N.10)

“(Most students are) stammered.” (N.14) (N.20)

Responses were uttered by respondent teachers who also discover lack of reading practice as a big problem to increase students’ literacy skills. It was illustrated by respondent (N.8) meanwhile respondent (N.9) and respondent (N.10) mostly voiced the same tune namely rare of a face-to-face classroom causing a serious effect on students’ reading ability. In another way, the respondent (N.14) and respondent (N.20) pictured that stammer is also a crucial factor that can decrease students’ literacy development.

1.4 Writing Problems

Based on the interview results with the respondent teachers, 8 problems in writing are discovered. The 8 problems are as follows.

Table 4
Students’ Problems in Writing

No.	Identified Problems of Reading
1.	Un-accustomed
2.	Language obstacle
3.	Incorrect punctuation
4.	Low intensity of face to face meeting
5.	laziness
6.	Low interest and unmotivated to write
7.	Lack of parents’ support
8.	Learning condition is not conducive

Writing activity that focuses on Bahasa Indonesia for elementary school level, will enhance students’ mastery of Bahasa Indonesia itself. (Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014) noted that writing in language context requires two focuses, focusing on the informal way (lower level) and writing for an academic or scientific purpose (high level). Writing helps students to activate their language and linguistics mastery such as grammar, word structure so that they are familiarized with the smallest component of language. In this study, writing is at a lower level because in terms of elementary school. The respondent teachers uncovered problems about writing skills. Writing skill is the peak skill among other basic literacy skills. It is a productive skill that may make someone draw ideas and feelings into a written pattern. Nevertheless, students faced problems in real writing practice implementation. This reality was pictured by respondent teachers as follows.

“(Barriers in writing literacy) it is may caused by lack of vocabulary mastery. Students’ language is dominated by their mother tongue; Mandailing language. Moreover, some of them do not recognize types of letters whether capital or lowercase or punctuation. They make them same in writing” (N.2)

“Sometimes online learning, not entering the class, or conventional class under shifting regulation (N.5)

“Lazy. Lack of concentration. Less motivated. Much playing (N.6)

“Less support from parents to make sure their kids study at home” (N.11)

Respondent teacher (N.2) outlined problems that caused writing skill degradation namely lack of vocabulary, language barrier, and low understanding of letters and punctuation. Those problems are basic and play a significant role in the writing process. Another problem was uttered by the respondent (N.5) namely lack of meeting quantity. The normal number of meeting each week is 6 days. But, the covid-19 pandemic makes the situation totally changes. From 6 days each week turned into 3 days in each week. This caused students to stay home. They don't meet their teacher at school and automatically they also do not practice writing as they do in the classroom. Other very crucial problems that decreased students' writing skill was laziness, lack of concentration, lack of motivation, and spending time much more playing than learning. It was voiced by the respondent (N.6) in addition, the respondent (N.5) took note of the vital role of parents' support. Without it, it was fatal. Students' self-study at home was getting stuck because their parents did not make sure their kids were at home to do it.

“(students writing literacy) was hindered by vocabulary mastery. Sometimes, a student doesn't know a certain meaning of a certain vocabulary, especially in Bahasa Indonesia. The student remained using Mandailing language and alongwith it was lack of writing practice.” (N.21)

“Less focus, classroom atmosphere is not convenient or noisy (N.22).

Vocabulary is the main point in writing. A student can't write something in Bahasa Indonesia, but they don't know much of the vocabulary along with the meaning in Bahasa Indonesia. It was asserted by the respondent teacher (N.21). Moreover, the respondent teacher (N.22) voiced the problem of class atmosphere. If the classroom is noisy, full of a variety of sounds and voices, students are disturbed and never concentrate on what they are going to write.

2.1 Solution for Listening Problems.

Beside problems of literacy discovered above, the interview result also showed solutions. There are 10 solutions for solving listening problems as presented in the table below.

Table 5
Students' Solutions in Listening

No.	Identified Problems of Reading
1.	Partnership and cooperation with students' parents
2.	Conductive class
3.	Mapping students with low ability in listening
4.	High frequency of listening practice
5.	Giving extra guidance/tutorship
6.	Conditioning students to be active in class discussion
7.	Urgently needed regular normal face to face meeting
8.	Demanded to come forward
9.	Extra learning at homeroom teacher's house
10.	Extra course outside formal class

Partnership and cooperation between teachers and students' parents as shown in the table is core in succeeding the teaching-learning process, especially for listening during the covid-19 pandemic. Parents have a central role in education at home, mainly during the covid-19 era (Sutarjo & Kristiawan, 2021), as they may act as steerers at home. This is an appropriate way the teachers took to handle students at home by coordinating with their parents. It was voiced by the respondent teacher (N.1), stating:

“Cooperation and partnership with students' parents to help their kids self-study at home. Or support by giving extra course (N.1)

Respondent teacher (N.4) also perceived that positive atmosphere in the classroom holding great point to make sure that teaching-learning process, mainly in listening, running well as expected. Furthermore, to succeed in listening ability, much practice is suggested.

“Teacher ensures the class is conducive. Then, mapping the students’ intelligence and abilities in listening whoever still do not understand (N.4)

“Make many listening practice (N.5)

“for slow learner, ask them to join extra learning in the rest time of school”(N.6)

It was expressed by the respondent teacher (N.5). Another important point was said by the respondent (N.7) where slow learners need to have extra time beyond official class time, for instance, the teacher asks them to learn with the teacher in rest time. Literacy is very vital and the essence of many things. Paul Richardson (1998) stated that literacy, together with learning and teaching are in the top priority and the government sees them as too important and entrust in the hands of teachers and literacy educators.

“Students are invited to join class discussion” (N.7)

“Back to normal class (without online, shifting learning system). And many practices” (N.14)

“Study at homeroom teacher under a certain shifting schedule.” (N.23)

Another solution for the listening problem is stated by the respondent teacher (N.7) where students are invited to join the class discussion. This way will get students accustomed to being active in listening, they effort their best to get someone else’s point/idea in the discussion. One respondent (N.14) also pointed out that the new normal by online learning, shifting system, and the like, decrease the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning ecosystem itself. Meanwhile, online learning is one of the government’s policies education system which targets people (lecturers, students) either to sustain the learning process as usual in a different way (namely online system) and to reduce the virus spreads throughout online learning and keeping social distancing (Suadi, 2021). Based on the respondent (N.14), it is inevitably needed a concrete solution to go back to normal way namely face-to-face meetings in the classroom. Respondent (N.23) had stated the box solution. Students are navigated to join extra time learning in homeroom teacher in scheduled groups by obeying health protocols.

2.2 Solution for Speaking Problems.

The solutions of speaking problems of 5th-grade elementary school students are discovered in the interview result. They are identified in the table as follows.

Table 6
Students’ Solutions in Speaking

No.	Identified Problems of Reading
1.	Increasing students’ self confidence
2.	Motivating students
3.	Asking students to be active in speaking in front of class
4.	Giving reward
5.	Asking students to be active in class discussion
6.	Making groups of asking question among students

Speaking is a very important part of the language learning process. The main objective of speaking is to make communication effective (Bahrani, T., & Soltani, 2012). To speak, the important thing to have is self-confidence. No matter what is the problem, if a student has high self-confidence, all barriers in speaking will be overcome. This is in line with the respondent’s (N.1) perception that it is a core thing to get closer to students, give them the motivation to raise their inner power, and the peak is encouraging students’ self-confidence. By these points, students’ problem in speaking is effortlessly omitted. Respondent (N.6) noted that besides giving motivation, it is important for students to go forward in front of the classroom to reduce apprehension. Respondent (N.1) and respondent (N.6) voiced their opinion clearly, saying:

“Getting closer to students personally, give them motivation, stimulate their self confidence” (N.1)

“Beside giving motivation, also asking students to come forward for speaking.” (N.6)

Respondent (N.8) appeared his opinion that giving a reward is also able to stimulate students’ completion soul. In the context of speaking, by giving a reward, students are expected to be more enthusiastic. Respondent

(N.21) showed his idea in solving speaking problems namely by getting students to be more active in-class discussion, making them into grouping, and leading them into a condition of asking-answering in the discussion. The two solutions above are clearly stated by Respondent (N.8) and respondent (N.21) as follows:

“Give reward for whoever is brave to come forward and performs speaking in front of the classroom.” (N.8)

“Steer passive type learner into more active. Raise their self-confidence and make groups in class that function to asking and answer each other” (N.21)

2.3 Solution for Reading Problems.

Based on the interview result on the solution of reading of 5th-grade elementary school students amidst covid-19 pandemi, there are 10 solutions identified as displayed in the table as follows.

Table 7
Students’ Solutions in Reading

No.	Identified Problems of Reading
1.	High frequency of reading practice
2.	Reading following with concrete actional example
3.	Reading with fair turn distribution
4.	Cooperating and partnership with students’ parents
5.	Facilitating a reading corner in each classroom
6.	10 minutes reading program before the class getting started
7.	Reading assignment at home
8.	Stimulating students to self-reading at home
9.	Giving reward
10.	Learning at homeroom teacher’s house by shifting

Reading problems can be resolved by giving a great deal of practice. By reading over and over, students can read very well automatically. (Lestari et al., 2021) promoted culture of literacy on science learning results at the elementary school level. It is in line when a teacher gives a concrete example as what they read in the textbooks. Respondent (N.2) and respondent (N.5), obviously voiced that idea as uttered below.

“Reading followed by practical performance, example; don’t throw rubbish here!” (N.2)

“Much practices”. (N.5)

(Haak et al., 2012) stated that children who have attention problems performed below their peers on expressive language measures even when they received comparable early home literacy exposure. Another solution was offered by the respondent (N.7) namely organize the classroom so that the students have the same attention and the same chance of reading. In addition, providing a reading corner in the classroom will also help students to be more content to read a variety of books. Respondent (N.8) proposed a slightly similar idea, besides suggesting students read together at the library, another important thing is cooperation with students’ parents who make sure their kids’ study at home or read books at home. Respondent (N.7) and respondent (N.8) stated their opinion on students’ solutions on reading as follows:

“Give fair turn/chance for students to read. Provide reading corner in each classroom (N.7)

“Beside read at the library, coordinating with students’ parents who live around the school or close to teachers’ house (N.8)

(Lestari et al., 2021) stated that the culture of literacy can function as a tool in the teaching-learning process to broaden students’ insights, to enrich vocabulary mastery, to force writing exercise, and to grow reading interest since early childhood. Respondent (N.13) spoke a unique program namely 10 minutes reading books before entering the classroom for class 1 to class 6. This is a creative way to ensure students conserve literacy culture at school. (Suyono et al., 2017) denoted a slight similarity of creativity on literacy development, namely boosting literacy implementation via thematic learning. Meanwhile respondent (N.16) uttered the significant effect of giving a reading task to students that must be done at home. The assignment of reading at

home will bring students into the reading habit. They do not only read school, but they also read books at home. Respondent (N.19) claimed that encouraging students' self-study is crucial so that they are independent in learning, especially reading, and make reading as the culture or daily habit. It is in line with (Tantril, A. A. & Dewantara, 2020) who emphasized effort on literacy culture to increase reading interest. Respondent (N.16), Respondent (N.16), and respondent (N.19) voiced their opinion about solution for reading as follows:

"Before entering the classroom, each student follows the 10 minutes of reading program. The program is applied for class up to class 6. Make a note for message to studnets' parents." (N.13)

"Give reading assignment at home" (N.16)

"Teacher guides students and also push their self-study culture, especially for reading." (N.19)

Respondent (N.22) emphasized giving rewards to students can enhance students' reading ability. Meanwhile respondent (N.23) pointed out that extra time study at homeroom teacher can increase students' ability in reading. They elaborated their opinion as a solution for reading problem as follows.

"Give students reward for reading champion. Rewards here such as hat, tie, books and pen" (N.22)

"Study at homeroom teachers in shifting." (N.23)

2.4 Solution for Writing Problems.

According to the respondents, there are 6 solutions of writing problems. The 6 solutions are filtered from the utterances of respondents due to literacy development of 5th-grade elementary school students during covid-19 pandemic. Table below shows the 6 solutions of writing literacy.

Table 8
Students' Solutions in Writing

No.	Identified Problems of Reading
1.	Extra special class
2.	Communication and cooperation with students' parents
3.	High frequency of writing practice
4.	Increasing up the students' focus and accuration
5.	Giving remedial of writing
6.	Getting students accustomed to use Bahasa Indonesia

Respondent (N.1) stated that solutions for writing problem are extra time and students' parents coordination. Two solutions can help students to enhance their writing ability. Respondent (1) remarked as follows.

"Extra (additional) hours/time for student. Build communication between teacher and parents, and telling parent for helping the school program by doing informed steps to strengthen students discipline to study at home mainly in writing." (N.1)

Before entering kindergarten or first grade (elementary school), most children are rare to accept formal instruction in reading and writing. But, their skills, knowledge, and attitudes toward reading and writing skills are well developed. It is called early literacy skills (Purpura et al., 2011). To develop writing ability, it is not enough just doing writing in the classroom. It must be completed with much practice of writing, besides students have early literacy skills from childhood. Besides, writing needs high concentration to write anything. If not, the idea will be gone. Respondent (N.5) and respondent (N.7) voiced:

"Much practices in writing." (N.5)

"Students are asked to focus and to be cautious" (N.7)

The spirit to increase literacy development of reading and writing is started at the elementary school level (Cahyono, A. H., 2020) For students who have obstacles in writing, they have the right to remedial. It means they have a second chance for improving their writing skill. Moreover, students also must use Bahasa Indonesia to cope with language obstacles. Respondent (N.20) and respondent (N.21) stated:

"Teacher give extra exercise and remedial for writing when needed" (N.20)

“Much more practices. Encourage students to get accustomed using Bahasa Indonesia.”(N.21)

CONCLUSION

It was enticing to identify problems and discover solutions for literacy development of 5th-grade elementary school students amidst the covid-19 pandemic. Some teachers' responses to the interview were similar to others. Nonetheless, some of them were different. To condense, results from this study revealed that 31 problems of literacy of 5th-grade elementary school students during the covid-19 pandemic era were found. They were consisting of 8 problems of listening, 8 problems of speaking, 7 problems of reading, and 8 problems of writing. Moreover, this study also uncovered 32 solutions for literacy development problems. They were 10 solutions for listening, 6 solutions for speaking, 10 solutions for reading, and 6 solutions for writing. These findings could function as significant sources for relevant problem-solving in the literacy development context amidst the covid-19 pandemic.

These findings alert us as a teacher, lecturer, stakeholder, academician, students' parents, and public community to be aware of the literacy degradation trend at the elementary school level, notably during the covid-19 pandemic. Thereupon, the findings of this study have a purpose to be evidence that the covid-19 pandemic causes a significant effect on education, particularly in the literacy development of 5th-grade elementary school students. Notwithstanding, this current study with all its limitations apparently can not provide definitive solutions for comprehensive literacy issues nowadays covid-19 the pandemic era. Presumably, with the suggested approach in this study involving 23 teachers from 23 different schools in 23 districts in Mandailing Natal Regency, a general picture of the literacy of elementary school students can be acquired.

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