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Reading Challenges in Elementary School Students' English as a Foreign Language

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini melihat jenis-jenis kesulitan membaca yang berhubungan dengan pemahaman yang dihadapi oleh anak-anak kelas empat SD, faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kesulitan membaca, dan upaya-upaya yang dilakukan oleh para siswa, yang berusia antara 11 dan 12 tahun, untuk mengatasi kesulitan membaca mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk mencoba memahami tantangan membaca bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Ada 22 siswa kelas empat menjadi subjek penelitian. Kuesioner, dokumentasi, dan wawancara digunakan dalam proses pengumpulan data. Analisis data kualitatif adalah metode yang digunakan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 15 siswa mengalami kesulitan membaca dan mereka kesulitan memahami teks bacaan bahasa Inggris yang diberikan oleh guru mereka. Kesulitan siswa kelas empat dalam membaca bahasa Inggris disebabkan oleh faktor internal: mereka kurang termotivasi untuk belajar bahasa Inggris di kelas dan memiliki kosakata yang lebih sedikit. Terkait komponen eksternal, perpustakaan sekolah tidak memiliki referensi buku-buku bacaan berbahasa Inggris. Dari hasil penelitian sebelumnya, terlihat jelas bahwa anak-anak kelas empat sekolah dasar mengalami kesulitan dalam membaca.

Keywords: *Kesulitan membaca, Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing*

Abstract

This study looked into the types of comprehension-related reading issues that fourth-grade kids faced, the factors that influence reading difficulties, and the efforts made by these students, who were between the ages of 11 and 12, to overcome their reading difficulties. The study used a qualitative method to try to understand the reading challenges of English as a foreign language. Twenty-two fourth-graders served as the research subjects. Questionnaires, documentation, and interviews were employed in the data collection process. Qualitative data analysis was the method employed. The study's findings showed that 15 students had trouble reading and that they had trouble understanding English reading texts when they were given by their teachers. Fourth-grade pupils' difficulties reading English was caused by an internal factor: they were less motivated to learn English in class and had a smaller vocabulary. Regarding the external component, the school library contained no references to English-reading books. It is evident from the previous results that fourth-grade elementary school kids struggle with reading.

Keywords: *Reading Challenges, English as Foreign Language*

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INTRODUCTION

One of the four language skills that is necessary to extract information from textbooks is reading. The subject matter covered in the learning materials may be simpler for the students to understand. Nonetheless, English is a foreign language in Indonesia. Understanding the reading content is not simple. Among the nations that speak English as a foreign language is Indonesia. English is once again taught in elementary school curricula. Understanding the meaning of content, learning new vocabulary, and the complete difference between Indonesian and English word order are only a few of the challenges associated with reading English (Widodo, 2016; Khan et al., 2020).

According to (Suryana, 2020; Nopriyani, 2018), the largest problem in Indonesia is the country's inadequate educational system. The Indonesian government works to raise the standard of education through a number of initiatives, such as improving school infrastructure, hiring more qualified teachers, and updating curricula and learning resources. According to (Kurniawati, D. 2019, (Sintadewi et al., 2020), the challenges in learning English are in the language and text comprehension. Despite this, pupils may not learn English well if they are unable to read texts in the language.

SD Negeri 5 Yehembang is one of the schools located in Yehembang which has problem with reading English. Based on the preliminary observation, the teacher said that the students' ability is still low even though some students have a good one. Mastering English vocabularies are still low and lacking. Further more, the students experience difficulties to understand English text. Somehow vocabulary mastery affects students to understand the content of English text (Lubis, 2018)(;Daulay et al., 2022)(Basri et al., 2014). Students find it difficult to recall word meanings, which is partly due to their lack of desire to learn English. According the results of the interview, the learning outcomes of the test were still not optimal. The pupils' proficiency still falls short of SD Negeri 5 Yehembang's minimal completion requirements. According to (Ithriyah & Nuramalia, 2021) stated that the learning difficulties are often found in English especially in English reading. Students who do not meet the minimum completeness standards can be considered to be struggling (Wenno et al., 2016).

(Abdulameer Mohammad & Hasbi, 2021) stated in their research entitled "Reading Difficulties in English as a Second Language in Grade Five at a Saint Patrick's High School for Boys, Hyderabad-India" that the study revealed that when reading English language texts, readers' accuracy, comprehension, and reading pace were all low. There were five students (50%) which classified at a low level of readers, three students (30%) at a high level, and two (20%) at a middle level after evaluation of their compatibility. The research was a qualitative approach to describe the data in understanding the reading difficulties of English as a second language. The data collection tools of the reaserch were interview, reading test, and observation.

(Sad, 2016) stated in the research entitled "Reading Difficulties in English as a Foreign Language" that some factors caused difficulties in English reading, namely: young learners' inadequate language and strategic skills, the detrimental transfer of L1 literacy, the unsuitable method of instruction, and the lack of exposure to L2 texts. There was a mixed-method approach that applied in this research. The data collection tools were eight instruments, 1) quantitative: reading research instruments, prompt think-aloud protocols, teacher questionnaires, contextual variables questionnaires, reading techniques questionnaires, and reading challenges questionnaires. While 2) qualitative: post-reading reflection protocols and propted think aloud protocols.

(Baihaqi, 2022) stated in the research entitled "The Study of Difficulties Factors in Reading Comprehension at Junior High School AL Hidayah in Malang" that each student has the same difficult reading comprehension, specifically: inadequate vocabulary, little prior knowledge, and insufficient vocabularies. There were some several strategies found by the reasearcher, such: memorization strategies, learning media strategies, and note-taking strategies. The research design was descriptive qualitative that focus on difficulties face and strategies used by grade ninth-grade students in reading English text. There were

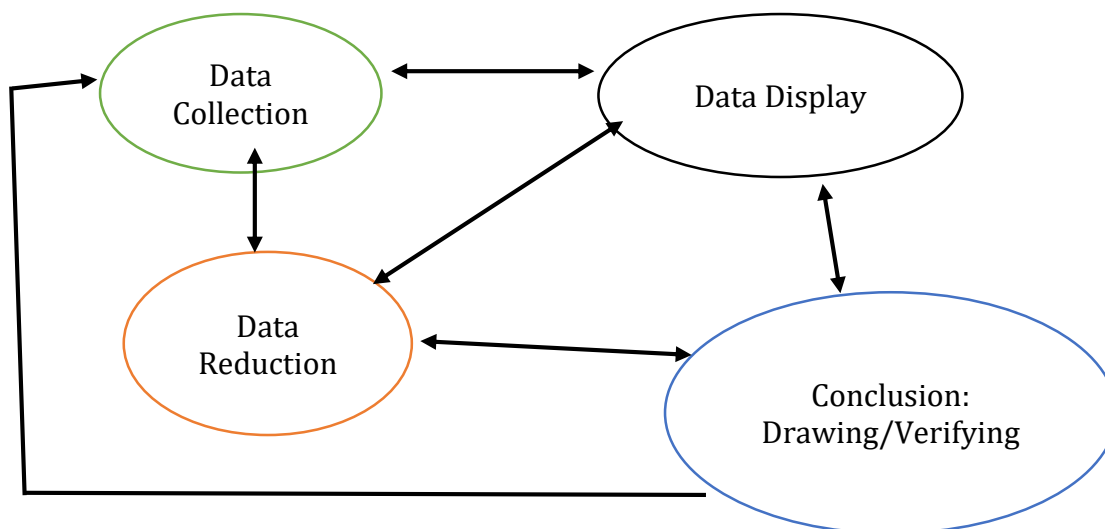
two instruments in this research, such: questionnaire and interview. There were ten questions in questionnaire. Rivera & Aggabao (2020) stated in their research entitled “Reading Difficulties of Grade 5 Pupils in English” that the fifth-grade students have their difficulties on word recognition and reading comprehension. The students tend to mispronounce English word and behavior affects their performance while reading.

Based on previously researches, those confirm that reading English text is difficult for students who learns English as a foreign language. However, previous research that have been conducted before were not specially proposed in analyzing and identifying the difficulties on student’s reading for fourth-grade students. As a result, three research objectives were developed, including: 1) Examine the reading challenges that the students have in English, 2) a contributing element to reading challenges in English, and 3) the initiatives taken to help primary school pupils in the fourth grade overcome their challenges with reading in English.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative methodology utilizing the Miles and Huberman model. There are 22 fourth-graders from SD Negeri 5 Yehembang served as the research subjects. Purposive sampling was the method employed in this most recent study. The teacher of SD Negeri 5 Yehembang served as the research's first informant. The fourth-grade pupils of SD Negeri 5 Yehembang, who were selected using the snowball sampling technique, served as the next informants. Five pupils that fell into the category of low ability students were chosen for research reasons. The classification is predicated on the learning objectives of the students. This study used questionnaires, interviews, and documentation as its data gathering methods.

According to Soegiyono (2015), data collecting was followed by data reduction, data display, and a conclusion drawing or verification once the data was gathered from the school.



Gambar 1. Data Analysis (interactive model)

The primary goal of the research efforts at this point was data collection. Numerous data were obtained from the field. After gathering further data, the researcher moved on to the data reduction phase. In this instance of data reduction, the task involved summarizing, picking the salient features, focusing on the primary data, analyzing student motivation to engage in English reading, and paying attention to students who struggle with reading the language. After gathering and reducing the data, the following stage was presenting the information. The data was shown in a descriptive manner, particularly the findings of observations made

by the school regarding kids' learning challenges, in order to make it easier to understand what was going on in the classroom.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The study was carried out in the public elementary school SD Negeri 5 Yehembang. It can be found at Yehembang Village, Mendoyo District, Jembrana Regency, on Jalan Yudistira. The entire fourth-grade student body and the instructor of SD Negeri 5 Yehembang participated in this study.

Challenges in English reading experienced by the students and factor of English reading challenges

In order to learn more about the challenges faced by the students, the researchers conducted interviews with fourth-grade students. The findings of the interviews revealed that: (a) five students found the English text to be easy to understand, while seventeen students found it difficult; (b) some students were unable to complete certain tasks; and (c) some students were unable to translate the text, which prevented them from answering the questions.

The reading challenges that the students encountered in English were brought on by both internal and external influences. The data gathered indicates that one of the internal factors contributing to fourth-grade SD Negeri 5 Yehembang students' difficulties reading English is their less-than-pleasant vocabulary mastery, their continued lack of motivation to follow the English learning process, and their lack of interest in the language. According to a research by Nida et al. (2020) and Emda Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh (2017), pupils will become disinterested and unmotivated in the learning process if the teaching methods are not novel. The resources and learning materials available here are currently scarce. Every student has a unique IQ; some will develop cognitively quickly, while others will develop cognitively more slowly (et al., 2018). Fourth-grade children at SD Negeri 5 Yehembang are shown to respond to English reading texts both quickly and slowly, according to the data analysis. Students who can react quickly will comprehend the English reading text well. However, children who answer slowly will also take longer to comprehend the English reading text's content. The development of learners is significantly influenced by intelligence (Susanto, 2013).

According to the questionnaire's conclusions, that is one of the outside variables contributing to the students' continued struggles with English reading. Based on the questionnaire responses, it is evident that students struggle with reading in English because the way teachers conduct English language instruction is not appropriate for their needs. However, the external element that results from sources other than students includes resources like facilities, learning media, and activities. For the pupils to enjoy the learning process, the teacher should use more varied activities. Learning resources are useful in helping students understand the subject. The interview results indicate that pupils find it challenging to understand the words in English texts. According to Nani and Hendriana (2019) and Farid (2017), the teacher should first provide the pupils with an understanding of how to comprehend the English text.

Efforts to overcome the challenges fourth-grade elementary school pupils face when reading in English

The next step is to talk about the measures made to help fourth-grade primary school children at SD Negeri 5 Yehembang overcome their challenges reading English after all the variables and difficulties encountered by the kids have been determined. By examining the interview's outcome, it provides some attempts to address the issues. Since English is a foreign language and not the pupils' home tongue, it is crucial to introduce some new vocabulary to them initially in order for them to understand the English text, (2) In order for pupils to feel secure when reading texts written in English, teachers should use varied media into the teaching process. (3) The teacher and students should primarily practice speaking English in class and

outside of it. They should also post some English quotes on the classroom wall. 4) Parental cooperation: In order for their kids to understand what they read in English, parents must strongly encourage their kids to learn the language. Students that receive positive parental attention are more likely to be motivated to learn in school (Nasution, 2019; Adiyani & Susilaningsih, 2018).

The instructor might use several techniques and media to introduce vocabulary. Since elementary school pupils enjoy playing games and singing songs, teachers might incorporate games or songs into their lessons. Language games are an activity that students will do in class as part of their language learning, according to Wirawati et al. (2023). These games can encourage students to learn English because they are entertaining and encourage them to experiment, discover, and interact with their surroundings. Students will be more motivated to learn English if games are included. The vocabulary will be simpler for them to understand because it gives them a sense of freedom. As a result, they won't find English to be challenging or tedious (Hanifah et al., 2020).

(Utami & Rahmawati, 2019) state that there are a number of advantages to employing songs in language learning, including motivating students to use the language, making it easier for them to remember vocabulary, and fostering a positive emotional attitude toward language acquisition. The use of songs will make the children joyful and make learning vocabulary easier. Thus, in elementary school, games can be utilized to teach English as a foreign language. Teachers can write original songs or adapt ones that already exist.

Moreover, media such as realia, pictures, audio-visuals will also help the students to improve their vocabularies. If the students already master the vocabularies, they will have their self-confident to read the text and answer the questions.

CONCLUSION

According to the research's findings, a number of factors, including students' incapacity to attend class due to a lack of English vocabulary mastery, subpar facilities in the classroom, and improper use of media and methods during the learning process, contribute to their difficulty reading in the language.

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