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Phonics Reading Method to Overcome Beginning Reading Difficulties on Elementary School Student in Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

Reading is an important skill for students when learning activities at school because they have to understand concepts and theories from reading activities. One of the problems about beginning reading difficulties was experienced by MNE, an 8 years old grade 1 elementary school student. MNE has difficulty in reading at first, the client still finds it difficult to distinguish between letters or pronounces letter incorrectly, one of which is the letter b which reads p, g which reads j, f which reads v. MNE still don't know several letters such as the letters w, y, x, and q. The method used in this research is a qualitative approach with a case study method to strengthen the diagnosis of MNE based on existing symptoms. The assessments used were observation, interview, intelligence test, and EGRA reading ability test. The intervention using the phonic reading method for 4 sessions in 10 days. The results of the intervention showed an increase in the client's reading ability to recognize letters well. Client's motivation to read also increases by trying to read all things that he sees with validation from the people around him

INTRODUCTION

Education is an effort to create a learning atmosphere and process so that students are able to develop their potential. Education has an important role in learning to use language as an individual activity that can't be separated in elementary school at beginning level (Kusno et al., 2020). Activities at the beginning level of elementary school students are reading, writing and arithmetic.

Reading is a very important skill for students when learning at school because there are understanding concepts process and theories from reading activities, so reading ability they have will be a big influence on the success of learning. If the reading ability is poor, it will hinder educational success at school (Hasanah & Lena, 2021). Reading in elementary school consists of two parts, namely beginning reading and further reading. Beginning reading often starts from grades 1 and 2, and advanced reading starts from grades 3 until 6. Beginning reading skills are important skills because they will influence subsequent reading skills (Rahma & Dafit, 2021). When reading skills have a weak foundation, students beginning reading will find it difficult to adequate reading skills (Rahma & Dafit, 2021). Udhiyanasari (2019) stated children will have difficulty following lesson when children don't have reading skills, so it influences on the lower achievement.

MNE, 8 years old on grade 1 elementary school student, has a problem of beginning reading difficulties. MNE is the most passive in participating in learning compared to his classmates. MNE is difficult to read fluently because he tends to spell out existing letters. The client also slows in speaking, he has only been able to speak fluently since kindergarten. MNE already took lessons including reading, writing and arithmetic, but stopped because he felt didn't get along with the teacher. The client has difficulty in reading at first alphabet, he still knowing letters or pronounces letters incorrectly, the examples are letter b which reads p, g which reads j, f which reads v. MNE still doesn't know several letters such

as the letters w, y, x, and q. Client also has difficulty reading two or more letters directly.

The majority of beginning reading difficulties are experienced by students especially grades 1, 2, and 3. Difficulties beginning reading MNE is an important problem for practitioners considering that the client is the most passive in class so it will be the main concern for practitioners to help him learn more optimally by getting to know the reading material being studied. This problem is also a major complaint for both his teacher and his parents, because the higher a child's education, the more reading skills are needed. Difficulty in reading causes various impacts, namely lower self-confidence and learning motivation will affect student learning achievement (Rafika et al., 2020). Many factors influence reading difficulties in MNE, but further assessment needs to be carried out because it affects future academic achievement. Reading activities are important in order to become more fluent, easier to read simple words and sentences, therefore, the beginning reading difficulties of MNE need to be solved further so the basic reading skills become better, more fluent and precise in understanding existing sentences so that they can be easier to understand what they learned in class.

Researcher interested to deepening the problems that exist in schools with the title "Phonics Reading Method to Overcome Beginning Reading Difficulties on Elementary School Students in Surabaya" in order to provide MNE through problem identification and assessment process according to client needs both observation, interviews and psychological tests, establishing diagnoses based on existing theories and characteristics, creating intervention plans and implementing interventions, conducting evaluations and follow up so problems are found and interventions according to the needs of the reading difficulties MNE.

METHODS

The method used in this research is qualitative with a case study method to strengthen the diagnosis of MNE based on existing symptoms. The research was conducted on 8 years old 1st grade elementary school male student. The assessments were conducted at school and at home. The assessments used in this research were:

1. Observation. Observation was done to analyze and observe the behavior indicators by practitioner on the client's reading difficulty problem. Indicators in observation include learning behavior, interaction, communication skills, and reading skills.
2. Interviews. Interviews are conducted with teachers and parents, especially the client's mother to identify and further analyze the problems faced by the client. Indicators of interview guidelines include learning behavior, interaction, communication skills, reading skills, developmental history, medical history, and family background.
3. Intelligence test called WISC test. The WISC test is conducted to identify the level of intelligence, intelligence category, and potential and obstacles.
4. EGRA reading ability test. The reading ability test is conducted to identify MNE's reading ability with indicators of letter recognition, reading words without meaning, reading aloud and reading comprehension, and listening.

The assessment was started on 23 April 2024 - 7 May 2024. The assessment began with observations at home and at school to see learning behavior, interactions, communication skills and reading abilities. Interviews were conducted with parents and teachers with in depth interview to know the conditions of MNE. Interviews were conducted with teachers regarding learning behavior, interaction, communication, and reading abilities. Interviews were conducted with parents discussing developmental history, health history, learning behavior, interactions, family background, communication skills and reading abilities. The

intelligence test by MNE is the WISC test to identify the level of intelligence, intelligence categories, as well as potential and obstacles. Researchers also conducted a reading ability test called EGRA test to identify the client's reading ability.

After the diagnosis was determined, the researcher intervened with MNE to improve the client's reading ability. The intervention was a beginning reading intervention using the phonics reading method. The phonics reading method is recognizing letter sounds and synthesizing syllables and words which enable MNE to listen to what is said and repeat what they said back (Cairns & Adams, 1990). This method is able to make it easier for clients to read, which is supported by the introduction of letters and sounds so that they can more easily and enthusiastically participate in the intervention. This method is also supported by the flashcard media because it is easy to carry, small in size, practical, and colorful images that can attract clients' attention. This agrees with Susilana & Riyani (2009) if the method of reading phonics will be helped with flashcards, so the intervention process with this media can be a pleasant medium for individuals.

This intervention by Taufiq & Sholihin (2022) regarding influence of the phonics method with flashcard in improving reading ability of 1st grade elementary school students, it shows that there is an influence of the phonics method with flashcard on improving the reading ability of grade 1 elementary school students in Surabaya. Stages refer to the stages by Tammardia Siregar et al (2024) referring to Cairns & Adams (1990) theory in implementing beginning reading activities, namely the preparation, implementation and evaluation stages. Practicing follow up to the client after 1 week of implementing intervention. The intervention was over 4 sessions within 10 days.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the assessment show that MNE experience difficulties in beginning reading, in accordance with the characteristics of beginning reading difficulties according to Muammar (2020) there are reading difficulties, many errors when reading, difficulty distinguishing letters that are almost similar, as well as errors in pronunciation of words/sound symbols experienced by MNE. Client tends to spell the letters provided without reading them directly, then he doesn't understand the text, he reads the letters upside down so that when he reads the words and reads it upside down. Supporting factors for the diagnosis of MNE reading difficulties refer to Wardani (1995) of early reading characteristics which consists of recognizing letters, reading meaningful words, reading meaningless words, fluency in reading aloud and reading comprehension, and listening.

The intervention was using a phonics reading method for 4 sessions in 10 days with stages of preparation, implementation, evaluation, and follow up. Researchers introduced the letters of the alphabet starting from A-Z with flashcards. Next, the 2 letters of the alphabet A-Z are introduced with a combination of vowels and consonants, followed by introduction of words with certain themes, namely animal themes and professional themes.

The intervention shows that MNE's reading abilities are increasing. This agrees with the implementation by Widiyanti et al (2018) that phonics methods are able to become a learning strategy so that children's reading skills develop and are prepared for further education. The improvement by MNE shows it is able to recognize letters one by one starting from A-Z, two vowel-consonant combination letters starting from A-Z to recognizing various types of animals and jobs. The client was able to read 15 types of work and 18 types of animals. MNE's motivation to read also increased because they continued to invite practitioners to read even though the time was more than 90 minutes, compared to the intervention being implemented for 60 minutes per session. MNE is able to recognize new letters such as q, x, and w and

are able to differentiate between g and j, c and e, b and d, and p and b. On the one hand, MNE still needs assistance in reading words consisting of the letters 'l' and 'r' because 'n' is often read like 'polisi' which is read as 'ponisi' even though the client already knows the picture is a police officer.

The results of the intervention showed that MNE already knew some of the pictures of animals or professions that were presented, but still had difficulty reading them so that several times the MNE paused for a moment to remember how to read the words. The client's desire to read flashcards gets higher with several times the client takes flashcards what he taught. MNE has the confidence to pronounce the letters indicated by the practitioner, even though it takes quite a long time to remember the letters again. Phonics media intervention in improving reading skills is also in accordance with the opinion of Bus & Van Ijzendoorn (1999) that this method can be effective in improving children's reading skills.

Overall, the phonics method intervenes through flashcards well and smoothly. This is in line with application of the phonics method by Widiyanti et al. (2018) which shows that the results are significantly different from the phonics method through flashcards on children's early reading abilities supported by the questions and answer method. The process will make children not only hear the teacher's explanation but also absorb information because letters containing pictures can attract children's attention. This also happens in MNE, where the client's motivation to read increases with their desire to read flashcards many times and read more than the specified time. MNE feels enthusiastic about the reading contained in flashcards and wants to try words that are difficult for him to pronounce even though he has already stated that they are difficult to read. This agrees with beginning reading activities by Taufiq & Sholihin (2022) when reading tests showed that students were more active and enthusiastic about reading words in flashcards and vocabulary and simple sentences. MNE increasingly wants to be able to read, which is supported by his older brother

who taught him using this method. MNE, who previously was reluctant to learn to read because it was difficult, willing to try to pronounce the letters in front of him even though there are still words that are difficult to read, making him hesitate, so the client needs support from other people for the words he reads to be more confident. Interventions

regarding phonics methods also improve individual reading abilities and provide broader reading comprehension (Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1995). This increases knowledge of phonics methods.

Below is a comparison of the results before and after the intervention.

Table 1. Comparison of Results Before and After Intervention

No	Before	After
1	MNE has lack of motivation to read, reluctant to read even when instructed by the teacher	MNE's reading motivation increases by asking practitioners to read continuously even though the intervention time is longer than planned
2	MNE doesn't know the letters q, x, w yet	MNE already know the letters q, x, w
3	MNE hasn't differentiated to said between the letters g, b, p, c, e, r, l, j, and d	MNE able to differentiate the letters g and j, c and e, b and d, p and b
4	MNE has wrong in spelling	MNE able to spell several letters but still mispronounces l and r which reads n
5	MNE already familiar with the professions and animals presented but do not know the letters in the theme	MNE understand the letters contained in the themes of professions and animals
6	MNE has difficulty reading the professions and animals presented	MNE able to read 15 types of professions and 18 types of animals

Follow up did 1 week after implementing the intervention. Follow up did on MNE's teachers and parents. Result of follow up shows that client has an improvement in reading various types of animals and professions. Practice providing flashcards for MNE's parents and older siblings able to learn and read at home also psychoeducation on how to apply the phonics method in reading. The client was taught by his older sister to learn to read and has learned the names of more animals than the practitioner taught, such as kangaroo, bear, etc. and has studied other professions such as dancer, painter, etc. MNE is able to read animals and other professions, but still has difficulty spelling letters that end in consonants such as astronaut, breeder, penguin, eagle and swan. The teacher felt that there was an increase in the client's motivation to read everything that appeared in front of him without being instructed to read. The client's mother and older sister also felt the same thing, namely increased motivation to read what they saw. Next, the client needs validation from the teacher or older sibling for the words he said. MNE continues to try to read with the tone taught by the practitioner, but the client still has difficulty reading long words (more than 6 letters), and those consisting of 2 consonant letters such as 'ng' and 'ny'.

CONCLUSION

MNE is a 1st grade elementary school student who has difficulty reading at the beginning. The client lacks motivation to read even if instructed by the teacher, there are several letters he does not know, it is difficult to differentiate between the letters. This makes him often misspell existing letters. MNE is also less able to read words that have no meaning because the spelling he reads is often inaccurate. The intervention was the phonics method through flashcard to improve MNE reading skills which was over 4 sessions in 10 days. The intervention begins with the introduction of letters, vowel-consonant letter combinations, and the introduction of words with the themes of professions and animals.

The results of the intervention showed an increase in the client's reading ability, able to recognize letters well. MNE's motivation to read also increases by trying to read things they see with validation from the people around them.

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