

Analysis of Students' Reading Comprehension Ability at an Islamic-based Elementary School in Klaten, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes students' reading comprehension skills, especially highlighting and summarizing skills in grade 5 students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan (an Islamic-based Elementary School). This study uses a qualitative research method. Data collection techniques in this study consist of 3 techniques: tests, interviews, and observations. The data analysis used in this study uses triangulation. The subjects of the study were homeroom teachers and 30 grade 5 students. Based on the study's results, it can be concluded that all grade 5 students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan, Klaten, are fluent or able to read. Some grade 5 students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan are skilled at highlighting and summarizing reading texts. There are some students whose reading comprehension skills are still low. Regarding reading comprehension skills, the teacher tries to ensure that grade 5 students always read texts to improve their reading comprehension skills.

Keywords: Elementary Education, Highlighting, Reading Comprehension Skills, Summarizing Reading Texts



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INTRODUCTION

Reading ability is one of the main goals to be achieved at the elementary education level [1]. Reading is a basis for learning all lesson content. Reading ability can influence the way students think when processing information from the reading texts studied to obtain broad knowledge and insight [2]. The more students like to read, the easier it will be for them to understand the subject matter. If students have low reading skills, it will automatically have implications for difficulties in learning other subjects [3].

Reading is an active process of constructing meaning by connecting old knowledge with new information encountered in the text. The readers construct meaning by engaging in a series of recursive interactions. In each interaction, readers produce the meaning of the reading that best fits the data in the text. Gradually, readers will construct their meaning. That meaning may be similar to the meaning the writer had in mind when putting pen to paper.

Each person will have their version of interpreting a reading text. Each of us will imprint a unique personal stamp on the act of reading that we do [4].

Teaching reading in elementary schools is one of the essential aspects of teaching the Indonesian language and literature. In elementary schools, reading skills are divided into beginning reading and advanced reading, or reading comprehension. The appearance of each student's reading comprehension can be described through different levels of reading ability. For example, when students with varying levels of expertise read the same section of text, each student will interact with the text differently. Elementary school students at the upper grade level, namely grades 4, 5, and 6, must understand the contents of a reading text. This is evidenced by the increasingly broad subject matter of students. According to Fauzi [5], one of the primary keys to obtaining information and understanding the contents of reading is having the ability to understand reading. Reading comprehension is placed at the heart of many school subjects because it plays a key role in the process of cognitive development [6].

Many strategies are used in teaching reading or reading comprehension. O'Malley and Chamot [7] distinguish between two reading strategies, namely cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies. The book entitled *Teaching for Student Learning* states that to become a "good reader," one must do three reading activities, namely activities before reading (before reading), during reading (during reading), and after reading (after reading). Each of these activities has a reading strategy that supports it. Activities during reading include strategies for highlighting and summarizing reading texts. These two strategies are familiar to students or commonly used by students. [8].

For readers, reading comprehension strategies are used as a tool for deep and lasting understanding and learning [9]. Many reading strategies have been proposed by researchers as solutions to improve students' reading comprehension skills [10]. One of them in the study of Muhassin et al. [11] applied the Fix Up strategy to overcome students' problems in reading comprehension. Applying the Fix Up strategy has been proven to have the potential to improve students' reading skills in Indonesia with self-monitoring and self-correction mechanisms in practice. The Fix Up strategy trains students to actively participate in group discussions to solve problems, providing space for students' independence in finding difficult words.

Based on the 2018 PISA data, Indonesian students' reading ability is in the low category. Indonesia is in the bottom 10 out of 79 countries in terms of student reading ability, with an average score of 371. In the OECD assessment, the average reading ability of Indonesian students is 80 points below the average when compared to the average achievement of students in ASEAN countries [12].

The quality of Indonesian education has not yet improved empirically. This is shown in the Primary Years Program category, which states that out of 146,052 elementary schools in Indonesia, only eight schools have received world recognition [13]. Other data states that Indonesian students have a low average achievement compared to other countries participating in the study [14]. Indonesian society is still not accustomed to a culture of literacy. These data show that the reading level of Indonesian students is far from expectations [15].

Reading ability can affect the ability to understand reading texts. Low basic reading ability can be an obstacle to the development of reading comprehension [16]. Students need to intervene in reading ability to help students develop reading comprehension skills. Because the development of reading comprehension depends on basic reading skills [17].

In the observations conducted on grade 5 students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan, researchers observed grade 5 students during learning activities. The survey results showed that the reading comprehension skills of grade 5 students were still lacking. Several students

found it challenging to interpret or understand, and to retell what had been read to be learned. Students' reading comprehension learning has been given since grade IV, but during grade 4, they only learned online. Learning during the pandemic, students learn using gadgets, resulting in students being less noticed when learning, especially in reading comprehension. So when students move up to grade 5, many still do not understand how to work on and answer questions given by teachers regarding reading comprehension.

Referring to the study "Analysis of Reading Comprehension Ability in Explanatory Texts of Grade 5 Elementary School Students" by Giyantika [18], the findings show that students' reading comprehension abilities are relatively lacking. Students have various reading comprehension problems, including difficulty understanding the text being read, inferior reading skills, a lack of attention to punctuation, some students are not yet fluent in reading, and cannot retell the contents.

Based on the description above, the researcher intends to analyze students' reading comprehension skills in understanding reading texts titled "Analysis of Students' Reading Comprehension Skills in Grade 5 MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan". The analysis is used to map students' reading ability level in understanding reading texts, as seen from the results of students working on questions related to the material on students' reading comprehension skills in grade 5 students at MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan. This school has an A accreditation and is a favorite private school.

METHOD

The type and design of this research is qualitative research. Qualitative research was chosen in this study to explain the reading comprehension ability of fifth-grade elementary school students. Qualitative research provides data that emphasizes descriptive forms that are not expressed in numerical form [19]. In this study, researchers will describe events and incidents of concern without giving special treatment to the event. The subjects in this study were teachers and students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan grade 5, totaling 30 students. Then, 10 students were selected as respondents (5 with high scores and 5 with low scores). The method of determining the source or taking data subjects in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique using data sources with specific considerations. The consideration of the subject is based on the results of the reading comprehension ability test. The data validity technique used in this study is the triangulation technique. In triangulation, the authors use various sources, methods, researchers, and theories to provide supporting evidence [20]. In this study, the researcher used the triangulation technique of data validity by using multiple data collection techniques, namely test techniques, interviews, observations, and documentation. The test technique is used to assess students' skills and as a support for this research [21]. Through the observation technique, the researcher hopes it will be easier to observe events directly. This is done to see the ability of the research object to understand reading texts directly.

RESULTS

Reading Ability

After the researcher conducted observations and interviews with grade 5 teachers and grade 5 students, data were obtained on reading skills in understanding reading texts in grade 5 students. In this analysis, the researcher interviewed Mrs. EN, the homeroom teacher of grade 5, on August 10, 2022. In addition, the researcher conducted interviews with grade 5 students by digging up information from 10 selected subjects. The 10 subjects were five

students with high test scores and five with low test scores. When the researcher conducted the interview, almost all students answered that they could already read.

When interviewing students with high test scores named NA, AF, AP, MA, and NI, the average of their answers was:

"I like reading and can already read, miss. It's fun when the teacher asks me to read, especially if we read together in turns." (NA, AF, AP, MA, NI. 10/08/2022)

In the following statement, students are happy and enthusiastic in reading activities, so that on average, almost all of the fifth-grade students at MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan can read without spelling or stuttering.

Meanwhile, the five students who got low scores, with the names HK, AD, JJ, FR, and FD in their reading activities, sometimes liked or disliked the reading activities. However, they were already fluent in reading and did not stutter as they said:

"I don't like reading, miss, and rarely like reading activities, but I can read without spelling the reading. I only read when the teacher tells me to read." (HK, AD, JJ, FR, FD, 10/08/2022)

Mrs. EN, as the homeroom teacher for grade 5, also said:

"For reading activities, the children can already read without stuttering. When I ask the children to read, they are enthusiastic. Because when they were in the lower grades, namely grades 1, 2, and 3, we from the madrasah provided reading lessons to continue their reading skills in the upper grades. So when it comes to reading, Alhamdulillah, these grade 5 children can already read fluently." (EN, 10/08/2022).

So, in the ability to read texts, in grade 5, students at MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan, consisting of 30 students, can all read texts. Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers, when students were asked to read, no students were still learning to read or spell. Still, they were already fluent in reading and very enthusiastic about reading texts when learning took place in class. The results of interviews with students also showed that five students who had a habit of liking to read could work on the questions on the test instrument given correctly. They can understand the keywords in the questions and answer questions correctly, so they get high scores. Students who do not like to read or rarely read but are already fluent in reading and without spelling have low scores when working on questions.

Students' reading comprehension ability starts with students having a hobby of reading. With students being accustomed to reading, they will be trained to understand the reading texts they read. After conducting interviews with 10 research respondents, the data showed that students who got high scores on average liked to read and considered reading fun, so they had reading comprehension skills. While students with low scores were asked about their reading hobby, they answered that they disliked reading because they were too lazy to read long texts and only read when told by the teacher.

Students who get the highest average scores when reading always mark their reading texts or highlight parts of words/sentences that they think are important, such as underlining words/sentences that students consider necessary. Some students highlight the reading text, and some students reread their reading texts. Their reason is that it is easy to remember and find again. A question asks, "When you finish reading, what steps do you take to understand the contents of the reading?" and the average student answer is to reread and highlight the

reading text such as underlining and highlighting the text. When interviewing students with high test scores named NA, AF, AP, MA, and NI, the average of their answers was:

"I highlight the text, such as underlining or highlighting it, miss. Or sometimes I like to reread it and note down important information from the reading text." (NA, AF, AP, MA, NI, 10/08/2022)

Meanwhile, out of 5 students who got low scores, only two highlighted or underlined words/sentences they considered necessary when reading. The other three students only did it when asked by the teacher.

In understanding the contents of the reading and the questions. The five students who got high scores did not have difficulty working because they had received material on reading comprehension skills, such as determining the main idea, main ideas, keywords, important information, and summarizing. The five students who got low scores found it challenging to work, and they did not know which sentences to highlight and write because, for them, the material on determining the main idea was difficult to understand. So, in solving the questions, they did not answer optimally.

The homeroom teacher of class V said that in terms of reading comprehension ability, the percentage of students could be balanced; 50% of students were quite able to understand the reading, and 50% of students still had difficulty with reading comprehension. Based on the study results, there are indicators of students' reading comprehension, namely in summarizing reading texts, students' ability to retell, and students' ability to answer questions.

The grade 5 teacher said that fifth-grade students at MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan have been taught how to highlight and summarize because highlighting key vocabulary can make it easier for students to reread or search for important information in the reading text, so that students will quickly understand it. This can be an effective and selective step for students to be able to understand the reading.

Students' difficulties in understanding reading texts

Students' difficulties in understanding reading texts in grade 5 at MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan are as follows.

Define the words/ terms contained in the reading

The ability of fifth grade students when students are asked to answer questions according to the contents of the text still needs or is given bait so that students can understand where the answer is by the contents of the text with guidance from researchers so that students can find the answer and some students must be monitored so as not to tease their desk-mates. From the results of direct interviews with fifth-grade students and fifth-grade teachers, teachers also, after completing the test instrument, students, when asked, could answer questions; however, the answers provided by students were only confused answers. So it can produce a temporary conclusion that students cannot answer teachers' questions during classroom learning.

Answering questions according to the contents of the text

Some students are still confused about how to answer questions. Even though the test instrument contains instructions for working on it, the researcher has explained it first before students start working on it. So it can be concluded that students cannot answer the teacher's questions during classroom learning.

Determining the main idea

When students are asked to determine the main idea, there are still some students who have not been able to decide on the main idea, and there is silence in working on questions about the main idea. Students are still not active in finding the main idea in the reading.

Summarizing or concluding the contents of the reading text

Some fifth-grade students at MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan were still confused about what sentences they would write and asked their friends who they thought understood the answer. Most students summarized the reading text by rewriting the entire reading text into the worksheet.

Efforts made by teachers for students whose reading comprehension skills are still lacking are by looking at the students' abilities, for example when the teacher asks to do an assignment about finding the main idea, sometimes each child is different in determining the main idea and from there the teacher will recheck by asking the child to repeat it independently facing the teacher so that the teacher also knows more about whether this student has understood or not. Even though the teacher has delivered the material repeatedly, there must still be students who do not see because it is also remembered that children's intelligence level varies. The solution provided by the teacher for students who still do not understand, especially the students' ability in reading comprehension, is to provide additional study time and sometimes ask students to give signs, such as underlining, highlighting essential words/sentences, to understand the reading text better. The teacher also evaluates students' reading comprehension skills by checking students' assignments and student worksheets to see whether students understand the tasks given. In addition to using worksheets, teachers also use other learning media to improve students' reading comprehension skills, such as printing and distributing texts so that students are not just reading the worksheets.

Students' skills in highlighting reading texts

In the test given to 30 fifth-grade students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan with a test of reading text highlighting skills, researchers were able to see the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade students. In this study, there are five indicators of descriptive questions: the first indicator, 1 question to find the main idea in the reading. The second indicator is 1 question with a question to collect information and 5W + 1H facts. The third indicator, 1 question with question to prove the similarity of reading information. The fourth indicator, 1 question with essential details in the narrative text of History. The fifth indicator, 1 question with question to find the main idea in a non-fiction text. The maximum score obtained from each question is 4 points, 1 point if the student can answer but the answer is still incorrect, and 0 points if the answer is wrong. The following are the assessment results that can be known [22] with the following formula:

$$\text{Total skor} = \frac{\text{skor perolehan}}{\text{skor maksimum}} \times 100$$

Categories of reading comprehension abilities based on test results include the following:

Table 1. Reading Comprehension Ability Category with Reading Text Highlighting Skills

Category	Students	Score
Very good	2	86-100
Good	5	76-85
Enough	4	56-75
Less	19	10-55
Total	30	100

From the research results, on average, students do not understand the questions on two indicators, namely the indicator of finding the main idea of a paragraph by highlighting the part of the word in the text that is the keyword correctly, and proving the similarity of information from both reading texts by highlighting the correct word/sentence. Of the 30 students who took this test, two students scored 90, which means they were in the outstanding category. In the good category, five students scored 76-85. The sufficient category is with a score of 56-75, which means that students have met the expected aspects, and four students are in the adequate category, with an average of 65. Finally, the least category scores between 10 and 55, which is 19 students.

Students' skills in summarizing reading texts

In addition to the test questions on highlighting the contents of the reading text, grade 5 students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan were also given test questions on summarizing the reading text. This can be seen from the author's statement that the ability to write a summary of the reading is a strong predictor of reading comprehension. In this study, there are two indicators with five descriptive questions. The first indicator is a 1 question to determine keywords in the reading text. The second indicator is four questions to summarize the reading text. The following are the assessment results that can be known [22] with the following formula:

$$\text{Total skor} = \frac{\text{skor perolehan}}{\text{skor maksimum}} \times 100$$

Categories of reading comprehension abilities based on test results include the following:

Table 2. Reading Comprehension Ability Category with Summarizing in Reading Text

Category	Students	Score
Very good	3	86-100
Good	5	76-85
Enough	8	56-75
Less	14	10-55
Total	30	100

From these results, the average student does not understand the questions on the reading text summary comprehension indicator well. So, the results of the student reading comprehension ability test with reading summary test questions showed that 3 out of 30 students who took this test got a score of 90, which means they are in the outstanding category. In the good category, five students scored 76-85. The sufficient category is with a score of 56-75, which means that students have met the expected aspects, and eight students are in the adequate category, with an average of 60. Finally, the least category scores between 10 and 55; there are 14 students.

Based on the observation results obtained on grade 5 students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan, researchers can see that almost all students can read texts. There are no students who read by spelling. Students can already distinguish letters of the alphabet, recognize punctuation in reading, and read together without anyone missing their reading. In learning activities, teachers always apply reading activities such as silent reading, reading together, or reading alone.

In the research observation on August 9, 2022, and August 10, 2022, when students were asked to read a reading text in the student book, the students were able and proficient in

reading. This is also what the grade 5 teacher conveyed: if grade 5 students are fluent in reading, no more students will read by spelling. This shows that in terms of reading, grade 5 students at MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan can already read. Some students already understand, but some students are not very good at highlighting and summarizing, as shown by the results of their tests. This can also be seen when the teacher gives assignments to read, find the main idea of the reading, and summarize the contents.

Researchers found that the efforts made by teachers for students whose reading comprehension skills are still lacking involve looking at the students' abilities, for example, when the teacher asks them to do an assignment about finding the main idea. Sometimes, each child is different in determining the main idea, and from there, the teacher will recheck by asking the child to repeat it independently, facing the teacher, so that the teacher also knows better whether this student understands or not. Even though the teacher has delivered the material repeatedly, there must still be students who do not know because they also remember that children's intelligence level varies. The solution given by teachers for students who still do not understand, especially students' ability in reading comprehension, is to provide additional study time and sometimes ask students to give signs, such as underlining, highlighting essential words/sentences, to better understand the reading text. Teachers also evaluate students' reading comprehension skills by checking students' assignments and student worksheet books to find out whether students have understood the tasks given. In addition to using worksheets, teachers use other learning media to improve students' reading comprehension skills, such as printing and distributing texts to students, so that students are not just reading worksheets.

DISCUSSION

The reading comprehension ability of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan fifth-grade students can be categorized as quite reasonable based on the results of tests, interviews, and observations. All fifth-grade students at MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan are fluent in reading, but in understanding reading texts, the percentage of students can be said to be balanced.

Reading is a foundation for students' success in expanding their knowledge. Reading is one of the four language skills that is very closely related to the other three language skills. Reading is an activity of understanding information conveyed through written language symbols. Then, reading is perceived as a basic literacy skill for everyone [23]. Reading comprehension is a term used to identify the skills needed to understand and apply information contained in written materials. The purpose of reading comprehension is to find out information from the reading material that has been read. Reading comprehension is needed to study and understand the contents of a reading. Reading comprehension is essential because it trains students to access material quickly and deeply. Therefore, reading is a crucial skill that students must master. Without proper reading skills, students will not understand the information in the text [24].

All students were fluent in reading it. However, some students still had difficulty understanding the information obtained in the text. This can be seen from the interviews, tests, and observations on each research subject. As many as 5 out of 10 research subjects admitted they were still confused by the reading text in the reading comprehension test. According to the results of interviews and observations, students were able to read the text but did not understand it, so they focused on reading the questions and looking for answers in the reading text.

Based on the study results, there are indicators of students' reading comprehension, namely in summarizing reading texts, students' ability to retell, and students' ability to answer

questions. Indicators of reading comprehension are the ability to answer 5W+1H questions, determine the main idea, students' ability to retell, and students' ability to summarize. [25].

The reading comprehension ability of fifth-grade students at MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan can be pretty good when viewed from the skills of highlighting and summarizing reading texts. The grade 5 teacher also conveyed that fifth-grade students at MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan have been taught how to highlight and summarize because highlighting key vocabulary can make it easier for students to reread or search for important information in the reading text, so that students will quickly understand the reading text and make it easier to summarize. This can be an effective and selective step for students to be able to understand the reading. Readers need to highlight a reading text to understand the topic and information obtained from their reading. This is the primary purpose of summarizing, which is to capture what the author or presenter thinks is important enough to share with the reader, not the reader's comments about the reading [26].

Readers need to read the text to highlight it effectively. Highlighting is an intensive reading strategy for monitoring comprehension while reading and reviewing after reading. Underlining or highlighting parts of a text is one of the most popular learning strategies among students because it is easy to use, and the belief that highlighting can improve comprehension is widespread [27].

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of in-depth data analysis on the reading comprehension skills of grade 5 students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan, it can be concluded that all grade 5 students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan can read texts fluently and without spelling out the words. Some grade 5 students of MI Muhammadiyah Srebegan are also skilled in highlighting and summarizing reading texts. This can be seen from the results of student answer sheets and student test scores. For reading comprehension skills, some students still cannot understand what they read. The lack of desire of students to read books causes some students to have difficulty understanding the content of reading texts. Efforts made by teachers for students whose reading comprehension skills are still lacking are by looking at the abilities of these students, for example when the teacher asks them to do an assignment about finding the main idea, sometimes each child is different in determining the main idea and from there the teacher will check again by asking the child to repeat it independently facing the teacher so that the teacher also knows more whether this student understands or not.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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