



Analysis of Early Reading Learning in Children with Intellectual Disabilities

Tri Sedyo Silo Pratiwi, Arista Widyawati, Khofidotur Rofi'ah

Universitas Negeri Surabaya
E-mail: tripratiwi89@guru.slb.belajar.id

Abstract: This study is based on the fact that early reading learning is very important for children from an early age, including children with mild mental retardation. Children with mild mental retardation are those who experience intellectual disabilities that cannot be distinguished from children with severe mental retardation. Early reading learning must be carried out properly so that children with intellectual disabilities can follow the lessons well too. The purpose of this study was to determine how the process of early reading learning is carried out on children with mild mental retardation and whether the approach used is effective. Because children with mental retardation must be taught with methods that are appropriate to their conditions. This study is a descriptive study using a literature study method. The use of this method is in accordance with the objectives of the previous study. The results of the study indicate that several approaches and strategies can be used to help children with mild mental retardation learn to read early.

Keywords: Light Mental, Retardation Category, Beginning Reading, Learning

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an important part of human life as a gateway to knowledge. A person with the ability to read can get information presented in the form of readings in the form of books, magazines, newspapers, the internet, and documents to improve their knowledge. As stated by B Tarigan (in Amalia, 2021) said that, initial reading is a prerequisite for students to be able to read further. Therefore, children at school age do not have the ability to read, then they will experience many difficulties in learning various fields of study in the following classes.

Recognizing letter symbols and reading is basic learning given to students at the beginning of school. Recognizing letter symbols is very important and fundamental for lower grade students is very much needed to prepare reading skills. Reading is the process of recognizing written symbols into simple words orally or how to pronounce them which involves various aspects such as vision, thinking skills (Amalia, 2021). Reading skills are needed to assess or measure the extent to which a person or student can digest the contents of the reading that has been read. The ability and interest in reading of a person, in this case students, will not happen by itself. It requires an effort, especially from educators, in addition to the family environment as the closest environment, to train, foster, develop, and improve their reading ability.

Related to the problem of learning to read, the role of teachers in schools is very important in providing variations in reading learning, including teachers for children with intellectual disabilities. In the form of

completing reading assignments for children with intellectual disabilities is not easy, this is because the diversity of conditions and problems faced by children is quite complex. The complexity in the reading process occurs due to various factors, both internal and external factors of the reader. Internal factors include intelligence, attitude, talent, motivation, concentration, and so on. External factors can be in the form of reading facilities, reading texts, socio-economic background factors, habits, and reading traditions. As stated by Nurhadi (in Firdaus & Pradipta, 2020), reading is a complex and complicated process. Mild intellectual disabilities are intellectual disorders that are not as severe as moderate intellectual disabilities and severe intellectual disabilities. The mild intellectual disability group, although their intelligence and social adaptation are hampered, they have the ability to develop in academic fields, social adjustment and work ability. Children with mild intellectual disabilities often cannot be identified until they go to school. It is usually discovered after several years of school, they have difficulty following lessons.

According to Efendi (in Dewi, 2016) states that there are differences in the characteristics of mentally retarded children such as individuals who tend to have difficulty thinking in general, have difficulty concentrating, have limited socialization skills, individuals who have difficulty receiving instructions. From this statement it can be concluded that each characteristic of an individual who experiences mental retardation can be overcome in several ways according to what is experienced, according to the needs of the individual. Reading is very much needed by children

who experience mental retardation or mental retardation which aims to help them to be able to carry out daily activities, this is very important because reading is the basis for someone to understand information. Based on this, it is necessary to create a new innovation to facilitate students according to their needs. Likewise, knowing the numbers is also important for the daily lives of mentally retarded children. Children who are unable to read well will have difficulty in participating in learning activities for all subjects, because they have difficulty in capturing and understanding the information presented in various textbooks, supporting books and other written learning resources. These children are very slow in absorbing lessons. As a result, learning progress is also slow when compared to their friends who do not have difficulty reading. Failure to read in mentally retarded children is often associated with low intelligence factors, as a result they experience problems in reading.

In Mala Pratami's research (2014), it was stated that mentally retarded children need a longer time to learn compared to normal children in general. Where this factor is influenced by short-term memory because mentally retarded children do not understand abstract learning and need several repetitions so that children understand the material that has been delivered. Abilities that can be developed in mild mentally retarded children include: (a) reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic. (b) adapting and not depending on others. (c) simple skills for future work interests. Mentally retarded children themselves have limited cognitive development at the concrete operational stage, and experience a lag of 2 or 5 levels in the cognitive field compared to normal children of the same age. Based on this, the research in this journal aims to find out about the process of learning to read early in children with mild mental retardation, in addition, this research will also discuss the influence of learning to read early on children with mild mental retardation.

Mental retardation is a state of mental retardation, this mental retardation is also called mental retardation. As we know, there are several disorders that can occur in children, both congenital and disorders that occur due to diseases suffered during development. Mental retardation is one of the types of disorders that are quite common in children due to genetic disorders and chromosomal disorders during the parents' pregnancy or due to events after they are born, such as nutritional disorders, infections or poisoning or the effects of trauma and radioactive substances that cause disorders in the minds of mentally retarded children (Anggraini et.al, 2022). Mental retardation itself is divided into three categories, namely mild mental retardation (educable), moderate mental retardation (trainable) and severe mental retardation (needs care). The subject of research by the researcher himself is mild mental retardation (educable). Mild mental retardation is a mental retardation that has the best academic ability

compared to other mild mental retardation. If we usually know that children who experience mental retardation are called children of a thousand faces, which means they have faces similar to fellow mental retardation sufferers, in contrast to children with mild mental retardation, there are still many of them who are not included in the children of a thousand faces, and even look like normal children in general. For some children with mild mental retardation, there are those who can learn quite well, it's just that it's very difficult to understand quite complicated problems (Halimah, 2019).

Reading is a process carried out and used by readers to obtain messages, which the author wants to convey through the media of words/written language. The sensitive period for children to learn to read and count is at the age of 4-5 years, because at this age children find it easier to read and understand numbers (Hainstock, 2002). Children should start learning to read at the age of 1-5 years because at this time the child's brain will be able to absorb all things related to their daily lives, such as reading, counting, and writing.

Reading ability is an ability that is generally obtained from school, this ability is very important to develop because reading is an activity that can develop knowledge and as a means of human communication. Early reading or early reading according to Steinberg in his thesis Sunarni states that early reading is reading that is taught in a programmed manner to preschool children. Focus of This program consists of whole words, meaningful in the children's personal context and materials provided through interesting games and activities as an intermediary learning (Risdayanti et.al, 2022).

Basically, beginning reading is a stage in the process of learning to read for elementary school students in early grades. When children learn to read, they learn to recognize words, spell them, and distinguish them from other words. For example, padi and pagi, ibu and ubi. Students learn to acquire the ability and master reading techniques and capture the contents of the reading well (Asmiati, 2019). Therefore, teachers need to design good reading learning so that they can foster the habit of reading as something fun. Beginning reading learning is given in grades I and II. The goal is for students to have the ability to understand and voice writing with natural intonation, as a basis for being able to read further. Beginning reading learning is a level of the reading learning process to master the writing system as a visual representation of language.

METHOD

The research approach used is a qualitative approach. What is meant by qualitative research is a series of activities or processes of gathering information from natural conditions in the life of an

object, connected to a problem, both from a theoretical and practical perspective (Moleong, 2008). Qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on human observation in its own area and relates to that person in its language and terminology. Based on the existing problems, this type of research is descriptive research, namely the data collected is in the form of words, pictures, not numbers. Descriptive research is a form of research that is intended to describe or depict existing phenomena, both natural phenomena and human engineering. Descriptive research is a researcher who intends to make a description of situations or events.

The data in this study were obtained from the results of a literature study. Research with a literature study is a study whose preparation is the same as other studies, but the source and method of data collection are by taking data from the library, reading, recording, and processing research materials. Therefore, to obtain data related to early reading learning in children with mild mental retardation, the author uses a literature study in the form of official sources or in the form of seminar reports/conclusions, notes/recordings of scientific discussions, official writings published by the government and other institutions, both in the form of books/manuals or digital such as optical discs, computers or computer data related to the research topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on several literatures that the author has selected and analyzed, the results of the research that the author has summarized into one are obtained. The research conducted by Rahman et al. in 2021, obtained results where initial reading learning activities were carried out in stages. The initial reading materials applied by the teacher are; 1) Recognizing letters includes student activities to recognize and mention the symbols and sounds of letters, pronounce vowels properly, and arrange letter cards into a word; 2) Reading syllables includes student activities to read syllables and arrange syllable cards into a word; 3) Reading words includes student activities to read picture word cards then mention the letters that form the word, and read simple words on the cards, arrange word cards into simple sentences.

The implementation of initial reading previously teachers used flannel board media, writing readings on the board or in student books. However, there was no increase or enthusiasm for learning in students so the teacher tried to use card media in the form of letter cards, syllable cards, word cards and picture word cards to support the effectiveness of the learning process because this media was considered quite interesting to students, easy to use, in accordance with the characteristics of students and card media can also

train students' motor skills (Firdaus & Pradipta, 2020). The study explained that in the initial reading learning activities carried out, the teacher applied learning media in the form of letter cards, syllable cards, picture cards and word cards to support the effectiveness of the learning process so as to make time efficient and attract students' attention. The results of Rahman and Haryanto's (2014) study showed that in reading and writing learning in lower grades, card media is an alternative and can be used as a game media to provide a fun and interactive atmosphere in learning and can be used to test reading skills (Pradipta & Andajani, 2017). Its application can provide opportunities for students to develop their associations between images, letters, syllables, and words. The results of the study showed that early reading learning by implementing picture word card learning media has been proven to improve early reading learning outcomes. Because picture word card media can make it easier for children to read from an early age, develop memory, train the ability to concentrate and increase vocabulary quickly.

Then based on research conducted by Yurmalina in 2019, the results of the study were obtained, namely in this study the researcher used the mingle learning technique, which helps improve early reading skills for children with mild mental retardation. The Mingle technique is a game model by blending using certain steps in reading and speaking skills (Irdamurni et al., 2018). In this case, this mingle technique involves the child's social level with other friends, because this technique is combined with games that involve children with other children so that in the learning process children will be more enthusiastic and faster in mastering the material given, so that learning objectives will be achieved optimally. This study began with a pretest carried out once to determine the child's initial mastery of early reading and the gains obtained with an average of 13.3%. Furthermore, treatment was given with learning given using the mingle technique for six meetings, when giving treatment, each meeting was given an evaluation to see the extent to which the child understood what was being taught. The results that the child obtained at each meeting increased, it can be concluded that the child has begun to be able to read the beginning. The next stage is given a final test, namely a post-test to assess the child's final ability after being given treatment, the child's learning outcomes increased by an average of 94%. When comparing the pretest and post-test results, there is an increase in children's abilities. It can be explained that there is an increase in the mastery of early reading in children with mild mental retardation after being treated using the mingle technique.

The results of the study stated that the mingle technique is effective in improving the early reading ability of children with mild mental retardation. This is proven by the results of the calculation of data processed using the Mann Whitney test formula with the results

of $U_{hitung} > U_{table}$ with the results of $U_{hitung} = 15$ Taken from the smallest count value and $U_{table} = 7$ adjusted to a significance level of 95% and $\alpha = 0.05$. Before being given learning with the mingle technique, the children's early reading ability test scores were still low, while when taught with the mingle technique, the children's early reading ability test scores increased. In implementing early reading learning for children with mild mental retardation, there are several obstacles in the learning process.

Internal barriers consist of intelligence, attention, memory and language development. External barriers consist of less supportive sources and media, short time and lack of parental support. Internal barriers are barriers that come from the students themselves including intelligence, Rahim (2009) "the relationship between intellectual factors and reading ability does not fully affect the success or failure of children in reading". Attention, children are seen having difficulty in focusing their attention when reading so that teachers apply card media to attract students' attention. In line with this statement, Atmaja (2018) concluded that "children with intellectual disabilities often focus on the wrong objects, and have difficulty allocating attention appropriately". Memory, children are seen having difficulty in remembering information, so teachers need to repeat reading lessons to maintain students' existing knowledge. Language development, children with intellectual disabilities often experience speech delays and unclear articulation. So when students read, the phonemes produced are less clear so that teachers often correct students' pronunciation. In line with this statement, it can be concluded that children with mild mental retardation tend to have irregular sentence structures (aphasia), word reduction (omission) and chaos in pronunciation (distortion)".

CONCLUSSION

The conclusion obtained from the results of the study using this literature study is that learning to read early in children with mild mental retardation is very important to be carried out. There are several implementations of learning to read early that can be carried out by teachers, the first is using picture word cards. Based on the literature study, it is known that the use of picture word cards in learning to read early in children with mild mental retardation is effective in improving children's reading skills. Picture word cards are considered capable of sharpening children's memory, as we know that children with mental retardation must be taught with special methods in their learning. Then, based on research conducted by Yurmalina where learning activities are carried out using the mingle technique, which is a technique that utilizes children's social abilities accompanied by

several games that are considered to be able to improve students' learning abilities. The results obtained are that the mingle technique is effective in helping to improve children's ability to read early, from the research procedure it is known that children feel enthusiastic in learning. This technique is considered capable of sharpening children's initial reading skills in children with mild mental retardation. So based on this, it is known that in learning to read early in children with mild mental retardation, several special and interesting methods are needed to be able to make students enthusiastic so that learning will end effectively.

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