

Improving Reading Skill through Game Technique for the First Grade Elementary School Students

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Abstract

The present research is a classroom action carried out with procedures starting from planning, action, observation, and reflection. The aim of the study is to obtain a concrete description of the use of game technique in improving students' reading comprehension skill and the change of students' behavior during and after learning activities. This research was conducted at SD Islamiyah Medan, involving 35 students as participants. The data was analyzed in three stages, namely: (1) reducing data, (2) presenting data, dan (3) Drawing the conclusion or verifying data. Pre-test and post-test in cycle I showed a very significant increase in reading interest in what was carried out on students with the average score of students. Based on this finding, the playing technique can be used as an alternative by teachers in learning because it is proven that this technique can improve reading comprehension skills which are marked by changes in student behavior.

Keywords

game technique, reading skill, students' behavior

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INTRODUCTION

The success of student learning in participating in the process of teaching and learning activities at school is largely determined by the mastery of reading skills. Students who are not able to read well will have difficulty in participating in learning activities for all subjects. Students will have difficulty capturing and understanding the information presented in various textbooks, supporting reading books and other written learning resources. The student will be very slow in absorbing the lesson. As a result, their learning progress is also slow when compared to students who do not have difficulty in reading.

Word recognition is one of the foundations for developing early reading skills. It can be said that word recognition is a prerequisite skill to be able to read fluently and carefully (Brown, 2017; Cohen, 1979; Ebbutt, 1985). Furthermore, this fluency and accuracy is the basis for the reading comprehension process. Therefore, early reading teaching really needs to emphasize learning comprehension skills in the context of discourse (Kasper, Uibu, & Mikk, 2018). The concept of word recognition in early reading includes a number of skills, including the skill of connecting written symbols with sound (decoding), the skill of using words which include sight words, namely words that have a high frequency of use that have been mastered by children.

Learning of reading in grade I of elementary school is an early stage of learning. In the early stages, the vocabulary they have is limited by the introduction of letter symbols that may not be mastered. In addition, grade I students still want to play more than study. Therefore, good learning is associated with games in accordance with the soul of the child who likes to play (Brevik, 2019; Habib, Mustapha, & Ali, 2019). After going through a series of language learning, grade I second semester students should be skilled at connecting written symbols with sounds, for example, being able to pronounce or mention the names of the letters used, be able to spell words, and be able to read a sentence. This is the hope for teachers, parents, and society.

However, the reality is still far from what was expected. This was revealed through interviews with teachers and first grade students at SD Islamiyah, Medan City. From the result of The interview to students, it was revealed that the ability of students to read at the beginning was still lacking, they were not able to read fluently, and some of them could not even mention the names of certain letters. While the results of interviews with teachers, it is known that the method applied by the teacher only revolves around the method of explaining, question and answer method and assignment method.

The reason for the low reading ability of the students mentioned above may be due to the methods or strategies used by the teacher. If most of the lectures, the students feel bored and bored every time they learn Indonesian. While assignments, especially those related to memorizing the names of letters, students are only fixated on the exercises provided by the teacher, as a result students have difficulty in reading (Grønhøj & Thøgersen, 2017; Viljaranta et al., 2017).

This problem cannot be left alone, because if students cannot read then they will have difficulty participating in learning activities for all subjects, will have difficulty capturing and understanding the information presented in various textbooks, supporting reading books and sources, other written learning resources. As a result, students will have difficulty developing other language skills.

To overcome this problem, it is necessary to have a method or strategy that allows teachers not only to use the lecture method, question and answer. It also does not result in students feeling bored and bored with studying. One method that is expected to be able to reduce the causes of a child's lack of reading ability is the game method. The purpose of this study was to improve early reading skills by using the game method in first grade elementary school students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading is the process of pronouncing writing to get the contents contained in it. Brown (2017) and (2017) stated that reading is essentially a complex thing that involves many things, not just reciting writing, but also involving visual, thinking, psycholinguistic and metacognitive activities. As a visual process, reading is a process of translating written symbols (letters) into spoken words. The emphasis on reading in the early grades of elementary school is the perceptual process, namely the introduction of the correspondence of a series of letters with the sounds of language, while the process of understanding meaning is emphasized more in high grades.

To do reading learning in the early grades well, a teacher needs to understand the basic concepts of early reading, including the nature of reading and the readiness of students to read. There are 7 basic concepts of early reading as stated by Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2017), namely: (1) skill acquisition (2) visual activity (3) understanding (4) thinking process (5) processing information (6) the process of associating writing with sound (7) ability to anticipate meaning. Those seven things are described as follows:

1. Reading is essentially a skill development, starting from the skill of understanding words, sentences, paragraphs in reading to critically and evaluatively understanding the entire contents of the reading.
2. Reading is essentially a visual activity in the form of a series of eye movements in following lines of writing, breaking sight of words and groups of words, reviewing words and groups of words to gain understanding of reading.
3. Reading is essentially an activity of understanding and observing written words giving meaning to these words based on the knowledge and experience they have.
4. Reading is a thought process that occurs through the process of perceiving and understanding information and giving meaning to reading.
5. Reading is essentially a process of processing information. In reading, there is an information processing process carried out by the reader by using the information in the reading and previous knowledge and experience that is relevant to the information.

6. Reading is essentially a process of connecting writing with its sound according to the writing system used.
7. Reading is essentially the ability to anticipate the meaning contained in the bans in writing. Reading activity is not only a mechanical activity, but is an activity of capturing the intent of groups of words that carry meaning.

Responding personally to reading task activities according to their interests. Reading activities are influenced by a number of affective aspects, especially attention, attitudes and self-concept. These effective aspects determine how serious a person is in reading, for example, a child who has great attention to a reading material will seriously read the reading.

A story review that contains information related to the story content can improve understanding (Jean et al., 2018; Magnusson, Roe, & Blikstad-Balas, 2018). Before reading, students are given parts of the story to build background knowledge about the story, improve learning, especially students' impressions of the story they are going to read. Story reviews can also help children activate their prior knowledge and focus attention before reading. While the anticipation instructions are designed to stimulate thinking that contains declarative statements, which may not be true or not in accordance with the story they read. Before reading the story, students respond according to their own experience. According to Wexler et al. (2018) guidance values can be developed into the post-reading section by repeating the process after reading, considering input from after reading, resulting in a combination of anticipation or reaction cues.

There are many kinds of game methods can be used for learning to read in the lower grades (Chang & Hwang, 2019). One of them is the “read do” game. This game is done in pairs, a child must read a written order made by the teacher, his partner must do what is instructed in the reading. For example, I have to look down. I'm holding my left knee. I dance holding my head. The teacher pays attention to how many commands are executed correctly and whether the reader reads the commands correctly.

Another game is “jumping the word circle”. Make balls out of cardboard, about the size of a plate. Write down the names of the family structures. For example: Father, mother, brother, sister. Put the word circle on the floor. Divide the students into several groups. Have students in each group skip the words spoken by the other group or the teacher. For example, jump to brother, jump to mother, jump to sister. Thus, each child reads the circle to be stepped on. Even more so, word circles can be in more difficult forms, for example words that when combined can become sentences. The words in the circles are spread out on the floor and allow you to compose several sentences if you skip them correctly. For example: Mother went to the market. Mother brought a book. Therefore, students have to jump to the mother and go to the market. Jump to mom, bring, book (Elaish, Shuib, Ghani, & Yadegaridehkordi, 2019).

In the “chain reading” game, the teacher invites students to form a large circle or students sit in their respective chairs and explain the purpose of the chain reading game,

then the teacher gives the text script to be read by students. The teacher reads the story then continues by the designated student. The designated student continues reading the story and is continued by the next student (Pellas, Fotaris, Kazanidis, & Wells, 2019).

Through playing game situations, children are expected to gain a deep understanding of objects and choose special skills in observing and acquiring mated and so that children get the spiritual meaning symbolized by mated and these activities. This play can finally be used by the teacher as a vehicle or learning technique to form understanding through role playing activities or by using various available media.

Playing in relation to education is a vehicle for learning in the form of demonstrating or playing something meaningful in describing messages, atmosphere, developing knowledge and skills that are valuable for children in producing learning experiences (De Freitas, 2018; Fox, Pittaway, & Uzuegbunam, 2018). The functions of playing games according to Gil-Arias et al. (2021) for children are: 1) cognitive development, 2) social development, 3) emotional development, 4) physical development, and 5) language development.

The types of games that will be given include syllable games, and word hoop jumping games. The syllable games are done in groups, each member is assigned to jump while reading, help direct and provide encouragement. Each group member plays the game while reading each syllable that is combined into a word. The word hoop game is a game that is played in groups. Each group skips the word circle spoken by another group or teacher, so that students are able to read fluently.

By following various types of games that are applied by the teacher in the game method, students will be motivated and feel happy, try to find out the reading to win the game, look for speed reading strategies and so on. Thus, it is hoped that the students' reading ability will increase.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a classroom action research design. This research was conducted in order to determine the reading ability of the first graders of SD Islamiyah Medan by using the play method. The number of subjects in this study were 35 students, consisting of 17 boys and 18 girls.

To collect data in this study, researchers used tests, interviews, observation, and field notes. Data analysis in this study was carried out during and after the study. At the time of reflection of each learning action and after data collection. The technique used is a qualitative data analysis technique developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). It consists of three stages of activities carried out sequentially, namely: (1) reducing data, (2) presenting data, and (3) drawing conclusions or verifying data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the initial test, it was found that most of the students made mistakes in reading. This is revealed from the many mistakes made by students in reading the letters of the alphabet, reading words and reading a sentence. When the

researchers asked the class teacher, the teacher said that in teaching reading, the teacher wrote a few sentences on the blackboard, then the teacher read the sentences followed by the students. Teachers do not use media in teaching reading. The teacher repeatedly reads the sentences on the blackboard and continues to be followed by the students.

The students who were selected as the research subjects were the students who made the most mistakes. To select research subjects, apart from looking at test results, they also pay attention to how students learn or how active students are in paying attention to lessons. Taking these things into account, the researcher and the first grade teacher agreed that the students selected by the students had the initials: N, M, R, R, M, M, R, and A. Those eight students were given special guidance.

The first cycle of action learning focused on the pre-reading stage, namely the introduction of the letters of the alphabet to students. Learning is carried out by applying learning with the play method. To obtain data on the implementation of the first cycle of actions, observations, interviews, tests and field notes were carried out. The results of observations, interviews, tests and field notes during the implementation of the action were analyzed and discussed with the observers in order to obtain the following:

1. The presentation at the pre-reading stage is the introduction of the letters of the alphabet, learning is carried out by applying the learning method of playing, running as planned. However, to learn the playing method, it is necessary to prepare sufficient time for these activities.
2. Students feel happy during the game with props in the form of letters of the alphabet made of cardboard in the form of a square that has never been given before.
3. The use of teaching aids really attracts students' attention, besides the use of teaching aids makes it easier for students to understand the material being studied.

Based on the data in the first cycle, it was found that the results of the initial reading which consisted of pre-reading, during reading and post-reading were categorized as poor. This is because the teacher has not been able to implement the lesson plan properly. It is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Student Learning Outcomes Reading Beginning of Cycle I

No	Reading Steps	Indicators	Cycle I		
			Frequency	Score	Category
1	Pre-reading	- Recognizing the alphabet	30	85,71%	Good
		- Pronouncing the alphabet	25	71,43%	Medium
		- Spelling the alphabet	21	60,00%	Medium
		- Spelling words	19	54,29%	Lack
2.	While-reading	- Pronunciation and Intonation, word, and sentence	28	80,00%	Good
		- Letters often found in word and simple sentences	24	68,57%	Medium

	- New meaningful words using familiars letters	23	65,71%	Medium
3. Post-reading	- Proper pronunciation and intonation, familiar and new word	20	57,%	Lack
	- Poetry according to ability level	20	57,14%	Lack
	- Reading about 10 sentences	22	62,86%	Lack
	- Simple sentences	20	57,14%	Lack
	- Capital letters at the beginning of person's name, God, and religion	19	54,29%	Lack

The learning action plan carried out in cycle II was designed as an effort to help students overcome reading difficulties. The action plan II is prepared based on the analysis and reflection of action I. Basically the action plan to be carried out remains the same as the learning stages in the cycle II learning implementation plan, the difference lies only in the game that will be carried out by students, namely the reading game that is carried out. The expected goals, teaching methods, teaching aids used are as follows:

1. The expected goal is that students can read fluently
2. The method used in this action is the method of playing, lectures and question and answer.
3. The props used are made of cardboard.

Action learning in cycle II was focused on the reading and post-reading stages. Learning in the second cycle of action is learning while playing, and to obtain data about the implementation of the second cycle, observations, interviews and tests were carried out. The results of observations, interviews and tests during the implementation of the action are analyzed and discussed with observers.

In cycle II, it can be seen that the results of the initial reading consisting of pre-reading, while reading and post-reading experienced significant improvements, namely from less to good qualifications, shown in the following table 2.

Table 2. Student Learning Outcomes Reading Beginning of Cycle II

No	Reading Steps	Indicators	Cycle II		
			Frequency	Score	Category
1	Pre-reading	- Recognizing the alphabet	33	94,29%	Excellent
		- Pronouncing the alphabet	33	94,29%	Excellent
		- Spelling the alphabet	30	85,71%	Good
		- Spelling words	29	82,86%	Good
2.	While-reading	- Pronunciation and Intonation, word, and sentence	30	85,71%	Good
		- Letters often found in word and simple sentences	26	74,29%	Good

		- New meaningful words using familiars letters	31	88,57%	Excellent
3	Post-reading	- Proper pronunciation and intonation, familiar and new word	29	82,86%	Good
		- Poetry according to ability level	25	71,43%	Good
		- Reading about 10 sentences	32	91,43%	Excellent
		- Simple sentences	34	97,14%	Excellent
		- Capital letters at the beginning of person's name, God, and religion	32	91,43%	Excellent

The results of the first cycle of action have not achieved the expected results because they have not reached the predetermined target, namely less qualification (K). In the first stage of pre-reading is pre-reading which consists of exploring students' initial knowledge, namely introducing the letters of the alphabet, spelling letters, and spelling words, some students have been able to connect their initial knowledge with the learning to be carried out. In the reading stage, some students can pronounce words and sentences, while in the post-reading stage, some students can read simple sentences.

The success of the second cycle achieved good qualifications. This shows at the post-reading stage that students have been able to read with proper pronunciation and intonation. The success of the actions from cycles I and II because students have recognized letters, spelled words, read words and sentences making it easier for students to understand the contents of sentences.

CONCLUSION

The use of the play method in learning to read early can improve the process of learning to read at the beginning of grade I elementary school students. This result is evidenced by the development of student learning abilities in the first cycle of 35 students showing that at the pre-reading stage 30 students (85.71%) could recognize the letters of the alphabet increasing in the second cycle, namely 33 students (94.29%) and 25 students (71,43%) can pronounce the letters of the alphabet well, increasing in the second cycle, namely 33 students (94.29%), 21 students (60.00%) can do or spell the letters well, to 30 students (85.71%)) in the second cycle, and 19 students (54.29%) could spell words to 29 students (82.86%) in the second cycle.

At the stage of reading in the first cycle, 28 students (80.00%) could read with pronunciation and intonation of simple words and sentences, an increase of 30 students (85.71%) in the second cycle, 24 students (68.57%) who could reading letters and simple sentence words, increased in cycle II 26 students (74.29%), and 23 students (65.71%) could read meaningful new words using familiar letters, increased by 31 students (88.57%) in the second cycle.

Then in the post-reading stage of the first cycle, it showed that 20 students (57.14%) who could read poetry according to the level of student ability, an increase of 25 students (71.43%) in the second cycle, 20 students (57.14%) who could reading with proper pronunciation and intonation, there were 29 students (82.86) in cycle II, 20 students (57.14%) could read simple sentences, an increase of 34 students (97.14%%) in cycle II, and 22 students (62.86%) can read ± 10 sentences, an increase in cycle II, namely 32 students (91.43%), while those who can recognize capital letters at the beginning of people's names, God, and Religion are 19 students (54, 29%), to 32 students (91.43%) in cycle II.

Therefore, the researchers suggest teachers to use the play method as an alternative to improve the process and results of learning to read in elementary school students.

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