Analysis of Early Reading Literacy Skills in Second Grade Elementary School Students in Kahayan Tengah Subdistrict, Pulang Pisau Regency

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Abstract: The learning outcome for Phase A of the 2025 Curriculum for second grade students is the ability to read simple words fluently from a text. Ideally, all students should be able to read letters, words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. However, based on data from the Pulang Pisau Regency Education Office, there are still many elementary school students who are suspected of having below-standard literacy skills, and many elementary school students who still have low initial reading skills. This shows a gap between learning achievement requirements and student abilities in school. The purpose of this study was to analyze the initial literacy reading abilities of second-grade elementary school students in Kahayan Tengah Subdistrict, Pulau Pisau District, in recognizing letters, reading open syllables, reading closed syllables, reading words, reading phrases, and reading sentences. This study used a quantitative descriptive approach. The research instruments were tests on reading letters, open and closed syllables, words, phrases, and sentences. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to describe the achievement of each reading indicator. The reliability of the instruments was tested using inter- rater reliability with a value of ≥ 0.70. The research procedure included preparation, observation, test implementation, data analysis, and conclusion drawing, which were presented narratively and graphically. The results showed that the initial literacy reading ability of second-grade elementary school students in Kahayan Tengah Subdistrict in terms of letter recognition was very good at 84.21%, fair to good at 15.78%, and none were in the poor category. However, students' abilities began to decline in the aspects of reading open syllables (very good 73.68%), closed syllables (very good 63.15%), and reading words with the same achievement of 63.15%. A further decline was seen in the aspect of reading phrases and sentences, with an excellent achievement of only 57.89%, while the fair category was 26.31% and the poor category was 15.78%. These findings indicate that the more complex the form of language units read, the more students' achievements tend to decline, so that more focused and gradual reading learning strategies are needed to improve reading skills at higher levels.

Keywords: early reading skills; basic literacy; elementary school students

Abstract: The Learning Outcomes of Phase A in the 2025 Curriculum for grade 2 students require them to be able to read simple words fluently from texts. Ideally, all students should be able to read letters, words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. However, based on data from the Pulang Pisau District Education Office, many elementary school students are suspected to have literacy reading skills below the standard, and many still have low early reading abilities. This indicates a gap between the learning outcome demands and students' actual abilities in schools. The purpose of this study is to analyze the initial literacy reading skills of grade 2 elementary school students in Kahayan Tengah Subdistrict, Pulang Pisau District, in recognizing letters, reading open syllables, closed syllables, words, phrases, and sentences. This research uses a quantitative descriptive approach. The research instrument consisted of reading tests on letters, open and closed syllables, words, phrases,

and sentences. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to describe the achievement of each reading indicator. The reliability of the instrument was tested using inter-rater reliability with a score of ≥ 0.70. The research procedure included preparation, observation, test administration, data analysis, and drawing conclusions presented in narrative and graphical form. The results showed that the initial literacy reading skills of grade 2 elementary school students in Kahayan Tengah Subdistrict were excellent in recognizing letters, with 84.21%.
categorized as very good, 15.78% as moderate, and none in the poor category. However, student performance began to decline in reading open syllables (very good 73.68%), closed syllables (very good 63.15%), and words (very good 63.15%). A further decline was observed in reading phrases and sentences, with only 57.89% in the very good category, 26.31% in the moderate category, and 15.78% in the poor category. These findings indicate that the more complex the language unit being read, the lower the students' achievement tends to be, suggesting the need for more structured and gradual reading instruction strategies to improve reading skills at higher levels.

Keywords: early reading ability; basic literacy; elementary students;
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Introduction

Indonesian language learning in elementary school plays a central role in developing students' oral and written communication skills. One of the basic skills that forms the foundation for successful learning in various fields is reading ability. According to Tarigan (2008), a person's language skills are largely determined by their vocabulary; the richer a person's vocabulary, the greater their ability to understand and express ideas accurately. In the early stages, reading instruction (early reading) is not limited to letter recognition, but encompasses a complex process involving decoding, fluency, and comprehension (Adams, 1990).

LaBerge and Samuels (1974) emphasize that automation in word recognition is an important prerequisite for readers to be able to shift their attention to understanding the content of the text. In line with this, Gough and Tunmer's (1986) Simple View of Reading theory explains that reading is the result of the interaction of two main components, namely decoding (word recognition) and language comprehension. This means that weaknesses in one of these components will directly impact overall reading ability. Ehri (2005) and Perfetti (1992) add that mastery of word recognition (sight words) and phonological awareness are strong predictors of the development of children's early reading skills.

The National Reading Panel (2000) recommends that effective reading instruction should integrate explicit phonics teaching, repeated reading practice, vocabulary development, and text comprehension strategies. Stanovich (1986) warns of a cumulative effect, or Matthew Effect, whereby students who are late in mastering reading skills will fall further behind due to a lack of motivation and opportunities to read. Therefore, early detection and intervention in reading instruction are crucial starting from the lower grades of elementary school.

In the context of Indonesian education, early reading skills remain a major challenge in various regions. The results of research by Sari and Usop (2023) show that the reading difficulties of elementary school students are caused by internal factors such as lack of motivation, as well as external factors such as minimal learning environment support. Ibrahim's (2024) research also confirms that limited.

family support and learning resources are the causes of low early reading skills among students. Meanwhile, Mana (2024) found that the use of picture word cards can significantly improve early reading skills in second-grade elementary school students.

Good reading skills play an important role in shaping students' basic literacy. Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) define reading as the ability to understand, use, and reflect on written texts to achieve learning goals and participate in society. This is in line with Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson

(1985), who state that reading is a constructive process between new information and the reader's existing knowledge. Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) even show that low early reading skills will have a direct impact on low academic achievement in various subjects.

This condition also occurs in Pulang Pisau Regency, especially in Kahayan Tengah District. Based on data from the Pulang Pisau Regency Education Office (2024), most lower grade students already know the alphabet, but still have difficulty reading closed syllables, complex words, and simple sentences fluently. The variation in reading ability among students shows a gap between the demands of the curriculum and actual abilities in the field. This situation calls for an in-depth study to determine the extent of students' initial literacy skills and the factors that influence them.

Based on this background, this study is entitled "Analysis of Early Literacy Reading Skills in Second Grade Elementary School Students in Kahayan Tengah Subdistrict, Pulang Pisau Regency." This study aims to analyze the level of students' early reading skills in recognizing letters, reading open and closed syllables, words, phrases, and sentences. In addition, this study also aims to identify factors that hinder and support the development of students' early reading skills. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of Indonesian language learning strategies in elementary schools, especially in strengthening basic literacy as a foundation for academic success at the next level.

Method

This study used a quantitative descriptive approach with a reading ability test survey method. The descriptive approach is used to describe the initial reading skills of elementary school students in the lower grades in Kahayan Tengah District, which include the ability to recognize letters, read open syllables, read closed syllables, read words, read phrases, and read sentences. Meanwhile, the quantitative aspect is used to measure the level of students' early reading skills based on these indicators.

The research population included all lower grade elementary school students in Kahayan Tengah Subdistrict who were members of the Hapakat Kahayan Tengah Teacher Working Group (KKG). The research sample was taken from second-grade students in Cluster 4, which consists of Bahu Palawa 1 Public Elementary School, Pamarunan 1 Public Elementary School, Balukon 1 Public Elementary School, and Bukit Bamba 1 Public Elementary School. This research was conducted through four main stages that were systematically arranged so that the research process was focused and produced accurate data. The first stage was the preparation stage, which began with a literature review of various theories related to early reading skills. In this stage, the researcher developed an early reading test instrument that included letter recognition, reading open and closed syllables, reading words, phrases, and simple sentences. After the instrument was developed, it was validated by Indonesian language education experts to ensure that the content of the instrument was in line with the indicators of early reading skills in elementary school students.

The second stage was the research implementation stage, which included selecting schools and research classes in Cluster 4 KKG Hapakat, Kahayan Tengah Subdistrict, Pulang Pisau Regency. This research was conducted on second-grade elementary school students as the main subjects. In this stage, the researchers administered reading tests using validated instruments and conducted direct observations of the students' reading performance. The observation process was carried out to record aspects of pronunciation errors, reading fluency, and students' comprehension of the readings.

The third stage is the data analysis stage, which is carried out using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques. This analysis aims to classify students' reading abilities based on five aspects, namely letter recognition, reading open syllables (KV), reading closed syllables (KVK), reading words, reading phrases, and reading sentences. Each aspect is then scored and the percentage of achievement is calculated to determine the category of student ability for each indicator. The final stage is the conclusion stage, which is carried out by summarizing the research results according to

achievement categories, namely excellent, good, fair, poor, and very poor. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of a narrative description accompanied by tables and graphs to make it easier for readers to understand the comparison of students' reading ability achievements in each aspect.

The main instrument used in this study was an early reading ability test, which consisted of several components. First, letter recognition, which measured students' ability to distinguish between vowels and consonants and letters with similar sounds, such as a, i, u, e, o, b, p, m, n, and x. Second, the ability to read open syllables (KV) and closed syllables (KVK). Third, reading words consisting of ten examples of two- or three-syllable words. Fourth, reading phrases consisting of five simple phrases. Fifth, reading sentences consisting of five simple sentences. In addition, the researcher also used an observation sheet to record pronunciation errors, reading fluency, and students' comprehension of the reading material.

To ensure the quality of the instruments, validity and reliability tests were conducted. Content validity was reviewed by Indonesian language education experts to ensure that the test items were in accordance with the indicators of early reading ability. Furthermore, the instruments were tested on second-grade students outside the research sample to assess the clarity and level of suitability of the test items with the students' ability levels. Meanwhile, the reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient or inter-rater reliability in the observation results. The instrument was declared reliable if it had a coefficient value of ≥ 0.70, which indicated the consistency of the measurement results for the early reading skills of elementary school students.

The test data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including the calculation of scores, averages, and achievement percentages for each reading ability indicator. The interpretation criteria were compiled based on the following score intervals:

SCORE INTERVAL	CATEGORY
9–10	Very Good
7–8	Good
5–6	Fair
3–4	Poor
0–2	Very insufficient

Students' initial reading scores are classified into five categories: very poor (0–2), poor (3–4), fair (5–6), good (7–8), and very good (G–10). Students in the very poor category demonstrate very low reading proficiency and make frequent mistakes. The poor category indicates limited ability with many mistakes. The adequate category indicates moderate reading ability with a few minor errors. Meanwhile, students in the good category read fairly fluently and make only a few errors. Students in the very good category have high reading proficiency, being able to read letters, syllables, words, phrases, and sentences fluently and accurately.

Result and Discussion
RESEARCH RESULTS

This study aims to analyze the initial literacy reading skills of elementary school students in Kahayan Tengah District, which includes six indicators, namely the ability to recognize letters, read open syllables, read closed syllables, read words, read phrases, and read sentences. Data were obtained from 19 second-grade students from four elementary schools, namely SD Negeri Bahu Palawa 1 (BP 1), SD Negeri Pamarunan 1 (PM 1), SD Negeri Balukon 1 (BB 1), and SD Negeri Bukit Bamba 1 (BN 1). Of the total 19 students sampled in the study, there were variations in reading ability in each aspect measured, namely letter recognition, reading open syllables, closed syllables, words,

phrases, and sentences. The table below shows the results of students' reading ability achievements in each aspect:

No	Name	School	Letters	SK Open	SK Closed	Word	Phrase	Sentence
1	Prandika	SDN BP 1	10	9	10	9	10	10
2	Juju	SDN BP 1	8	4	2	2	0	2
3	Ardan M.	SDN BP 1	10	10	10	10	10	10
4	Agustina	SDN BP 1	10	10	10	10	10	10
5	Zahra	BP 1 Elementary School	10	10	6	10	10	8
6	Paska	SDN PM 1	6	2	1	1	1	0
7	Yayola	SDN PM 1	10	6	7	8	8	10
8	Jordan	SDN PM 1	10	10	10	10	10	10
9	Felisia A.	SDN PM 1	10	10	10	10	10	10
10	Agustian	SDN PM 1	9	10	9	9	6	8
11	Melik D.S,	SDN BB 1	10	8	8	8	8	8
12	Tiara J.	SDN BB 1	10	10	10	9	8	10
13	Justin	SDN BB 1	10	9	9	8	8	10
14	Alif A.	BB 1 Elementary School	10	10	10	10	10	10
15	TN	SDN BB 1	8	10	10	9	10	10
16	Mikha	BN 1 Elementary School	10	10	9	9	10	8
17	Velira R.	BN 1 Elementary School	10	10	10	10	10	10
18	Rafael	BN 1 Elementary School	10	9	7	7	10	8
19	Miti	SDN BN 1	10	7	4	2	0	4

In terms of letter recognition, most students (around 90%) scored high between 9 and 10, indicating that almost all students were able to recognize and pronounce letters very well. However, there were still a few students (around 10%) who scored between 6 and 8, indicating minor errors in the pronunciation of certain consonants. In terms of reading open syllables (KV), student achievement declined slightly with scores ranging from 2 to 10. Approximately 73% of students were classified as very good (scores of 9–10), while 16% were in the good–fair category and 11% in the poor category. The ability to read closed syllables (KVK) showed greater variation. Only 63% of students were in the excellent category, 21% were in the good–fair category, and 16% were in the poor–very poor category. Some students still seemed to have difficulty reading closed word patterns such as tanah (land) or pojok (corner). In terms of word reading ability, the results were relatively the same as for closed syllable reading. A total of 63% of students were classified as excellent, 21% were in the good–fair category, and 16% were in the poor–very poor category. Some students still read by spelling out each letter and have not yet achieved fluency in reading words automatically. The ability to read phrases and sentences showed the highest level of difficulty. Only 58% of students were classified as very good, while 26% were in the fair-good category, and 16% were poor-very poor. The difficulties that arose were mainly in combining words and reading fluency in the context of meaning.

In general, the average reading ability of students is in the "good" category, with strengths in letter recognition and open syllables, and weaknesses in closed syllables, phrases, and sentences. This indicates that some students are still in the early stages of reading fluency development (emergent

reading stage), requiring learning interventions that focus on improving complex syllable reading skills, repeated reading exercises, and meaningful exposure to simple sentences.

DISCUSSION

LETTER RECOGNITION ABILITY

The ability to recognize letters is the main foundation for early reading, because through letter recognition, students begin to understand the relationship between symbols and sounds in language. Based on the results of the study, most students in Kahayan Tengah Subdistrict have mastered this aspect very well, with 84% of students in the very good category, 16% in the good–fair category, and no students (0%) in the poor–very poor category. The highest score in this aspect was 10, achieved by the majority of students in the four sample schools (SDN BP 1, SDN PM 1, SDN BB 1, and SDN BN 1), indicating that most students were able to recognize and name vowels and consonants correctly. Meanwhile, the lowest score was obtained by students with a score of 6, indicating that there are still difficulties in distinguishing certain letter sounds. In general, the letter recognition aspect showed a very high average achievement, indicating that students are ready to move on to the syllable reading stage.

However, there are still some phonemic difficulties experienced by a small number of students. First, some students pronounce the sound /b/ as /bi/, indicating that they still have difficulty distinguishing between the name of the letter and the sound of the letter. Second, there are errors in distinguishing between the letters /p/ and /b/, which are likely caused by the visual similarity between the two letters and a lack of consonant articulation practice. Third, some students pronounce the letter /x/ as /yeh/, an error that may arise due to differences in pronunciation between Indonesian and foreign languages, or because the letter /x/ rarely appears in everyday vocabulary. Fourth, there are also students who are not familiar with or unable to pronounce the letters /g/ and /y/ correctly due to limited exposure and practice. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that although the students' mastery of letters in general is very good, additional phonetic and visual practice is still needed to strengthen their ability to distinguish between similar letter sounds and shapes and to improve the accuracy of pronouncing certain letters.

OPEN SYLLABLE READING ABILITY (CV)

The ability to read open syllables is an important initial stage after learning the alphabet, because at this stage students begin to combine vowels and consonants into meaningful sound units. Based on the results of the study, the ability to read open syllables among students in Kahayan Tengah District was quite good, with 73% of students in the very good category, 16% in the good–fair category, and 11% in the poor–very poor category. The highest score achieved by students in this aspect was 10, while the lowest score was 2, indicating a significant gap between individuals. Most students were able to read simple syllables such as ma-ma, pa-pa, ke-na, and bo-la fluently, but some students still had difficulties in recognizing and pronouncing certain consonant-vowel combinations. The overall average achievement showed that although the majority of students understood the basic patterns of open syllables, a small number still needed intensive guidance in pronouncing syllables phonetically correctly.

The difficulties encountered in reading open syllables include several important aspects. First, a number of students pronounce the letter /j/ as /ji/ and the letter /g/ as /gi/, which indicates confusion between the name of the letter and the sound of the letter due to weak phoneme-grapheme mapping. Second, there are errors in pronouncing the letter /p/ as /deh/ or /geh/, most likely due to the influence of regional languages or differences in local phonological habits. Third, some students misinterpret the letter /y/ as /f/, indicating difficulty in distinguishing similar consonant sounds due to a lack of phonemic practice. Fourth, there were also cases of confusion between the vowels /u/ and /o/, reflecting limitations in recognizing differences between vowel sounds with similar characteristics. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that students' ability to read open syllables needs to be strengthened through systematic consonant-vowel articulation exercises, a phonetic approach based on sound games, as well as repetitive reading activities to strengthen the automation of basic syllable pattern recognition.

CLOSED SYLLABLE READING ABILITY (CVC)

The ability to read closed syllables is an advanced stage of reading open syllables, because at this stage students are required to be able to combine consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) into a complete sound unit. Based on the results of the study, the ability to read closed syllables among students in Kahayan Tengah District was relatively low, with 63% of students in the very good category, 21% in the good–fair category, and 16% in the poor–very poor category. The highest score achieved by students in this aspect was 10, while the lowest score was 1, indicating a wide range of abilities among individuals. In general, students who have good open syllable reading skills also show positive performance in closed syllables, but there are still a number of students who have difficulty recognizing the closing letter patterns in syllables such as kan, jah, nih, and cuk. This shows that the process of mastering closed sound patterns requires a more complex level of phonological skills and morphological awareness than open syllables.

Based on the error analysis results, there are several main patterns of difficulty experienced by students. First, some students pronounce /nih/ as /niha/, which indicates difficulty in phoneme segmentation, namely the ability to separate sounds in syllables. Second, mispronouncing the letter /j/ as /ji/ and /g/ as /gi/ reflects confusion in phoneme-grapheme mapping, especially for consonants that have similar sounds to other languages. Third, there are students who read/po–jok/ as /ka–jok/, indicating difficulty in recognizing closed syllable patterns and combining sounds phonetically. Fourth, pronunciation errors such as /se–hat/ becoming /ha–te/ or /ha– tet/ indicate weaknesses in understanding syllable structure and blending final sounds. From these findings, it can be concluded that the students' main weaknesses lie in the processing of final consonant sounds and consistency in

phoneme pronunciation, which need to be improved through explicit phonics instruction, word mapping exercises, and read-aloud activities to strengthen phonological awareness and accuracy in pronouncing closed syllables.

WORD READING ABILITY

Word reading ability is an important stage in early reading development because it requires students to not only recognize letters and syllables, but also understand the phonological and morphological structure of words as a whole. In this study, students were asked to read ten words: father, mother, run, walk, enter, school, class, terrace, walk, and car. The results of the analysis show that the word reading ability of students in Kahayan Tengah District was in the fairly good category, with 63% of students classified as very good, *21% as good–fair, and *1c% includes poor–very poor. The highest score obtained by students was 10, while the lowest score was 1, indicating a striking variation in ability. Students with high abilities were able to read each word fluently and with the correct intonation, while students with low abilities still tended to read slowly and spell out each letter. This indicates that some students have not yet reached the stage of reading automaticity, which is the ability to read words spontaneously without having to spell out each letter.

Based on the results of the observation, two main difficulties experienced by students were identified. First, difficulty distinguishing between the pronunciation of letters in English and Indonesian, for example, the tendency to pronounce the letter a as /ei/ or i as /ai/, indicating confusion in cross-language phoneme-grapheme mapping. Second, the habit of reading by spelling out letters one by one shows low reading fluency, which is caused by a lack of repeated practice and weak mastery of decoding strategies. The accumulation of difficulties from the previous stages—letter recognition, reading open and closed syllables—makes reading words tiring and inefficient for students. To overcome this, literacy intervention is needed that focuses on improving reading fluency through repeated reading, explicit phonics learning, and guided reading activities. This approach is believed to strengthen the connection between visual word recognition and phonological understanding so that students can read words more quickly, accurately, and meaningfully.

PHRASE READING ABILITY

The ability to read phrases is an advanced stage in early reading development, where students are required to connect several words into a single meaningful whole. In this test, students were asked to read five simple phrases, namely red car, grandfather's house, fish pond, rooster, and light blue. Based on the analysis results, the phrase reading ability of students in Kahayan Tengah District showed quite varied results, with only 58% of students in the very good category, 2c% in the good–fair category, and 1c% in the poor–very poor category. The highest score obtained by students was 10, while the lowest score was 0, indicating significant differences in ability between individuals. Students with high abilities were able to read phrases fluently and with natural intonation, while students with low abilities tended to read word by word without a comprehensive understanding of the meaning. This phenomenon shows that some students have not yet achieved phrase-level fluency, which is the ability to group words into units of meaning without having to spell them out one by one.

Specifically, several major difficulties were identified. First, the habit of spelling out letters slowly when reading phrases indicates low fluency and automation in reading. Second, students showed signs of fatigue and lack of reading endurance, which led to low motivation and interest in reading activities. These factors may be caused by a lack of repeated phrase reading practice and a lack of learning support that emphasizes the meaning of phrases in context. This condition is in line with Stanovich's (1986) findings on the Matthew Effect, in which students who lag behind in reading

fluency will fall further behind due to reduced opportunities and motivation to read. Therefore, improving phrase reading skills requires learning strategies that focus on fluency and motivation, such as paired reading, the use of contextual visual media, and a guided oral reading approach so that students become more accustomed to reading phrases fluently and meaningfully.

SENTENCE READING ABILITY

The ability to read sentences is the highest level in early reading, where students must combine word recognition, reading fluency, and understanding of meaning in a complete context. At this stage, students are asked to read five simple sentences, namely mom goes to the market, sister eats fish, uncle plants rice, Budi learns to read, and brother writes stories. Based on the analysis results, the achievements of students in Kahayan Tengah Subdistrict show that only 58% of students are in the very good category, 2c% are in the good–fair category, and 1c% are still in the poor–very poor category. The highest score in this aspect is 10, while the lowest score is 0, showing that there are quite extreme differences between individuals in one class. Some students are able to read simple sentences fluently, while almost half of the others still have difficulty connecting words into complete sentences. This difference illustrates a considerable gap in early literacy skills at the elementary school level.

The main difficulties encountered include two things: first, low motivation and self- confidence among students, as evidenced by complaints of fatigue and reluctance to read. Second, reading that is still syllable-by-syllable indicates that most students have not yet reached the stage of reading fluency. They are still at the decoding stage, where cognitive energy is focused on recognizing letter sounds and syllables, rather than on understanding sentences as a whole. This condition indicates that automatic word recognition skills have not developed optimally. This is also exacerbated by a lack of repeated sentence reading practice, limited vocabulary mastery, and frequent phonological and orthographic challenges.

These factors are consistent with the findings of the National Reading Panel (2000) and Stanovich (1986), which emphasize that early readers need repeated exposure to simple texts to build fluency and automation. Low reading motivation is also closely related to a lack of literacy support, both at school and at home. Therefore, to improve sentence reading skills, structured literacy interventions are needed through activities such as repeated reading, guided oral reading, and the integration of meaningful reading activities in the context of Indonesian language learning. These efforts are expected to not only improve reading fluency but also strengthen the comprehension, confidence, and reading interest of elementary school students in Kahayan Tengah District.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research on the early reading skills of lower grade elementary school students in Kahayan Tengah District, Pulang Pisau Regency, it can be concluded that students' reading skills still vary in each aspect, with the highest tendency in letter recognition and open syllables and the lowest in sentence reading. In detail, in the aspect of letter recognition, 84% of students were in the very good category, 16% in the fair category, and none were classified as poor. This shows that most students are already able to recognize letters well, although there are still phonemic errors such as pronouncing /b/ as /bi/ and difficulty distinguishing between the letters /p/ and /b/.

In terms of open syllable reading, 73% of students were in the excellent category, 16% in the fair category, and 11% in the poor category. Although the majority of students were able to read open syllables fluently, errors were still found in the pronunciation of letters such as /j/ read as /ji/, /g/ read as /gi/, and confusion between the vowel sounds /u/ and /o/. These errors indicate that some students still have weak phoneme and grapheme mapping skills. Meanwhile, in terms of closed syllable reading, the results declined sharply, with 63% of students in the excellent category, 21% in the fair category, and 16% in the poor category. Students still have difficulty combining sounds and

recognizing closed syllable patterns such as /nih/ pronounced /niha/ or /po-jok/ becoming /ka-jok/. These errors indicate weak phoneme segmentation and sound blending skills.

In terms of word reading, students' achievements were similar to those in closed syllable reading, with 63% in the excellent category, 21% in the adequate category, and 16% in the poor category. Some students were able to read simple words such as bapak (father) or ibu (mother), but many still read slowly and spelled out each letter. This shows that reading automation has not been optimally formed and reading fluency is still limited. Furthermore, reading phrase reading showed a further decline, with 58% of students in the excellent category, 26% in the adequate category, and 16% in the poor category. Although students can read single words, they still have difficulty when words are combined into phrases such as "red car" or "fish pond." This is due to low reading fluency, lack of exposure to meaningful phrases, and weak learning motivation.

Finally, sentence reading was the lowest skill, with 58% of students in the excellent category, 26% in the adequate category, and 16% in the poor category. Some students were not yet able to read simple sentences such as "mother went to the market" or "Budi learned to read fluently," and even still read syllable by syllable. They showed signs of fatigue and low self- confidence when asked to read longer texts.

Overall, the average reading ability of students reached 65.7% (sufficient category), with the highest achievement in letter recognition (84%) and the lowest in reading phrases and sentences (58%). This means that most students already have a strong foundation in letter recognition, but have not yet achieved automatic and meaningful reading fluency. The average percentage of skills that are still lacking is 15.8%, indicating that there is a group of students who need intensive assistance. The main difficulties lie in phonological skills, sound blending, and low reading motivation. Therefore, phonics-based reading intervention and meaningful repetitive reading practice are needed to strengthen students' decoding, fluency, and reading comprehension skills from an early age.

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