

## JAVANESE READING LEARNING IN LOW GRADES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### Abstract

Reading learning in the low grade is in the learn to read phase. Teachers of first, second, and third grades have the challenge of making children have reading skill. In Javanese learning, teachers often experience obstacles since many children do not know the phonemes and words in Javanese. This is increasingly difficult to do during the covid-19 pandemic period where the learning is done online. This research is qualitative research that aims to describe the learning process of reading Javanese for elementary school students especially for low grades students, the faced problems, and the alternative solutions that can be done. The subject of the study was an elementary school in the excess area of Solo Raya. The methods used in this research are questionnaire and interview. The results showed that reading learning was severely affected by the covid-19 pandemic. Teachers can't teach students how to read freely. The main difficulty is due to lack of facilities and infrastructure. Alternative solutions carried out by teachers and schools include lowering the minimum limit of learning materials, changing learning methods, using IT-based learning media, and doing a "pick up ball" strategy for underprivileged students.

**Keyword:** Javanese, reading learning, low grade, elementary school, covid-19 pandemic

### A. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic is proved to be very dangerous. Various policies have been taken by governments in various countries to save their citizens. Almost all sectors of life were affected and made adjustments, including the education sector. In the USA, Korea, and Mexico, for example, conducting virtual learning policies, reducing study hours, postponing national exams, and preparing various LMS, media, and even television broadcasts to make it easier for their citizens to access learning materials (McKins, 2021).

In Indonesia, the same thing happened. Dewi (2017: 56) revealed that in order to reduce the impact of the corona, the

government issued an instruction or Circular Letter which contained a temporary postponement of all activities in order to reduce the spread of the corona, especially in the education sector. As for the education sector, the government provides policies to implement online or distance learning processes.

The online learning policy was taken by the government due to the pandemic. Teachers and students have not prepared themselves to deal with this situation. This of course creates obstacles in the implementation of learning. Nakayama, Yamamoto, and Santiago (2007: 195) state that the implementation of online learning does not guarantee that all students can be

successful in going through it. Schools and teachers are still groping about how to carry out online learning well. Various efforts are made so that students can still receive the material even though they are not face to face with the teacher. Of course, this is not easy because briefings about online learning only began to be echoed shortly before the pandemic occurred. This paper is devoted to discussing the implementation of online language learning.

Language learning in Indonesia consists of learning Indonesian, regional languages, and foreign languages. Local language learning that is still ongoing today is Javanese language learning. Javanese language learning in Indonesia is carried out starting from elementary school to high school level, especially in the area of Javanese speaking. For areas that speak Javanese, such as Central Java, the implementation of Javanese language learning has a strong legal basis. Starting from the issuance of the Central Java Governor's Decree No. 895.5/01/2005 regarding the implementation of Javanese language learning starting from basic education to secondary education which was later strengthened by the issuance of Central Java Regional Regulation No. 4 of 2012 and Central Java Regional Regulation No. 9 of 2012 then the Javanese language became a compulsory local content in the curriculum in schools in the Central Java region. Meanwhile, the implementation of Javanese language learning at all levels of education was strengthened by the issuance of Central Java Governor Regulation No. 57 of 2013 and Central Java Governor Regulation No. 55 of 2014.

Language learning includes learning four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Learning to read should be taught as soon as possible since children begin to enter formal education (Wigfield, Galdstone, & Turci, 2016). Reading is a very important activity in learning because students will easily access knowledge if they already have reading skills. Through reading activities, readers can obtain information from the written symbols they read. If students'

reading skills are lacking, it is likely that they will experience difficulties or even failure in learning (Somadayo, Nurkamto, & Suwandi, 2013). Reading is also the main activity of literacy which was proclaimed as the main agenda of the 2015 global community development by the United Nations with the term "Literacy Decade". This agenda implies that in those decades all citizens of the world must be free from illiteracy (Janjic-Watrich, 2009: 559). Learning to read should also have a fun process so that children are not burdened when learning it. One of them is by providing appropriate reading books for children. Seeing the significance of reading skills in life, this study focuses on reading skills.

Reading is not a simple process. The ability to understand the idea of what is read needs to be trained since childhood. One of them is to know and understand the language used as the language of instruction in written texts. Of course, this understanding process is gradual and does not necessarily apply to difficult reading materials. According to Musfiroh and Listyorini (2016) there was a change in the concept of reading in fourth grade elementary school students, which previously "learn to read" to "read to learn". This statement implies that before grade IV elementary school, students are still at the stage of learning to read. This stage should be known by the teacher and the school so that the teacher really needs to facilitate elementary school students in grades I, II, and III with reading materials that are in accordance with the reading concept they have.

Seeing the concept of reading in elementary school low grade students in such detail, the pandemic could be a significant obstacle in teaching children how to read. This paper will explain how the results of this study include the process of learning to read Javanese in low grade online which took place during the covid-19 pandemic, the obstacles encountered, and possible solutions to overcome them.

## B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative research that aims to describe the process of learning to read Javanese online for lower grade elementary school students, what problems they face, and alternative solutions which can be done. The research subjects were 14 elementary schools in the former Residency of Solo Raya (Surakarta, Boyolali, Sukoharjo, Wonogiri, Sragen, Klaten, and Karanganyar). The primary schools selected were one public elementary school and 1 private elementary school in each district. The research method used is observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The data which will be studied in this study are online learning activities for reading Javanese for elementary school grades, the obstacles faced by teachers and students in using online learning models, and efforts to overcome these obstacles.

### C. DISCUSSION

The implementation of online learning of Javanese at the elementary level has been going on for a long time since the establishment of an online learning policy due to the pandemic. Until this article was written, there were still many research subjects who carried out online learning.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, learning in elementary schools in the former Solo Raya residency is carried out using the distance learning method because the area is included in the red zone area. Distance learning is carried out with various methods adapted to the conditions of students in each school. For schools with affluent students' backgrounds, reading learning is carried out in virtual meetings accompanied by their respective parents. For students with medium and low economic backgrounds, the teacher teaches through the *whatsapp* application then the student's reading learning outcomes are recorded using *voicenotes*. The teacher provides additional assignments so that students' activities while studying at home are more focused. Another method used by teachers to facilitate children who do not have IT facilities at all is to conduct regular home visits even though this clearly endangers the lives of teachers. Furthermore, the obstacles faced by

teachers when teaching Javanese to lower grade elementary school students during the pandemic are described below. Based on the research, online learning to read Javanese for lower grade elementary school students has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The main obstacle is that the teacher cannot teach how to read freely. The lower class is in the learning stage which requires a high intensity of action in interpreting symbols, recognizing letters, combining and sounding syllables, to interpreting words or sentences. Online learning severely limits teacher-student interaction. Teachers cannot approach students personally to find out students' difficulties and facilitate what students need. Another obstacle experienced by teachers is at the early reading stage. Teachers have difficulty how to do repetition or drill, provide instructions on how to read, and provide continuous motivation so that children's psychology is in a good condition so that they want to read during online learning. The main difficulties are due to the lack of facilities and infrastructure, signal problems, tools to access online learning, and learning materials which must be redesigned so that they can be displayed during online learning.

These various obstacles trigger the non-achievement of learning objectives. This is due to the continuous learning loss. Almost all schools feel that there is a difference in learning achievement before the pandemic and during the pandemic. This is in line with the results of the research done by McKins (2021) in several countries which showed a decline in learning to read an average of about 4 months. Not to mention other sectors such as the economy and health which are very influential on the course of learning and how it results.

However, there are some exception cases expressed by the teacher that there are some students who can actually read faster. This is because these students actually get more intense help and study time from their parents or siblings. During the pandemic, many parents work from home. This makes the duration of the meeting with their

children longer than when doing WFO (*Work From Office*). Children's learning is monitored and parents are more involved in teaching their children. Lower grade elementary school children really need a support system and environment that helps them develop faster. The teacher also felt very helpful and appreciated the good cooperation from the family. This is in line with the results of research by McKinsey (2021) which states that unfinished learning does not have a significant impact on the lower grades of elementary school because it shows better results than the high grades.

Furthermore, based on the results of interviews, teachers and schools have initiated various alternative solutions by teachers and schools, including by conducting remedial learning, lowering the minimum limit for learning materials, designing new learning materials, and implementing a "pick up the ball" strategy for students who less fortunate. At first glance, it appears that these efforts really require extra effort from the teacher. The work of teachers during the pandemic has actually increased greatly. These efforts are described in the following description.

Remedial learning in learning to read Javanese is done by re-teaching the parts which are very difficult for students to master. Remedial learning is usually done by different methods. Remedial learning conduct when offline learning. If students have difficulty online, the teacher will do a home visit and then teach the children directly, of course with the permission of the parents.

The second solution is to lower the learning achievement target. Many teachers are forced to do this. The priority during this pandemic is health. The many obstacles in learning make teachers forced to reduce learning outcomes and make adjustments to the allocation of learning time. The duration for learning to read Javanese for grade 1, which is usually in the middle of the semester, has read long sentences, then it is reduced to reading words. This automatically affects the form of questions and evaluations.

The next alternative solution is for teachers to design new learning materials tailored to the conditions of students. For the early reading stage, the teacher prepares simple and very concrete material according to the cognitive range of the children. The material is also designed as attractive as possible so that children don't get bored quickly listening online or in the form of daily tasks which are given and collected periodically.

There are some teachers who do have adequate infrastructure and so do their students. Some teachers design their own video media and game applications which make students learning to read more fun. All of this is done so that there is no too wide a gap experienced by students when studying during the covid-19 pandemic.

#### D. CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that online learning is something real and can be done. Obstacles will definitely arise. However, this should be an evaluation for teachers to determine what steps need to be taken to anticipate the occurrence of learning loss, especially for learning to read in lower grades of elementary school. Synergy between schools and families is really needed so that children can still learn optimally during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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