

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN SOLVE STORY QUESTIONS IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE SUBJECTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the difficulties faced by third-grade students at SDN Pangulah Utara in solving story problems in Indonesian language lessons. The research employs a qualitative, descriptive approach, involving observations, interviews with teachers, and administering tests to students. Observations indicate that while interactions between teachers and students are generally positive, some students struggle with understanding and answering story problems. Test results show that the majority of students (47.1%) are categorized as having low proficiency in understanding and solving story problems effectively, while 32.3% fall into the moderate category. Only 20.6% of students demonstrate a good understanding of the story. Additionally, no students achieved an "Excellent" category, meaning none answered all story problems correctly and completely. These difficulties are attributed to various factors, including inadequate reading comprehension, insufficient understanding of story structure, limited parental guidance, and insufficient teaching materials. The study recommends several strategic measures to address these issues, such as enhancing students' reading skills through more intensive practice, developing teaching materials that match students' comprehension levels, and involving parents in the learning process. It is hoped that by implementing these recommendations, students will overcome their difficulties and improve their ability to solve story problems, thereby making Indonesian language learning in elementary schools more effective and aligned with students' needs.

Keywords: Student Difficulties, Story Questions, Bahasa Indonesia, Elementary School, Qualitative

Abstrac

This research aims to analyze the difficulties experienced by grade 3 students at SDN Pangulah Utara in solving story problems in the Indonesian language subject. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach, which involves observation, interviews with teachers, and giving tests to students. Observation results show that interactions between teachers and students tend to be positive, but there are some students who experience difficulty in understanding and answering story questions. Based on the test results, the majority of students (47.1) were in the low category in understanding and answering story questions well, while 32.3% were in the medium category. Only 20.6% of students showed good understanding of the story. Meanwhile, for the very good category, a result of 0% was obtained, meaning that no students answered the story questions correctly and completely for all questions. This difficulty is caused by various factors, including the inability to read with deep understanding, lack of understanding of story structure, as well as a lack of guidance at home and a lack of adequate teaching materials. This research recommends several strategic steps to overcome this problem, such as improving students' reading skills through more intensive practice, developing teaching materials that are appropriate to students' level of understanding, and involving parents in the learning process. It is hoped that by implementing these recommendations, students can overcome their difficulties and improve their ability to solve story problems, so that the Indonesian language learning process in elementary schools becomes more effective and in accordance with students' needs.

Keywords: Student Difficulties, Story Problems, Indonesian, Elementary School, Qualitative

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Introduction

Elementary schools are educational institutions that are managed and regulated by the government, focusing on formal learning for 6 years, starting from grade one to grade six, for students throughout Indonesia. This formal learning is designed for children as the nation's next generation, adapted to the nation's personality and customs through the curriculum. The curriculum is the basis for learning expeditions, and in its application, students receive various modules or subjects.

Subjects in lower school include religious studies, national studies, Indonesian, natural sciences, social sciences, mathematics, physical education and sports, traditional arts and crafts, and optional local subjects suited to each region, such as English, regional languages, and read and take notes from the Koran. In practice, education in elementary schools is regulated by the government through a curriculum that is adapted to the characteristics of students and the needs of the local community. The elementary school curriculum consists of compulsory subjects and local content. Elementary school education is also equipped with various extracurricular activities, such as sports, arts and social activities, which aim to develop students' potential outside of mandatory subjects. Apart from academic aspects, education at the elementary level also emphasizes character development. The curriculum is often designed to form positive attitudes, ethics and moral values in students (Mustadi, 2020).

According to Prawiyogi & Cahyani (2016) during their education at elementary school level, students are prepared in four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is hoped that by having good language skills, students will be able to cope well with life and be socially accepted in their surrounding environment. Education at the elementary school (SD) level refers to the formal learning process given to children in the age range of 6-12 years. Elementary school is designed as the initial stage of education which aims to provide basic knowledge, skills and values to students. The main focus of education at this level is to build a strong foundation for children's intellectual, emotional and social development (Mustadi, 2020). Prawiyogi (2022) explains that Indonesian language learning in elementary schools aims to improve students' communication skills, both in oral and written form, as well as to develop appreciation for Indonesian literary works.

Indonesian as an important subject at the elementary school level has a very important position, not only as a means of communication, but also as a tool for improving students' critical thinking and analytical skills. Through Indonesian language training, students not only practice good speaking methods, but also practice understanding, analyzing and applying information effectively. Story problems are an integral part of the Indonesian language curriculum, which aims not only to measure students' understanding of the material, but also their ability to apply these concepts in everyday life situations (Hidayah, 2017).

The importance of Indonesian as a main subject at elementary school level can be seen from several aspects. First, Indonesian is the official language of the country and is the main means of communication in society. is the official language of the country and is an important means of communication in society. Therefore, good Indonesian language skills are very important for students to be able to speak efficiently in everyday life or in academic areas. Not

only that, Indonesian also has an important role in improving students' critical and analytical thinking skills (Oktariani & Ekadiansyah, 2020). Through Indonesian language courses, students are taught to master and analyze various reading materials, including narrative questions, which require in-depth explanations and the ability to apply concepts in everyday life situations. This helps students improve critical thinking skills, uncover problems, and make good decisions.

The learning material that cannot be missed from Indonesian language lessons is story questions. Story problems are an integral part of Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level. Story questions are not only designed to measure students' understanding of the material, but also aim to test their ability to apply these concepts in everyday life situations. Thus, Indonesian not only facilitates basic understanding of the language and speaking skills, but also provides a foundation for developing students' critical thinking abilities. Through story problems, students are invited to think deeply, analyze information, and solve problems in real contexts (Tanjung et al., 2019). Thus, Indonesian at the elementary school level is not just language learning, but is also an integral part of the process of developing students' thinking abilities from an early age.

Language skills in Indonesian include four interrelated factors, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing (Prawiyogi & Cahyani, 2016). First, listening skills refer to a person's ability to understand the information conveyed clearly and precisely during the learning process. Teachers can evaluate these abilities through tests or other assessments. Second, speaking skills are the process of conveying messages through the use of human speech tools. Then, reading skills are an individual's ability to understand and interpret written texts. This involves the process of processing and understanding the message conveyed in writing, including understanding the implied meaning. Lastly, writing skills are considered a complex and challenging language ability (Simbolon, 2019). This not only involves the ability to combine letters into words, words into sentences, and sentences into coherent paragraphs, but also involves the ability to convey ideas effectively to readers (Prawiyogi & Hakiki, 2018). At the elementary school level, learning to write involves various activities, such as writing poetry without rigid rules and writing essays. In the context of discussing poetry, essays, short stories and similar writing, you must have the ability to understand the meaning and rules of writing. All of this includes language skills (Mulyati & Hanifah, 2022) (Zulmiyetri et al., 2020).

Indonesian language lessons do not involve reading, especially because they contain lots of story questions. Providing questions in the form of stories makes students have experience in solving problems and they can relate them to their real lives (Supriyatna & Asriani, 2019). However, in general, story questions are very difficult to answer if students do not understand the appropriate model for the question. Students' lack of understanding in answering story questions makes it difficult to complete them and can trigger an inability to complete these questions (Prawiyogi et al., 2020). Difficulties will become more visible if the questions presented are based on higher order thinking skills (HOTS) (Aji, 2020). These difficult aspects include the processes of assessing, evaluating, creating and inventing (Setiawati, 2019). Not to mention considering Indonesian vocabulary which is different from vocabulary used in everyday language (Oktaviani et al., 2022). Apart from that, low reading intention is a serious inhibiting factor, because it can cause students to have difficulty understanding and solving existing story problems (Farhi & Latief, 2024).

Based on information on semester 1 numbers and the results of questions and answers with Indonesian language teachers at SDN Pangulah Utara, it can be seen that the numbers in general for students' Indonesian language subjects are low. The difficulty that students often

experience is difficulty when asking narrative questions because they are unable to understand the meaning of the questions. Generally, students require a very long time to complete questions in the form of narratives. Students' difficulties in completing narrative questions can be influenced by various aspects, such as problem-solving skills, understanding of design, and students' practice styles, vocabulary descriptions, reading skills, and problem-solving skills and the teacher's practice style applied. Not only that, students' difficulties can also be influenced by external aspects, such as minimal use of tools, minimal provision of question illustrations, and question guidance in the form of narratives submitted by teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis regarding the difficulties experienced by students to provide a better description of the factors that may influence students' performance.

In relation to students' ability to solve story problems, research by Ramdani et al., (2024) revealed that students experienced several difficulties, such as not understanding the meaning of the questions given. They also often have difficulty finding the information contained in the story, especially if the story is long. Apart from that, they have difficulty in determining which is the main idea and which is the main sentence. After conducting tests, observations, interviews, and distributing questionnaires, it can be concluded that students experience various difficulties, with the most common difficulties being in finding the main idea and rearranging sentences. The results of this research are in accordance with research conducted by Ramdani et al., (2024) entitled "Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Solving Low Grade Story Problems." The suitability of the research can be seen in the results obtained. Vivi Puspita Sari's research states that students experience various difficulties, one of which is difficulty understanding the story questions given. From this research, it was found that almost all students experienced difficulty in solving story problems, with only two students successfully completing them.

Similar research was also conducted by Farhi & Latief (2024). From the data obtained, it is known that the level of students' abilities is still low. Of the five questions given, many students had difficulty answering questions related to moral messages and character traits. Based on the results of interviews with 15 students, it is known that there are no difficulties in the high subject category. In the medium subject category, the difficulty experienced is in determining the moral message and character traits. Meanwhile, in the low subject category, the difficulty lies in understanding the questions given. Based on the results of research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that many students still experience difficulties in solving short story questions in Indonesian subjects.

Based on the research summary that has been presented, it can be concluded that the majority of students at elementary school level face significant difficulties in solving story problems in Indonesian language subjects. This research aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the difficulties experienced by grade 3 students at SDN Pangulah Utara in solving story problems. Thus, this research not only identifies factors that influence student difficulties but also offers relevant solutions and recommendations. The goal is to make the learning process more effective and appropriate to student needs. With a deep understanding of the difficulties students face, education stakeholders can develop more adaptive and responsive learning strategies to improve students' understanding and application of Indonesian language concepts.

Research methods

This research was carried out at SDN Pangulah Utara for three months in the second semester of the 2024 academic year. The research approach applied was qualitative, with a focus on problem exploration. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews with

Indonesian language teachers, and giving tests. The research subjects consisted of 34 grade 3 students at SDN Pangulah Utara who were chosen because they were studying story problems in Indonesian.

In collecting data, three main techniques were used, namely observation, interviews and tests. First, observations were carried out to directly observe the learning process and interactions between teachers and students in class 3 of SDN Pangulah Utara. Through observation, teaching and learning activities, Indonesian language teaching strategies by teachers, as well as students' responses to learning materials are taken into account. The goal is to gain a deeper understanding of students' interactions with story problems and teachers' teaching approaches. Second, interviews were conducted with Indonesian language teachers to obtain information regarding the curriculum, teaching methods used, and obstacles faced in learning Indonesian. By conducting interviews, researchers can gain direct insight from educators regarding the challenges they face in teaching Indonesian, as well as information regarding the teaching approaches applied. Third, the data collection technique used is documentation, which involves collecting data from various related documents, such as student assignments, diaries, or learning records. This documentation provides additional context about students' understanding of the material, test results, and learning materials used.

Qualitative descriptive methods are used in data analysis to identify patterns that emerge from the results of observations and interviews. In tests carried out on students, the aim is to evaluate their ability to solve story problems. The test results are then analyzed using statistical techniques to provide a more detailed picture of student abilities.

Results and Discussion

This research was conducted at SDN Pangulah Utara involving 34 students from grade 3. The research was carried out through five stages, namely observation, tests, interviews and documentation.

From the results of observations regarding interactions between teachers and students, it appears that the majority of these interactions tend to be positive. However, it was found that some students had difficulty understanding story problem material even though the teacher had implemented various Indonesian language teaching strategies. This is reflected in the direct interaction between teachers and students during the learning process. Most students appear to actively participate in discussions, show interest in the material being taught, and often ask the teacher questions. However, on the contrary, there are some students who appear confused or lack participation in the learning process, which may be seen from their facial expressions which indicate confusion or lack of involvement in class discussions.

Based on the research results, when students were given tests in the form of story questions, it was found that the majority of students had difficulty understanding and solving story questions well. The story question used in the test is entitled "Adventure in the Forest" tells the story of Rini and Budi who go on an adventure in the forest. The story includes their journey, an encounter with a large shadow in the forest, and the eventual discovery that the shadow is just a deer looking for food. The questions asked in the test include: (1) What did Rini and Budi bring to prepare for their trip to the forest? (2) Why did Rini and Budi feel afraid when they saw a large shadow in the forest? (3) What did they actually find after following the shadow?

From the results of the qualitative descriptive analysis, it is known that students have difficulty understanding and answering these questions well. In the assessment process, the following value categories are used, and the results of the test calculations after the story questions are given to students:

Tabel 1
Value Category

Category	Criteria
Very good	Correct and complete answer to all question
Good	Correct and complete answer to 2 question
Currently	Correct and complete answer to 1 question
Low	Incomplete or incorrect answers to all questions

Table 2
Test Calculation Result

Category	The number of student	Percentage
Very good	0	0%
Good	7	20,6%
Currently	11	32,3%
Low	16	47,1%
Total	34	100%

Based on the research results presented in table 1 and table 2, an in-depth picture can be obtained regarding the level of understanding of grade 3 students at SDN Pangulah Utara in solving story problems in the Indonesian language subject. Table 1 classifies value categories based on the answer criteria given by students. The "Very Good" category indicates that the student's answers are correct and complete for all questions, while the "Good" category reflects correct and complete answers for two questions. The "Medium" category indicates correct and complete answers to one question, and the "Low" category indicates incomplete or incorrect answers to all questions.

Based on the test calculation results shown in Table 2, the majority of students, namely 47.1%, are in the "Low" category. This shows that almost half of the students experienced significant difficulties in understanding and answering word problems well. These results indicate that students in this category often provide incomplete or incorrect answers to all questions asked. This difficulty can be caused by several factors. First, students may not have developed deep reading skills, such as the ability to identify important information and understand the context of a story (Faridah et al., 2023). A lack of understanding of story structure and moral messages may also contribute to these difficulties (Retnoningtyas et al., 2023). In addition, there may be external factors such as a lack of guidance at home or inadequate teaching materials at school that hinder the student's learning process. Limitations in cognitive abilities, such as difficulty processing information or poor memory, may also influence these results (Sapitri et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, 32.3% of students fell into the "Medium" category, meaning they managed to answer correctly and completely for only one question. This shows that although there are some students who can answer one question well, they still have difficulty understanding and answering story questions as a whole. Causes may include an inability to generalize concepts understood from one question to another, or difficulty in handling variations in question types (Amalia et al., 2022). It is also

possible that these students have difficulty understanding complex elements of story problems, such as moral messages or relationships between characters, which may require deeper understanding and analytical skills (Sari & Zuhdi, 2024).

Only 20.6% of students demonstrated good understanding of the story, falling into the "Good" category, meaning they were able to answer two of the five questions correctly and completely. These results show that although a small number of students can understand and answer most of the questions well, there are still challenges that must be overcome so that more students can achieve better understanding. This could be caused by variations in the level of complexity of the questions or aspects of the story that are more difficult to understand (Sari & Zuhdi, 2024). Students in this category may have developed better reading and analysis skills compared to students in the "Medium" and "Low" categories, but still need to improve their ability to handle all types of questions with the same level of rigor.

Unfortunately to note is that none of the students fell into the "Excellent" category, meaning no student was able to provide correct and complete answers to all of the questions. This shows that although some students can answer some questions well, there are no students who fully understand and can solve word problems very well. Factors that may contribute are the complexity of the material and the type of questions asked (Lie et al., 2020). There may also be deficiencies in learning strategies that are inadequate to develop students' overall abilities (Winata, 2020). Lack of practice in answering complex story questions or lack of constructive feedback from the teacher could be the cause (Santosa, 2020).

Based on the analysis of the research results that have been presented, there are several main factors that influence students' difficulties in solving story problems in Indonesian language subjects in class 3 at SDN Pangulah Utara. First, the inability to read with deep comprehension is a significant factor. Students may experience difficulty in identifying important information and understanding the context of the story, which results in their inability to answer questions correctly (Faridah et al., 2023). In addition, a lack of understanding of story structure and moral messages also plays a role in these difficulties (Retnoningtyas et al., 2023). External factors such as the lack of guidance at home and the lack of adequate teaching materials at school also influence student learning outcomes. Cognitive limitations, such as difficulties in processing information and weak memory, are also the main causes (Sapitri et al., 2023).

To overcome students' difficulties in solving story problems, several strategic steps can be applied. First, it is important to improve students' reading comprehension skills through more intensive practice and a focus on effective reading techniques. Using interactive and story-based learning methods can help students understand the context and structure of stories better (Amalia et al., 2022). Furthermore, developing teaching materials that are more appropriate to students' level of understanding and providing constructive feedback from teachers can improve weaknesses in story understanding and analysis (Sari & Zuhdi, 2024). In addition, it is important to involve parents in the learning process by providing clear guidance on how they can support children in understanding and solving story problems. With this integrated approach, it is hoped that students can overcome their difficulties and improve their understanding and skills in solving story problems in Indonesian subjects.

Conclusion

This research identified that students' difficulties in solving story problems in Indonesian language subjects in class 3 at SDN Pangulah Utara were caused by several main factors. First, the inability to read with deep understanding prevents students from identifying important information and understanding the context of the story, so they have difficulty answering questions correctly. Second, a lack of understanding of story structure and moral messages also contributes to students' difficulties. External factors, such as the lack of guidance at home and lack of adequate teaching materials at school, as well as cognitive limitations, such as difficulties in processing information and weak memory, also influence student learning outcomes. To overcome this difficulty, it is recommended to improve reading comprehension skills through more intensive practice and story-based interactive learning methods. Developing teaching materials that are appropriate to students' level of understanding, as well as providing constructive feedback from teachers, is also important to correct weaknesses in story comprehension and analysis. In addition, involving parents in the learning process by providing clear guidance on how to support children in understanding and solving word problems can increase learning effectiveness. With this integrative approach, it is hoped that students can overcome their difficulties and improve their skills and understanding in solving story problems in Indonesian subjects.

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