



Literacy relay implementation: Enhancing primary school students' early reading comprehension

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ABSTRACT

The ability to read early is a very important basic skill in education, because it is the foundation for students' literacy mastery at the next level of education. A good education at an early age can form essential basic character and skills. This study aims to describe the implementation of the Literacy Relay in the initial reading ability of grade III students at Mancasan 02 State Elementary School. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation of 11 students. The instruments used in this study include observation guides, interview guidelines, and analysis of learning documents. The results of the study show that the Reading and Writing Relay program has succeeded in significantly improving students' reading skills. Students who take part in this program show increased motivation, confidence, and active participation during the learning process. Interactive and collaborative activities in the program help students better understand letters, syllables, and words thereby strengthening their literacy skills. Teacher and parent support is also an important factor in the success of this program. Based on the results of this study, the implementation of the Reading and Writing Relay program can be used as an alternative learning method to improve elementary school students' early reading skills effectively and enjoyably.

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INTRODUCTION

Education has a very important role to develop a person's interests and talents. According to Susanna, (2019) Education is an effort to help children, both born and mental, from their natural nature towards a good human civilization. Education must be instilled in children from an early age because with education children become characterful. Everyone has different skills. In line with the opinion Muhyidin et al., (2018)



that developing skills is one of them by doing reading and writing activities. Both activities are included in language skills. Language has the main function, which is used to communicate through a person's language can convey a thought, message, idea, and feeling. One needs to learn a language because it is to communicate and interact with others (Durrotunnisa & Nur, 2022). So a person needs to be taught and directed from an early age so that they can use Indonesian properly and correctly to communicate and interact in writing and orally.

Education serves as a bridge that connects children with the vast world of knowledge, allowing them to explore a wide range of information and ideas that will shape their understanding and skills in the future. According to Rohim et al., (2020) Effective education not only teaches children to recognize letters and words, but also helps them understand the meaning and context of reading in a profound way. This is very important, because the ability to read and write is the basic skills needed to interact with information that is constantly evolving. Reading and writing are not just technical skills; Both are also essential foundations for understanding the various lessons and information that children will receive in the future. Literacy skills in elementary school age children are a very important aspect and should not be underestimated. According to Hasanah & Lena (2021) These skills serve as the key to opening the door to broader and deeper knowledge. Children who have good literacy skills tend to have an easier time attending lessons at school. They are able to actively participate in class discussions, complete assignments well, and develop the critical thinking necessary to face various academic challenges. On the other hand, children who have difficulty reading and writing often face various challenges in their learning process. Nurani et al., (2021) note that these difficulties can negatively impact their confidence and make them feel alienated from a supposedly supportive learning environment. Therefore, it is important for parents, educators, and the community to provide adequate support so that each child can develop literacy skills optimally (Hasanah & Lena, 2021). Thus, they will not only be better prepared for further education but will also have a strong foundation for their future lives.

Language plays an important role in the intellectual, emotional, and social development of students and supports student learning success (Suparya, 2021). Language skills have several aspects, namely listening skills, writing skills, reading skills, and speaking skills. Students must be able to master language skills, namely listening, writing, reading, and speaking well, especially at the lower grade level, namely grade I, grade II, and even grade III. Teachers must be able to play their role so that students have these skills, especially in reading and writing skills. At the lower grade level, in grade I and even grade II, reading and writing skills are more often referred to as initial reading and writing. This is because the initial class or beginning of students is taught to learn to read and write more intensely. Meanwhile, in grade III, it is more focused on reading, writing, comprehension. In line with the opinion Alawiyah et al., (2018) Reading and writing skills are the main learning taught in the lower grades at the beginning of elementary school. Reading and writing skills are one of the aspects of language skills taught in schools with the aim that students can understand the content of the reading. According to Nurhamsih et al., (2019) that learning to read and write is very important for students to practice using language actively. Reading is one of the most important skills for students. In line with the opinion of Pandeas et al., (2020) Reading is very important in addition to reading the beginning, reading comprehension must also be improved because reading comprehension aims to obtain information contained in reading texts. According to Muhafidin, n.d. (2016) Reading is the activity of processing

words, information, and ideas put forward by the author related to knowledge and experience in observing writing symbols, connecting words, and interpreting the observed writing. However, many students do not get adequate reading learning because learning to read is the first step for them to get to know the teaching and learning process systematically. Therefore, it is natural for teachers and parents to give encouragement to learn to read and make children love to read.

According to Durrotunnisa & Nur, (2022) Reading is a physical and psychological process. Reading activities can maintain brain health, increase logical and linguistic intelligence so that children who are diligent in reading will tend to understand various problems better (Batubara & Ariani, 2018). In addition to reading, writing is also one of the skills that is no less important. Writing is a form of communication to convey ideas through written language. So children need to be guided and taught to write from an early age. Writing will increase brain intelligence, develop a sense of initiative and creativity, gather information, and cultivate the character of courage in oneself (Lisdyana, 2019). Students must be skilled in reading to acquire writing skills and through writing students can present an idea, idea, feeling, and thought to others through the medium of writing (Puspitasari, 2021). In the realm of language skills, reading occupies the second position after listening skills. Reading activities not only require good concentration to focus on the writing in reading, but also require synergy between the senses of the eye and sound (Alqurnia, 2022). At the level of initial reading or reading aloud, the competency that is expected to be mastered by students is the ability to produce letters or numbers with clear and precise sounds. This is in line with the opinion Kartini et al., (2023) which explains that reading activities are carried out by a person to obtain information properly and completely. Therefore, reading is done through a continuous process where the sound and meaning must be understandable by the reader.

Beginning reading ability is a person's ability to understand and express language accurately and clearly. A person can be said to be able to read the beginning well if he has fulfilled three main characteristics or conditions: first, the ability to sound written symbols such as letters and numbers correctly; second, mastery of vocabulary to understand the meaning of the words read; and third, including meaning in language proficiency, namely being able to understand the meaning of words in the context of sentences. Aisyah et al., (2020) said that this process is carried out in a structured and systematic manner, starting from letter recognition, followed by reading syllables, words, and sentences. After a child understands and is able to sound these symbols, he must be able to interpret the words according to the context. Finally, children who have been able to read will be proficient in using various vocabulary according to the purpose and function of the word (Amri et al., 2021). Opinion Okatavia & Fadhillah (2024) stated that the ability to read beginning greatly affects the ability to read further. Therefore, joint attention between teachers and parents is very necessary. In the lower grades (I, II, and III), important competencies that need to be mastered by students include: reading skills, writing skills, numeracy skills, love for the homeland and nation, as well as ethics, morals, and religion. Teachers should not overburden students with various sciences that are not needed at this stage of their development.

Improving early reading skills in elementary school children is a very important challenge. Effective implementation by utilizing various interesting methods can help students in recognizing letters and words better. According to research conducted by Hanisah, (2022) In letter recognition, teachers can use letter cards that display uppercase and lowercase letters, where children are asked to name and sound each letter while doing

interactive activities such as "letter hunting" in class, where they search for and point to specific letters that are on the board or in a book. Once children are familiar with the letters, the next step is word mastery, which can be done by teaching them to read simple syllables such as "ba", "ka", and "ma", then combining them into words such as "book" and "room"; Here, teachers can use object images to help students understand the words in a more concrete context. Next, in the sentence comprehension stage, the teacher can introduce a simple sentence such as "The flower is red" and ask the students to draw the flower according to the description, as well as encourage them to create their own sentences using the vocabulary they have learned, for example by asking them to string together sentences from the given words such as "I like to play in the park." In this way, the entire process of learning to read becomes systematic and enjoyable, so that children can build a strong foundation in reading skills that will support their future learning (Nurani et al., 2021). Based on the results of observations and initial interviews at Mancasan 02 State Elementary School, it was found that grade III students still experienced difficulties in their initial reading skills. Out of a total of 11 students in the class, there was a significant variation in reading ability. This condition indicates the need for more attention from teachers and parents to improve students' overall reading skills. The curriculum implemented at SD Negeri Mancasan 02 is currently the Independent Curriculum for grades 1 to 4 and the K13 Curriculum for grades 5 and 6. In the context of this study, the Independent Curriculum is used because it focuses on learning outcomes in grade III related to the ability to read narrative and descriptive texts with varied sentences and accurate information.

Further observations show that the classroom atmosphere during the learning process is quite conducive. However, there were three students who seemed to be less active and involved in reading activities. For example, when the teacher asked students to take turns reading, two students seemed hesitant and needed more encouragement to participate, while the other six students showed great interest by raising their hands to answer questions or interact with classmates. The learning process carried out by teachers of SD Negeri Mancasan 02 involves students actively in discussing the content of the reading and sharing understanding through group collaboration. This helps them describe images and retell the content of the reading more confidently and creatively. This fun and interactive learning can increase students' interest and motivation to learn effectively. When students feel actively involved in the learning process, they tend to be more motivated and easier to understand the subject matter (Hidayati et al., 2022). In addition, positive experiences during learning can build students' confidence in using language, both spoken and written. In an effort to improve the quality of education, it is very important to provide support to students who face challenges in reading. Therefore, the Literacy Relay program is specifically designed to help them overcome these difficulties. The program aims to improve students' reading and writing skills through interactive and collaborative activities. This activity involves students in a reading session together, where they can share their understanding of the content of the reading. After the reading session, a discussion was held that encouraged students to delve into and analyze the material they had read. Next, students will continue to write based on the reading.

This activity is held regularly every Tuesday and Thursday, providing an opportunity for students to practice consistently and build confidence in their literacy skills. As part of efforts to support students who are experiencing reading challenges, the literacy relay program is specifically designed to help them overcome these difficulties. On Tuesdays, activities are carried out in the classroom during learning. Students are

divided into small groups of 3-5 people. After that, the teacher introduced reading books taken from the library, which had been selected in advance to match the level of understanding of grade 3 students. Students then read the reading material in turn in their groups, where each member of the group reads a paragraph or page. After the reading session is over, each group discusses the content of the reading. This discussion aims to ensure that all members of the group understand the story or information contained in the reading. Students ask each other questions and answer each other and share opinions about the characters, themes, and moral messages of the reading. After the discussion, students proceed to the chain writing stage, where each group member writes one piece of the story based on the reading they have read before. Writing is done in turns, so that each student contributes to the final result of their group writing.

On Thursdays, activities are carried out in front of the classroom before learning begins. Students read the same book again and then do a personal reflection writing activity about what they learned from the reading. In addition, in this activity there is also a learning session to spell letters, words, and sentences related to reading materials. Students are trained to correctly spell the various words that appear in the reading as well as construct simple sentences based on their understanding. This activity aims to strengthen students' understanding of the material and practice their writing and spelling skills independently. Thus, the Reading and Writing Relay (ESBATU) program not only aims to improve reading skills but also foster cooperation between students and make the learning process enjoyable. There are several previous research results that are relevant to this study. First, based on the results of research researched by Islamiah et al., (2023) in his journal entitled "Improving Writing Ability Through the Relay Method *Writing* in Grade IV Students of SD Inpres Exemplary Merpati, Bantaeng District, Bantaeng Regency". PGSD, FKIP University of Muhammadiyah Makassar. The results of his research show that the application of the Relay method *Writing* significantly improved students' writing skills, with the percentage of classical learning completion reaching more than 80% in cycle II. This study recorded an increase in the average score of writing skills from 68.23 in the first cycle to 82.51 in the third cycle, and showed that this method made the learning process more fun and interesting for students.

The second research was conducted by City, (2024) in his journal entitled "The Effect of the Application of the Chain Writing Method on the Improvement of Writing Skills of Students of SDN Mannuruki Makassar City". College of Islamic Sciences and Arabic Language (STIBA) Makassar. The results of his research showed that the application of the chain writing method significantly improved students' essay writing ability, with the average score before the treatment being 65.00 and increasing to 82.50 after the application of the method. Data analysis using the paired T test showed a significance value of 0.001, which showed that the improvement of students' writing skills was very significant. Thus, this study recommends that teachers apply the chain writing method as an innovation in learning to improve student motivation and learning outcomes.

The conclusions of previous research show that the application of innovative learning methods, such as Relay Writing and Chain Writing, has a significant positive impact on students' writing ability. The first research indicates that the *Relay Writing* method not only improves writing skills, but also makes the learning process more interesting and enjoyable for students. Meanwhile, the second study confirmed that the Chain Writing method succeeded in substantially improving students' essay writing skills. These two studies recommend that teachers integrate these methods in learning to

improve student motivation and learning outcomes in writing. Based on this background, this study aims to describe the Literacy Relay (ESBATU) in the initial reading ability of grade III students of Mancasan 02 State Elementary School.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative research method. Based on Abdussamad's (2021) view, qualitative research is an approach based on philosophy *Post-positivism*, which aims to study objects in natural conditions, in contrast to experimental methods. In this approach, the researcher plays the role of the main instrument, while sampling is carried out *purposive* and *snowball*. The data collection technique uses triangulation (a combination of various methods), while data analysis is inductive or qualitative. In an effort to analyze qualitative data in depth and comprehensively, this study uses the NVivo 12 Pro application system as a tool. The NVivo application is a device intended for processing qualitative research data, both interview results, online magazines, online news and so on (Tambun et al., 2023). The utilization of this software allows researchers to (1) manage data from a variety of sources, such as in-depth interview transcripts and field notes of participant observations; (2) encoding data systematically and efficiently to find patterns and relationships between information relevant to the focus of the research; and (3) identify key themes emerging from the data, which provide a rich and in-depth picture of the student experience and the impact of the ESBATU program. Thus, the NVivo 12 Pro application plays an important role in ensuring the rigor and validity of qualitative data analysis in this study (Utama et al., 2019).

The main focus of qualitative research is to explore the deep meaning of the phenomenon being studied, not just to produce generalizations. Qualitative research as a strategy to search for meaning, understanding, concepts, characteristics, symptoms, symbols and descriptions of a phenomenon, focused and multimethodical, natural and holistic, prioritizing quality, using several methods, and presented in a narrative manner in scientific research (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019). This research also focuses on the interaction between important elements, such as people, objects, and the relationship between the two. This research method is intended to find out or obtain information about the implementation of the literacy relay (ESBATU) in the initial reading ability of grade III students. The research was conducted at SD Negeri Mancasan 02, Baki District, Sukoharjo Regency.

In the research conducted at SD Negeri Mancasan 02, the population involved in this study was 11 students. Sampling in this study was taken from grade III students of SD Negeri Mancasan 02, related to the implementation of literacy relays (ESBATU) in the initial reading ability of grade III students. At the elementary school (SD) level, the data explains that as many as 20% are in categories that need special intervention or special handling in the field of literacy (Aisyah et al., 2020). The field referred to here is the understanding in the initial reading phase which currently many students are not optimal in practicing. Students who have reading difficulties tend to have low motivation, so it is difficult to understand letters, words and sentences in reading books. These difficulties are something that many students experience. In this study, a descriptive analysis related to the school program was carried out in an effort to improve the initial reading ability (1) the description of the literacy relay program including its objectives and implementation methodology, (2) the analysis of students' reading ability during the running of the program to measure the progress that occurred, (3) the evaluation of the

response with a focus on the level of involvement and factors that affect their motivation in learning to read.

Data collection used 1) Interview, used as a data collection technique to find the problem being researched and also if the researcher wants to know things from the informant in more depth. In this study, interviews were conducted with 11 students. The interview contains a condition regarding the student's reading ability (Bahri et al., 2021). 2) Documentation, in the form of reading books sourced from the library, student worksheets (LKS), student attendance lists, class observations, learning reflections, student works, evaluations and assessments, and photos of activities. Documentation techniques are complementary to the use of observation and interview methods in qualitative research. Documentation to support and corroborate the data collected. Through documentation, it can be found out that the data taken before is accurate data (Suwartono, 2014). 3) Observation, carried out to find out the literacy relay activities that take place in the classroom and in front of the classroom before the first learning hour starts, according to the implementation schedule. After that, the data obtained will be used to describe the dynamics of student interaction during the activity (Bahri et al., 2021).

The qualitative data analysis technique in the form of interactive analysis of Miles and Huberman is analyzed using the Miles and Huberman qualitative data analysis technique which consists of three stages of data reduction, data presentation stage and conclusion drawing / verification stage. The following is an overview of the Miles and Huberman data analysis model (*interaktif model*).

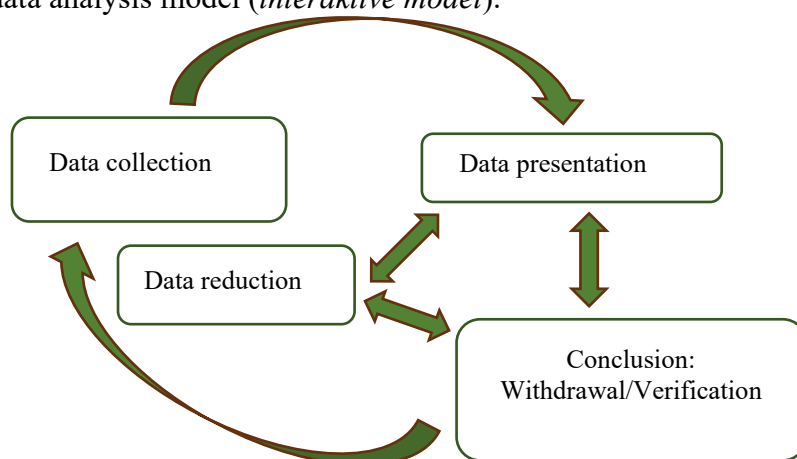


Figure 1. Components in data analysis (*Interactive Model*) (Sugiyono, 2021)

Data analysis according to Miles and Huberman (1984) referred to by Sugiyono (2021) is carried out through three stages, namely data reduction which includes summarizing, selecting important elements, focusing on significant aspects, and looking for themes and patterns to provide a clearer picture and facilitate further data collection and search; Data presentation is carried out after reduction, where data is presented in the form of brief descriptions, diagrams, relationships between categories, flowcharts, or other formats as described by Yunengsih & Syahrilfuddin, (2020). as well as drawing conclusions and verification aimed at finding relationships, similarities, or differences in the data by comparing the suitability between statements and research subjects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literacy is a fundamental skill that students must master from an early age, especially at the elementary school level, because literacy includes reading and writing skills that are essential for academic development and daily life. Beginning reading is the

initial stage in the literacy development process, where students begin to recognize letters, spell words, and understand simple sentences. Beginner reading skills can be practiced with various strategies such as using letter cards, pictures, syllabic cards, and storybooks. In addition to strategies, interesting models, methods, and media are also needed to activate and encourage students' interest in reading. Research shows that innovative learning models and other collaborative approaches have a positive influence on student learning outcomes. Research by Pratiwi, (2020) explained that basic literacy is the foundation of education that allows students to understand the lesson better and express their thoughts effectively. Meanwhile, research by Alfie Yuda, (2022) It shows that the activity of starting reading through books from the library can significantly improve students' literacy habits by building their confidence and reading skills. Therefore, the application of effective learning methods and collaboration between the government, schools, families, and the community is very important in building a strong literacy culture in schools.

One of the innovative approaches that has been implemented to support early reading skills is the Literacy Relay Program (ESBATU). The program is designed with a collaborative approach that allows students to learn to read in turn in a fun and interactive atmosphere. Through this method, students not only learn individually but also collaborate with their peers to support each other in understanding reading. Research shows that collaborative approaches are able to increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process Rahmavati, (2017). In addition, the cooperative atmosphere built through the relay method helps students feel more confident and motivated to learn Ansoriyah, (2018).

The theory of collaborative learning serves as the main foundation in the application of ESBATU, where students build understanding through social interaction with peers. This process allows them to share knowledge, correct mistakes collectively, and discuss and deepen their understanding of the reading Pakaya & Ibrahim, (2019). Collaborative learning not only contributes to better academic achievement, but also plays an important role in the development of crucial social skills in everyday life. Vygotsky's (1978) view supports this by emphasizing that social interaction is a key element in students' cognitive development, especially through the concept of Progressive Development Zones (ZPD), where students can reach their maximum potential with the help of peers or teachers. In this context, teachers act as facilitators who create a collaborative learning environment, as well as provide support to students to overcome their learning difficulties (Wangsa et al., 2021). The application of collaborative learning in ESBATU provides opportunities for students to exchange ideas and views, so as to create a dynamic and meaningful learning process.

Based on the results of the study, it was shown that the implementation of the Reading and Writing Relay (ESBATU) program had a significant positive impact on the initial reading ability of grade III students at SD Negeri Mancasan 02. Interviews conducted on January 23, 2025 with 11 grade III students provided in-depth insight into their experiences while participating in the ESBATU program. Most students (10 out of 11) stated that they felt more motivated and enjoyed the process of learning to read through the relay method, because the learning atmosphere became more interactive and fun. This shows that ESBATU not only improves reading skills, but also provides a positive learning experience for students. This improvement in reading ability is supported by more intensive interaction between students and a play approach integrated in the relay method. A pleasant atmosphere helps to reduce stress and increase students'

confidence in reading. In addition, the program also helps to improve students' overall literacy skills, which has a positive impact on their academic achievement in various subjects.

The Reading and Writing Relay (ESBATU) activity began with an individual relay reading session. Each student takes turns reading the text in their respective seats, creating a dynamic atmosphere in front of the class. A student reads one part of the text then continues by the next student until the entire text is finished, the teacher ensures that each student is actively involved in the learning process. The atmosphere in front of the classroom was very supportive of the course of this session, as can be seen from the full attention given by teachers and friends to students who were reading, creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students. The implementation of the Reading and Writing Relay (ESBATU) in grade III, there was a student named Brian reading the first paragraph of the reading book that had been provided. Observations showed that Brian initially seemed hesitant and nervous when pronouncing a few words, indicating an initial challenge in students' confidence in public reading. When he stumbles on a difficult word, the teacher provides quick and precise help by pronouncing the word slowly, providing a model of correct pronunciation and helping Brian overcome his shyness. The teacher also provides an explanation of the meaning of the word by providing examples of sentences that are relevant to the students' daily lives, making it easier to understand the concept and enriching students' insights. After that explanation, Brian showed a significant increase in confidence and was able to continue reading smoothly, proving the effectiveness of teacher intervention in overcoming students' difficulties and building confidence.

Khrisna continued by reading the second paragraph. Based on the results of observation, he experienced obstacles in the process of exchanging information which was then assisted by the teacher with correct pronunciation and explanation of the meaning of words, accompanied by contextual and easy-to-understand sentence examples. After getting the explanation, Krishna nodded and continued his reading more fluently, indicating that the understanding provided by the teacher helped students overcome obstacles in reading and improve reading fluency. When it was Bagas' turn to read the third paragraph, he also had difficulty with a difficult word. Teachers again provide assistance by pronouncing the word and providing relevant explanations, helping to expand students' vocabulary and improve their understanding of the language. Bagas looked more confident after receiving the help and successfully completed his part, showing that teacher support is very important in improving students' overall literacy skills.

After the individual relay session is over, the activity continues with a group relay. Students are divided into three small groups of two people each, encouraging collaboration and interaction between students in a more intimate and supportive atmosphere. Each group received a Student Worksheet (LKPD) containing reading texts and comprehension questions related to the content of the reading book, testing students' ability to understand and analyze the text critically. The types of texts used in LKPD vary, ranging from narrative stories to informative texts, adjusted to the level of students' abilities. In groups, students take turns reading the text back while discussing the content of the reading with group friends, creating an interactive and collaborative learning environment where students can learn from each other and exchange ideas. In Atika's group, she started the discussion by asking her friends about the content of the stories they had read, facilitating a deeper understanding of the text and encouraging students to

think critically. When Saskia has difficulty answering questions about the main characters in the story, Atika helps by reminding certain parts of the text that are relevant, demonstrating students' ability to support each other and build a sense of solidarity. Saskia then nodded and was able to answer the next question more confidently, proving the effectiveness of group discussions in improving students' understanding and building critical thinking skills. This interaction describes the implementation of cooperative learning, where students learn together to achieve a common goal.

The ESBATU program also has a positive impact on students' writing skills. Through repeated practice and collaboration between students, they become more confident in expressing ideas through writing. Students begin to understand how to structure simple sentences well and use punctuation correctly. This shows that the relay method not only improves reading ability but also narrative writing skills significantly (Sukma & Oktaviani, 2021). This approach is supported by constructivism theory which states that learning occurs when students actively build knowledge through direct experience and interaction with the environment. The use of learning media such as picture books is also one of the factors in the success of the ESBATU program. Books with bright illustrations and attractive designs are able to arouse students' interest in reading. Visual media like this has proven to be effective in grabbing children's attention and increasing their motivation to read (Mulrajil et al., 2023). This is in line with the theory of intrinsic motivation put forward by Grolnick in Santrock, (2009), where visual attraction can encourage children's curiosity so that they are more motivated to learn independently.

Based on the results of the interview, it was shown that students felt significant benefits from ESBATU's activities. Most students stated that they felt more confident when reading in front of their peers because of the supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere of the class. In addition, students also feel that this activity helps to enrich their new vocabulary and improve their understanding of various concepts. The following is the opinion of a third grade student of Mancasan 02 State Elementary School, regarding the implementation of the Literacy Relay (ESBATU) program:

"I really enjoy reading alternately with friends makes me more courageous. Because we help each other if anyone has trouble understanding the sentences, so the atmosphere is really exciting." (Cindy, interview January 23, 2025)

Additional information from similar informants related to the implementation of the ESBATU program that can increase confidence in group reading relay sessions are:

"I am more confident because my group members listen and justify the words I read, and then when my turn is over, I can listen to my friends read and learn from them as well." (Yudha, interview January 23, 2025)

Further analysis of Cindy and Yudha's statements revealed that the collaborative and supportive aspects of ESBATU played a key role in increasing students' confidence. Cindy highlighted how the atmosphere of mutual help in the group creates a fun and motivating learning experience. This shows that ESBATU has succeeded in creating an environment where students feel safe to take risks and learn from mistakes. Meanwhile, Yudha's experience emphasizes the importance of constructive feedback from peers. The process of listening, proofreading, and learning from others not only improves students' reading abilities but also develops important social and emotional skills. These two statements indicate that ESBATU is not just a reading activity, but also a means to build a positive and inclusive learning community. This activity empowers students to become independent and confident learners, and to be able to collaborate effectively with others.

The success of the ESBATU program does not only stop at increasing students' confidence and reading ability. This positive impact is also seen in the increase in overall student learning motivation. By feeling more comfortable and supported in a learning environment, students become more actively participating in classroom activities and more motivated to achieve their academic goals. This shows that ESBATU has great potential to become a learning model that can be applied in various educational contexts, with a focus on creating an inclusive, collaborative, and supportive learning environment.

The results of students' written work after ESBATU activities showed an improvement in their writing skills. After the reading session is over, each student is asked to write a summary of the story or create a sentence using the new vocabulary that has been learned. Analysis of the summary of the story written by the students showed an improvement in their ability to identify the main idea, string sentences coherently, and use relevant vocabulary. A student named Atika writes a story summary about the events experienced by the main character, demonstrating a good understanding of the storyline and characters. Rafa writes sentences using new vocabulary, demonstrating the ability to apply new knowledge in different contexts. Teachers appreciate this work by reading some of the best writings in front of the class and giving praise to the author, motivating students to continue to improve their writing skills and excel in academics. The following is the opinion of a third grade student of Mancasan 02 State Elementary School, regarding his work that is appreciated by teachers and friends:

"I am very proud if my work gets awards from teachers and friends. It makes me even more excited." (Atika, interview January 23, 2025)

ESBATU activities not only succeeded in improving students' literacy skills, but also created a fun learning atmosphere and supported their social development. Support from teachers in dealing with reading difficulties and positive interactions between students are the keys to the success of this activity. With an interactive learning atmosphere and appreciation for students' work, ESBATU has succeeded in building confidence while motivating students to continue learning and developing. In order to provide a clearer and more comprehensive picture of how ESBATU improves students' confidence and learning ability, the following section presents a visualization of data processed through the NVivo 12 Pro application. This visualization will help to concretely understand how these themes are connected and contribute to ESBATU's positive impact. Here is a visual representation of the data:

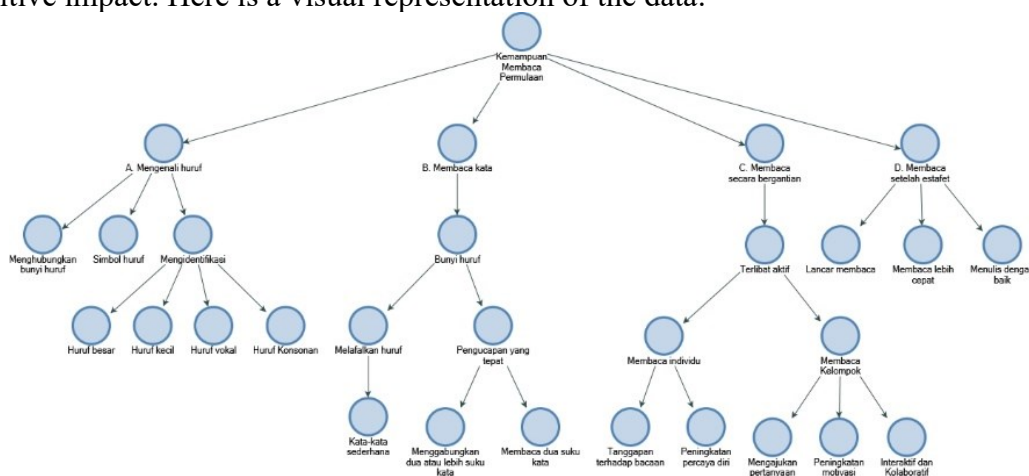


Figure 2. Project Map Implementation of the ESBATU program

Based on the results of *the project map* in figure 2. which was made in accordance with the research question instrument at Mancasan State Elementary School 02, it can be concluded that students show good reading skills by being able to recognize letters and letter sounds correctly, pronounce letters correctly, and identify differences between uppercase and lowercase letters. In addition, students are also able to read words with correct pronunciation, show fluency in reading simple words, and successfully combine two or more correct syllables. Through literacy relay activities, students are actively involved in reading alternately both individually and in groups with confidence. They also respond to readings, ask questions to their friends, and show active participation in discussions related to the content of the reading. After participating in this activity, students experienced a significant improvement in reading fluency, reading speed, and confidence. Overall, this learning method has proven to be effective in creating a collaborative and supportive learning atmosphere, as well as improving students' reading skills at Mancasan 02 State Elementary School as a whole.

However, the implementation of this program is not separated from challenges. Some students still have difficulty understanding the reading texts even though they have participated in this program. Individual factors such as lack of reading habits at home or lack of support from parents are the main obstacles for them. Therefore, teachers need to pay special attention by providing additional guidance or learning materials tailored to the needs of each student (Islamiah et al., 2023). In addition, the theory of behaviorism by Kiki Melita Andriani et al., (2022) Suggested use *reinforcement* positive such as awards to motivate students to continue to strive to improve their abilities. This study also found several challenges in the implementation of the Literacy Relay (ESBATU) program. There are two students who still have difficulty understanding the reading text even though they have participated in this program. This may be due to individual factors, such as a lack of reading habits at home or a lack of support from parents. Therefore, it is important for teachers to pay special attention to these students by providing additional guidance or learning materials tailored to their needs. The success of the ESBATU program is highly dependent on the active role of teachers as facilitators. Teachers need to keep monitoring each student's progress and provide constructive feedback to keep them motivated to learn.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the Reading and Writing Relay Program (ESBATU) is an effective learning innovation in improving students' initial reading skills, especially at Mancasan State Elementary School 02. The program helps students master basic reading skills, such as recognizing letters, spelling words, and understanding simple sentences, through an interactive and fun collaborative approach. An inclusive learning atmosphere is created through alternating activities individually and in small groups, where students support each other. This approach not only improves students' reading skills but also builds their confidence to read in front of their peers as well as motivates them to continue learning.

The success of this program is supported by the active role of teachers as facilitators who provide additional guidance to students who have difficulty reading. Teachers help pronounce difficult words, provide contextual explanations to reinforce understanding, and give appreciation to students' efforts. However, the study found several challenges, such as a lack of reading habits at home and a lack of parental support, which became an obstacle for some students. Therefore, special attention in the form of additional guidance or customized learning materials is needed. Overall, ESBATU not only improves

students' basic literacy skills but also contributes to their social and emotional development, making it an innovative learning model that has the potential to be applied more widely in other primary schools.

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