

THE EFFECT OF TARL APPROACH ON LITERACY SKILLS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

PENGARUH PENDEKATAN TARL TERHADAP KEMAMPUAN LITERASI SISWA SEKOLAH DASAR

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach to enhance students' reading literacy skills, specifically by tailoring learning methods to individual ability levels. The research utilized a quasi-experimental design and collected data through tests, observations, and interviews. The study focused on grade I students at MIN Kota Bima, with grade I D serving as the control group and grade I E as the experimental group that received the TaRL learning intervention. Descriptive and inferential statistics, specifically the independent sample t-test, were used to analyze the data. The findings indicated that the TaRL approach had a positive impact on students' literacy skills. Implementing the TaRL approach is an effective way to address the issue of low reading literacy skills in students.

Keywords: *Literacy, Primary School Students, TaRL Approach*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyelidiki penggunaan pendekatan Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) untuk meningkatkan kemampuan literasi membaca siswa, khususnya dengan menyesuaikan metode pembelajaran dengan tingkat kemampuan individu. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuasi-eksperimen dan mengumpulkan data melalui tes, observasi, dan wawancara. Penelitian ini difokuskan pada siswa kelas I di MIN Kota Bima, dengan kelas I D sebagai kelompok kontrol dan kelas I E sebagai kelompok eksperimen yang menerima intervensi pembelajaran TaRL. Statistik deskriptif dan inferensial, khususnya uji-t sampel independen, digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan TaRL memiliki dampak positif terhadap kemampuan literasi siswa. Menerapkan pendekatan TaRL merupakan cara yang efektif untuk mengatasi masalah rendahnya kemampuan literasi membaca siswa.

Kata Kunci: *Literasi, Siswa Sekolah Dasar, Pendekatan TaRL*

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1. Introduction

Literacy is an important foundation for an individual's academic and social development. Literacy includes the ability to read and write and the skills to critically understand, interpret, and analyze various forms of information. The scope of literacy

ability is not limited to reading and writing but also includes skills to think deeply about sources of knowledge in print, visual, digital, and auditory forms (Harfiyani, 2018). In today's knowledge-based society, literacy skills are critical for personal empowerment, active participation in the community, and access to better economic opportunities. Literacy is a basic ability that must be taught so students can more easily and quickly understand learning content (Ahmad, Harits, Hermasnyah, & Mulyadi, 2024; Sarika, 2021). Therefore, strengthening literacy skills from an early age is a priority for education systems worldwide. Popular literacy is generally understood as the ability to read and write (Irene, Dwiningrum, & Ratri, 2021; Kit, Leung, Chu, & Qiao, 2021).

Reading literacy is an important literacy component that involves the ability to understand and use written texts effectively. It includes recognizing words, understanding sentences, and interpreting the meaning of entire texts. Reading literacy is essential for gaining knowledge in various subjects and is the key to lifelong learning. Students may need adequate reading skills to follow the curriculum, which can hinder their academic progress and prospects. In Indonesia, the problem of low reading literacy skills of elementary school students is a serious concern. Data from international assessments such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and national evaluations show that many Indonesian students have not reached the expected reading literacy level. Various factors, including inadequate teaching methods, limited access to quality reading materials, and a lack of focus on individual learning needs, can cause this deficiency. Based on research by Cahyani, Rahmawati, & Torre (2022), Indonesia has a relatively low level of students' reading ability. These persistently low reading literacy levels demonstrate the need for effective educational interventions. Besides that, In today's classrooms, it has been recognized that students have diverse academic achievements (Putri, Magdalena, Fauziah, & Azizah, 2021). Often, a student in the same class or study group has a different level of knowledge and understanding from other students (Colle, Nurnia, & Rabiah, 2023; Mulyawati, Zulela, & Edwita, 2022). Several factors generally influence these differences, including teaching quality, student support, and learning environment (Fuadi, Robbia, Jamaluddin, & Jufri, 2020). These indications show that there are problems in the national education system. According to Baro'ah (2020), the manifestation of quality education is being able to carry out a quality maturation process. Students are developed by freeing from ignorance and inability. According to Dirsia, Anggreni, Diananseri, & Setiawan (2022), equitable and quality learning is determined by the quality of competent educators. The characteristics of effective learning involve all students participating in the learning process (Pebriyanti, Fitrianawati, & Astuti, 2023).

Based on the results of interviews with the principal and teachers of MIN 1 Bima, they said that MIN 1 Bima only accepts students for five classes in each batch, namely class A to class E. Then, the placement of students based on their ability level so that class A is the best in literacy and other abilities. Students who still have delays in literacy are placed in class groups D and E. So, teachers are required to develop their abilities in teaching. The pretest results showed that students' reading ability was still categorized as low. So, for researchers, it is urgent to find a solution.

According to Janah, Yulianti, & Purnomo (2023), the education system has implemented an independent learning curriculum. It is related to differentiation learning. Referenced learning is essentially learning that sees differences in student characteristics as something different and always changing (Mulyawati, Zulela, & Edwita, 2022). According to Tomlinson in Pitaloka & Arsanti (2022), differentiation

learning is an effort to adjust the learning process to the ability level of students in the classroom to meet each student's individual learning needs. Teachers can facilitate students according to their needs based on the abilities and skills possessed by each student (Pitaloka & Arsanti, 2022; Wahyuni, 2022). So it requires teachers to have expertise in designing learning models that have novelty characteristics to create a more effective learning atmosphere (Dirsa, Anggreni, Diananseri, & Setiawan, 2022; Kistian, 2019; Meishanti, Fitri, Rif'atul, Istiqomah, Ummi, Solikhah, Farkhiyatus, Widarmawan, & Ilham, 2022).

One alternative solution that is applied is a learning model using the TaRL approach. TaRL focuses on adapting teaching practices to students' current learning ability levels rather than by age or grade. Research on the TaRL approach has demonstrated its effectiveness in various educational contexts. Studies conducted in countries show significant improvements in students after implementing TaRL. India, Nigeria, Kenya, Australia, and other countries around the World have successfully implemented learning models using the TaRL Approach (Kemendikbud, 2020; Widodo & Umar, 2021). The implementation of TaRL can provide significant changes to student learning outcomes (Ahyar, Nurhidayah, & Saputra, 2022), able to bring students to significantly increase their literacy competence (Sanisah, Edi, Mas'ad, Darmurtika, & Arif, 2023; Syarifudin, Yulianci, Ningsyih, Hidayah, Mariamah, & Irfan 2022), increase reading ability (Ningsyih, Yulianci, Haryati, Syarifudin, Zulharman, & Ahyar, 2022), can assist teachers in adjusting students' ability levels (Asiza, Rahman, & Irwan, 2023), teachers can develop effective learning designs (Meishanti, Fitri, Rif'atul, Istiqomah, Ummi, Solikhah, Farkhiyatus, Widarmawan, & Ilham, 2022).

The TaRL approach looks at the characteristics of students based on their abilities. The learning process emphasizes the needs in terms of each student's ability. Thus, the TaRL approach can channel students' rights to obtaining good and appropriate learning. The TaRL approach has three stages in its use, namely, conducting assessment, planning, and learning.

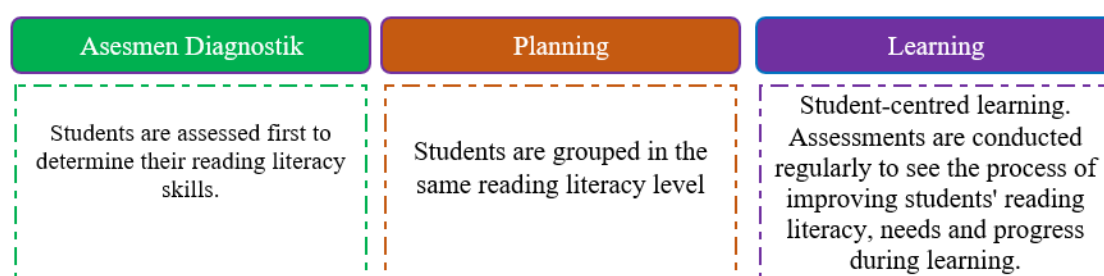


Figure 1. Stages of Implementation of the TaRL Approach

However, schools in Indonesia still group students based on their age level (Jauhari, Rosyidi, & Sunarlijah, 2023). This can hinder the increase in student literacy achievement (Dermawan, Malik, Suyitno, Pawestri, Solissa, Mamun, & Hita, 2023). TaRL approach involves periodic diagnostic assessments to identify students' reading abilities and adapting instruction according to those abilities. By grouping students based on their current skill level and providing targeted support, TaRL aims to accelerate learning and bridge gaps in reading literacy.

In Indonesia, the implementation of TaRL is still in its early stages and has yet to be studied in depth. Initial pilot projects and small-scale implementation show that

TaRL has the potential to improve reading literacy among Indonesian students. However, more comprehensive studies are needed to evaluate its effectiveness and fully identify factors influencing its success. Understanding the implementation process and results of TaRL in Indonesia will provide valuable insight and assist in policy-making to improve the quality of education and overcome the literacy challenges that elementary school students face. It can be concluded that the application of learning models using TaRL approach can have a positive influence on increasing student literacy. Various studies have revealed the effectiveness of learning using TaRL, so researchers are then interested in conducting a similar study with efforts to increase student literacy achievement as previously carried out by several previous researchers. This study aims to know the effect of TaRL approach on the literacy skills of primary school students.

2. Research Method

This study used quasi-experimental research. This research involved students of grade I of MIN Kota Bima as the research population. Overall, there were five classes of grade I in this school, with students' literacy skills in each class having different levels. Classes A to C are categorized as good, and D and E are categorized as low. Therefore, the sample was determined using the class random technique in all classes of grade I of MIN Kota Bima. As a result, class I D, with 36 students, was selected as the control class, and class I E, with 36 students, was selected as the experimental class. The experimental class was given treatment using the TaRL approach, while the control class was given treatment using other approaches commonly applied in schools. The design used is a pre and posttest design. The research design is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Pre and Post Design

Class	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Control	Q1	X2	Q3
Experiment	Q4	X5	Q6

(Laksono, Nurcahyo, & Wibowo, 2023)

Description:

Q1: Pretest initial literacy skills of control class students

Q2: Posttest literacy skills of control class students

Q3: Pretest of literacy skills of experimental class students

Q4: Posttest of literacy skills of experimental class students

X2: Learning using conventional approach

X5: Learning using the TaRL approach

The data collection techniques used in this study were tests, observations, and interviews. The test used was an oral reading test, which was a test conducted directly and face-to-face with students. The aim was to measure students' reading ability. The indicators and aspects assessed are shown in table 2.

Table 2. Reading Skills Assessment Instrument for Grade 1 Students of MIN Kota Bima

Assessed Aspects	Indicator	Criterion	Vulnerable Values
Pronunciation	Pronunciation of words and sentences is proper and correct.	Excellent	21-25

Assessed Aspects	Indicator	Criterion	Vulnerable Values
	The pronunciation of words and sentences is good but not precise in pauses.	Good	15-20
	The pronunciation of words and sentences is not correct, and the taking of pauses is not right.	Enough	9-14
	Unclear pronunciation of words and sentences.	Less	3-8
Intonation	Appropriate in the use of intonation.	Excellent	21-25
	Good in the use of intonation.	Good	15-20
	Sufficient in the use of intonation.	Enough	9-14
	Lack in the use of intonation.	Less	3-8
Fluency	Fluent in reading simple sentences.	Excellent	21-25
	Read fluently with a little help from the teacher.	Good	15-20
	Read without getting everything done without the help of the teacher.	Enough	9-14
	Difficulties in reading even if the teacher already helps it.	Less	3-8
Voice Clarity	Loud voices when pronouncing letters and words so that all students can hear them.	Excellent	21-25
	Some students can hear the sound when pronouncing letters and words.	Good	15-20
	The sound when saying letters and words can only be heard by the teacher, not by other students.	Enough	9-14
	The sound of letters and words when saying is not heard by teachers or friends.	Less	3-8
Maximum Number of Scores			100

Arikunto in Kurniawati & Koeswanti (2020)

The observation was carried out to obtain data in the overall social context that was concurrently related to the context of research on the implementation of the TaRL approach. Interviews were conducted with teachers who implemented learning using the TaRL approach. The interview was conducted so that researchers could find out how the teacher's perception of the implementation of learning so that researchers get input and improvements to the implementation of learning. Then, documentation was carried out to collect a large number of facts and data stored in materials in the form of documentation. Some of the available data were in the form of letters, diaries, souvenirs, reports, artifacts, photographs, and so on. The research data analysis used descriptive and inferential statistics through the Independent sample t-test. This testing process involved the help of SPSS data analysis software.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Description of Students' Literacy Skills

The result of student literacy skills based on the Pretest and Posttest in control and experimental classes is presented in figure 2.

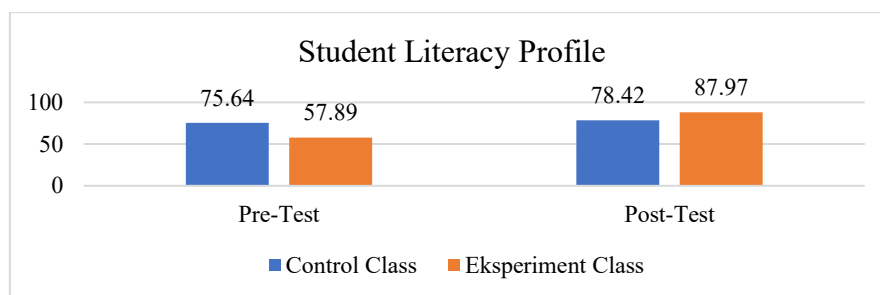


Figure 2. Profile of Students' Literacy Skills

The profile of students' literacy skills, as shown in figure 1, indicates that there are differences in the pretest and posttest results in the control class and the experimental class. The posttest results increased significantly in statistical calculations on the average student score. Furthermore, researchers used the SPSS version 23 to describe the results of the analysis as follows:

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest Control	36	55	92	2723	75.64	8.240
Posttest Control	36	33	96	2823	78.42	11.835
Pretest Experiment	36	32	87	2084	57.89	17.016
Posttest Experiment	36	76	100	3167	87.97	8.351
Valid N (listwise)	36					

The results of the descriptive analysis in table 3 show that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control classes in the pretest and posttest sections, which experienced an increase in statistical analysis. The results obtained indicated the difference in scores and average scores in the experimental class using the TaRL approach, with a score of 2084 rising to 3167 and then the average score from 57.89 rising to 87.97. the results obtained showed that there was an increase in the reading literacy skills of elementary school students.

3.1.2 Independent Samples T-Test

Table 4. Independent Samples T-Test

	Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Literacy skill results	Posttest control class	36	78.42	11.835	1.973
	Posttest experimental class	36	87.97	8.351	1.392

Table 5. Group Statistics

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Literacy skill results	Equal variances assumed	.441	.509	3.958	70	.000	-9.556	2.414	-14.371	-4.741
	Equal variances not assumed			3.958	62.928	.000	-9.556	2.414	-14.380	-4.731

Based on table 5, the level of testing independent samples t-test with the criteria obtained < 0.05 has an average difference with a value of sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05 , which is 0.000 with a value of sig 0.442. The conclusion that can be drawn based on the test decision is that the test has a difference in the average results of the posttest in the experimental and control classes.

3.1.3 Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing was conducted to prove the researchers' conjecture on the effect of the TaRL approach on elementary school students' literacy skills after giving treatment to the experimental class. The hypothesis followed several stages, namely preliminary studies, theoretical studies, and research results similar to the current research. The hypothesis proposed in this study is as follows:

H_a : The TaRL approach has an effect on the literacy skills of elementary school students.

H_0 : The TaRL approach has no effect on the literacy skills of primary school students.

Test the hypothesis of the average difference in the experimental class using t-test statistics (t-test-one-sample statistics). At the significance level (t-test-one-sample statistics), $\alpha = 0.05$ with testing criteria: H_0 is accepted, the significance value $> \alpha$ value, while in other circumstances, H_0 is rejected. For more clarity, it can be presented in table 6.

Table 6. Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest of experimental class	36	57.89	17.016	2.836
Posttest of experimental class	36	87.50	8.161	1.360

Table 7. One-Sample Test

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Pretest of experimental class	20.413	35	.000	57.889	52.13	63.65

Posttest of experimental class	64.33135 .000	87.500	84.74	90.26
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Based on table 7, the significance number obtained in the pretest and posttest of the experimental class is (sig) a < 0.05 , namely the number (sig) a = 0.000, so H_0 is rejected. In other words, the literacy skills of students in the experimental class are significantly different. Significant differences between students' literacy scores in pretest and posttest can also be seen in the mean difference with pretest ability, which is 57.889, while the score obtained in posttest learning of students' literacy ability is 87.500.

3.2 Discussion

The effectiveness of the TaRL approach can be seen from the acquisition of data from several stages of testing, namely normality and homogeneity tests, with the conclusion that the data obtained are normally distributed and homogeneous. Then, at the independent sample T-test stage, namely the test of the difference in the average value in the posttest of the control and experimental classes, the sig value (2-tailed) < 0.05 is 0.00, so the data shows that there is an average difference between the control class and the experimental class. Then, in the hypothesis testing stage using the One-Sample Test, the results obtained in the significance number on the pretest and posttest of the experimental class are (sig) a < 0.05 , namely the number (sig) a = 0.000 then H_0 is rejected, and H_a is accepted. In other words, the literacy skills of students in the experimental class are significantly different.

Based on the results of the acquisition of values obtained after the learning implementation process using the TaRL approach, the statistical analysis shows that there is a significant increase in the experimental class using the TaRL approach. The acquisition of the average value in the pretest and posttest sections in the control class has an increase in statistical numbers, still on a small scale. It can be seen that the average value of the pretest is 75.64, and the posttest is 78.42. These results show that learning using conventional approaches to improve the reading skills of elementary school students is not optimal enough for solving reading problems. This is indicated by the results of the statistical analysis obtained, which are not able to influence the improvement of the reading skills of elementary school students.

However, in the experimental class, the implementation of learning using the TaRL approach was seen from the statistical analysis in table 4. The acquisition of the average value at the time of the pretest, which was calculated as 57.89, increased by 87.97. based on the acquisition of the average value obtained in the experimental class, there is an influence and a significant increase in the reading ability of elementary school students. These results show that the implementation of the learning process using the TaRL approach can have a positive influence on improving the reading literacy skills of primary school students. This is supported by the concept of learning, which emphasizes the characteristics of students more so that the learning transformation process is treated according to the abilities of students.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the use of the TaRL approach can solve the problem of reading at the primary school level. By referring to the score obtained between the control and experimental classes, the experimental class

experienced a significant increase in reading ability compared to the control class, which had a small increase in reading ability.

Based on the research result, there is a significant change in the students' literacy skills. In this case, it is in line with the results of previous findings conducted by Janah, Yulianti, & Purnomo (2023), with the results of the research obtained in each aspect reaching > 80% with a very good category. Then, the results of research by Binaoui, Moubtassime, & Belfakir (2023) showed statistically high improvement results with a large effect size. Moreover, according to Ningsyih, Yulianci, Haryati, Syarifudin, Zulharman, & Ahyar (2022), the results of the research obtained as many as 78% of students have experienced an increase in the level of reading ability. Widodo & Indraswati (2022) also said that level-based learning shows an improvement in the learning process and an increase in student learning outcomes. According to Colle, Nurnia, & Rabiah (2023), the TaRL approach can provide convenience for teachers in the learning process; namely, teachers can more easily design strategies and learning media according to the level of student ability because the TaRL approach is a learning model designed to provide teaching to students based on their ability level, not by age level or grade (Listyaningsih, Nugraheni, & Yuliasih, 2023; Widodo & Umar, 2021). The use of learning models using the TaRL approach is an effort to resolve reading problems in the elementary school environment, considering that the character of learning that is built focuses more on the uneven abilities of each student. Thus, in the learning process, it is not treated according to the level of student ability.

It can be concluded that the TaRL approach affects improving student literacy. By comparing the results of previous findings with this study, the researcher found that the application of the TaRL approach is very effective in improving the literacy skills of elementary school students. The TaRL learning can be implemented consistently with full discipline because, in an effort to enhance students' literacy skills, if it is not emphasized with discipline, it will slow down the process of improving literacy. In this study, within one month used to the maximum, accounting for 12 meetings with 3 meetings a week, can improve the literacy achievement of elementary school students. This is because the implementation of the TaRL approach is disciplined and carried out continuously with a focus on reading and storytelling learning.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, the researcher can conclude that using the TaRL approach in the learning implementation process is part of the effort to solve the problem of reading literacy of elementary school students. Implementing the TaRL approach also encourages students to continually improve their reading skills, giving them space to express themselves. The active involvement of students in a learning process is a manifestation that illustrates the quality of teaching, so using the TaRL approach can improve it. In addition, the benefits for teachers in applying the TaRL learning concept can make it easier for teachers to control student progress related to reading skills, and teachers will be easy to choose the suitable method in the learning process. The use of the TaRL approach is highly recommended in an effort to improve student literacy. Further research is needed to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the TaRL approach.

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