

Analysis of Eighth-Grade Students' Difficulties in Learning Reading Skills of Arabic Texts in Class

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Abstract. Reading skills are one of the skills that play an important role in increasing students' insight, especially those related to Arabic insight. In learning reading skills, students experience various kinds of difficulties. In general, these difficulties are influenced by two main factors, namely internal factors and external factors. Difficulties in learning reading skills are problems that must be found solutions because they hinder learning to achieve their goals. This study aims to analyze the difficulties of grade VIII students of Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School in learning Arabic text reading skills, analyze factors both internal and external that affect student difficulties, and provide suggestions and input to teachers to solve these problems. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection through interviews and observations. The results of this study showed that the eighth-grade students of Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School experienced some difficulties in learning reading skills. Among these difficulties are: difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of hijaiyah letters, difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of harakat, difficulty in managing the short length of reading, difficulty reading Arabic text fluently, and difficulty in understanding the meaning of Arabic text. These difficulties are generally caused by two main factors, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include a lack of student interest, a lack of mastery of hijaiyah letters, a lack of vocabulary mastery as well a lack of grammatical understanding of Arabic. External factors include educational background, teachers, learning media, and curriculum. The solutions suggested by researchers to overcome these problems are as follows: collecting data on students who have difficulty reading, conducting special training, increasing student motivation to learn Arabic, providing and completing learning media, improving learning design and study time management, and repeating learning materials.

Keywords: learning difficulties 1; learning difficulty factors 2; reading skills 3; Arabic Language

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Abstrak. Keterampilan membaca merupakan salah satu keterampilan yang berperan penting dalam menambah wawasan siswa, khususnya yang berkaitan dengan wawasan kebahasaan Arab. Dalam pembelajaran keterampilan membaca, para siswa mengalami berbagai macam kesulitan. Secara umum kesulitan-kesulitan tersebut dipengaruhi oleh dua faktor utama, yaitu faktor internal dan faktor eksternal. Kesulitan-kesulitan dalam pembelajaran keterampilan membaca merupakan permasalahan yang harus dicari solusi, karena menghambat pembelajaran untuk mencapai tujuannya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesulitan siswa kelas VIII Sekolah Menengah Pertama Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Batanghari dalam pembelajaran keterampilan membaca teks bahasa Arab, menganalisis faktor-faktor baik internal maupun eksternal yang mempengaruhi kesulitan siswa, serta dapat memberikan saran dan masukan kepada guru untuk mengatasi permasalahan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan

kualitatif deskriptif dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara dan observasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa para siswa kelas VIII Sekolah Menengah Pertama Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Batanghari mengalami beberapa kesulitan dalam pembelajaran keterampilan membaca. Diantara kesulitan tersebut adalah: kesulitan dalam membedakan pelafalan huruf hijaiyah, kesulitan dalam membedakan pelafalan harakat, kesulitan dalam mengatur panjang pendek bacaan, kesulitan membaca teks bahasa arab dengan lancar, kesulitan dalam memahami makna teks bahasa Arab. Kesulitan tersebut secara umum disebabkan oleh dua faktor utama, yaitu faktor internal dan faktor eksternal. Faktor internal meliputi: kurangnya minat siswa, kurangnya penguasaan terhadap huruf hijaiyah, kurangnya penguasaan kosa kata serta kurangnya pemahaman gramatikal bahasa Arab. Faktor eksternal meliputi: latar belakang pendidikan, guru, media pembelajaran serta kurikulum. Solusi yang disarankan oleh peneliti untuk mengatasi permasalahan tersebut adalah sebagai berikut: mengumpulkan data siswa yang mengalami kesulitan membaca, melakukan pelatihan khusus, meningkatkan motivasi siswa untuk belajar bahasa Arab, menyediakan dan melengkapi media pembelajaran, memperbaiki desain pembelajaran dan manajemen waktu belajar, serta melakukan pengulangan materi pembelajaran.

Kata kunci: kesulitan belajar 1; faktor-faktor kesulitan belajar 2; keterampilan membaca 3; bahasa Arab 4

INTRODUCTION

Reading skills are one of the four skills that students must master in learning Arabic (Wargadinata et al. 2020; Zurqoni et al. 2020). Reading skills are the ability to read Arabic texts with fashih according to the place where Arabic letters, vowels, and rules come out and understand the contents of the text correctly (Ahmed Okasha 2020). Reading skills are one of the skills that play an important role in increasing students' insight (Qureshi et al. 2022), especially related to the vision of the Arabic language (Ritonga, Kustati, et al. 2021). This is because, by reading students can expand their knowledge (Ritonga, Widodo, et al. 2021), Such as knowledge about culture, socio-politics, and especially religion carried out independently by students (Alshaye 2021).

In learning Arabic, especially in learning reading skills, students still have many difficulties (Al Janaideh et al. 2020; Nurul Iskandar et al. 2021). These learning difficulties are not only experienced by students who take Arabic language learning in non-formal educational institutions such as

Pesantren (Khan et al. 2020), But it is also experienced by students who study in formal educational institutions such as junior high schools (Susanti, Tariq, and Carmelo 2023). One of them was experienced by students of Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School.

From the results of *a pre-survey* conducted by researchers at the Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School, several difficulties were found experienced by students, Especially eighth-graders in learning reading skills, including students stammering in reading Arabic texts, students difficulty in distinguishing some letter sounds, and students difficulty in understanding the meaning/intent of the reading text.

The difficulties experienced by students, especially eighth-grade students in reading Arabic texts, are one of the reasons researchers conducted research at the Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School. These difficulties are a big problem for teachers, especially eighth-grade Arabic teachers, in achieving their learning goals. In this study, researchers tried to discuss several problem formulations based on a brief description of the subject matter studied, including determining what are the difficulties of students in learning reading skills, what are the factors causing these difficulties, both internal and external, and what is the right solution to overcome these difficulties. Thus, this study aims to analyze students' difficulties in learning reading skills, analyze factors both internal and external that affect students' difficulties in learning reading skills, and provide suggestions and input to teachers to solve these problems.

Similar research has been carried out, including research conducted by Ela Isnani Munawaarah (Munawwaroh 2021), research conducted by M. Pakihun (Pakihun, Ritonga, and Bambang 2021), research conducted by Mualim Wijaya (Wijaya and Hikmah 2023), research conducted by Dinda Lestari Hamka (Hamka, Mantasiah, and Mariah 2021). The similarity of these studies lies in the object of research study, which both analyze

difficulties in learning reading skills. The difference between previous studies and this study lies in the results of the study.

Previous studies have not been able to fully present students' difficulties in learning reading skills accompanied by factors that cause these difficulties and solutions to overcome these problems. While in this study, researchers present the results of an analysis, about students' difficulties in learning reading skills, accompanied by factors that cause these difficulties, not forgetting researchers contribute solutions to overcome the problems that occur.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Difficulties Experienced by Students

From the results of research conducted by researchers at the Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School, with observation, interviews, and documentation, researchers found some difficulties in learning Arabic text reading skills experienced by eighth-grade students. These difficulties include difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of *hijaiyah* letters, difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of harakat, difficulty in managing the short length of reading, difficulty reading Arabic text fluently, and difficulty in understanding the meaning of Arabic text. In detail, these difficulties the researcher describes as follows:

Difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of hijaiyah letters

Based on the results of observations that have been made by researchers, it was found that students experienced problems in the form of difficulty distinguishing the pronunciation of *hijaiyah* letters, among the *hijaiyah* letters that are difficult to distinguish by students in pronunciation are ا letters with ع, ب with ي, ث with س, ش with ح, ح with خ, ح with ه, خ with غ, د with ذ, ز with ك, ق and ض with ظ.

The data is corroborated by the results of interviews conducted by

researchers with teachers and students. From interviews with eighth-grade Arabic teachers, researchers found that students had difficulty distinguishing the pronunciation of *hijaiyah* letters. From interviews with eighth-graders, researchers found that students on behalf of Baim had difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of the letters ح with خ, ح with ش, س with ث, students on behalf of Afif had difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of the letters ذ with د, ه with ح, ز with ن, students on behalf of Fedo had difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of the letters ظ with ض, students on behalf of Fahri had difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of the letters ع with ا, students on behalf of Diki had difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of the letters ث with س, ش with ض, ظ with ض, on behalf of Rafa had difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of the letters س with ش, ع with غ and غ with خ.

The data was then corroborated by observations on the documentation of the eighth-grade reading skills assignment value of the Insan Mulia Integrated Islamic Junior High School Batanghari.

Difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of harakat

Based on the observations made by researchers, it was found that students experienced problems in the form of difficulty distinguishing the pronunciation of harakat. The data is reinforced by the results of interviews conducted with teachers and students. From interviews with eighth-grade Arabic teachers, researchers found that the students had difficulty distinguishing the pronunciation of harakat. From interviews with eighth-graders, researchers found that students on behalf of Baim and Rafa had difficulty distinguishing the pronunciation of harakat.

The data was then corroborated by observations on the documentation of the eighth-grade reading skills assignment value of the Insan Mulia Integrated Islamic Junior High School Batanghari.

Difficulty in organizing short length of readings

Based on observations made by researchers, it was found that students experienced problems in the form of difficulties in managing the short length of reading. The data is reinforced by the results of interviews conducted with teachers and students. From interviews with eighth-grade Arabic teachers, researchers found that the students had difficulty managing the short length of the readings. From interviews with eighth-graders, researchers found that students on behalf of Fahri and Diki had difficulty in organizing the short length of readings.

The data was then corroborated by observations on the documentation of the eighth-grade reading skills assignment value of the Insan Mulia Integrated Islamic Junior High School Batanghari.

Difficulty reading Arabic text fluently

Based on observations made by researchers, it was found that students experienced problems in the form of difficulty reading Arabic texts fluently. The data is reinforced by the results of interviews conducted with teachers and students. From interviews with eighth-grade Arabic teachers, researchers found that the students had difficulty reading Arabic texts fluently. From interviews with eighth-graders, researchers found that students on behalf of Baim, Afif, and Rafa had difficulty reading Arabic texts fluently.

The data was then corroborated by observations on the documentation of the eighth-grade reading skills assignment value of the Insan Mulia Integrated Islamic Junior High School Batanghari.

Difficulty in understanding the meaning of Arabic texts

Based on observations made by researchers, it was found that students experienced problems in the form of difficulty understanding the meaning of Arabic texts. The data is reinforced by the results of interviews conducted with teachers and students. From interviews with eighth-grade Arabic teachers, researchers found that the students had difficulty understanding the meaning

of the Arabic text. From interviews with eighth-graders, researchers found that all students had difficulty understanding the meaning of the Arabic text.

The data was then corroborated by observations on the documentation of the eighth-grade reading skills assignment value of the Insan Mulia Integrated Islamic Junior High School Batanghari.

Factors Influencing Student Learning Difficulties

In general, the difficulties experienced by students in learning Arabic text reading skills are influenced by two main factors:(Daud et al. 2019), internal factors and external factors(Sanusi, Sauri, and Nurbayan 2020), Both of these factors were also found in the results of the study. Here is an explanation of the two factors, which researchers found in this study:

Internal factors

Lack of student interest

Based on observations during learning, several students are not serious about participating in reading lessons, are in and out of class, are in late attendance, and even sleep in class. A number showed little enthusiasm in learning reading skills. Some students think that learning Arabic is a boring lesson. This is in line with the findings of *pre-surveys* and interviews conducted by researchers at the research site.

Lack of mastery of hijaiyah letters

Mastery of hijaiyah letters including mastery of letter shapes, where letters come out, the nature of letters, and tajweed is very important in supporting students' ability to read Arabic texts. But at the junior secondary level, there are still many students who have not completed learning the tahsin of the Qur'an(Sawaluddin et al. 2022). In line with the results of the study, this also happened to several eighth-grade students who had not completed learning the Qur'an tahsin so in learning Arabic, especially reading Arabic texts they felt difficult.

Lack of vocabulary mastery

In learning Arabic at the elementary level, there are still many students who lack vocabulary mastery. As a result, several students are still confused when understanding Arabic texts, even though in learning Arabic at the junior secondary level, students only read and understand Arabic texts with simple vocabulary content (Kartel et al. 2022). In line with the results of the study, it also occurs in most eighth-graders who have difficulty understanding the meaning of Arabic texts due to a lack of mastery of vocabulary.

Lack of grammatical understanding of Arabic

In addition to the factor due to lack of vocabulary, there is the factor of lack of mastery of Arabic grammatical understanding. Syntax is part of Arabic grammar, which discusses how to read Arabic sentences correctly, by the rules that apply in Arabic (Abu-Rabia 2021). In addition to Syntax, Morphology, which is part of Arabic grammar, deals with the procedure for changing a word, from one form to another, to produce different meanings (Ritonga et al. 2022). The two sciences complement each other, especially in reading learning. Learning to read usually emphasizes the ability in the fields of syntax and morphology, so that Arabic sentences that usually do not have harakat can be read properly and correctly (Najjar 2020).

The Arabic script has differences from the Latin script. In Arabic, the writing starts from right to left. Letters in Arabic also have variations in writing when they are at the beginning, middle, or end of words. Some letters can be connected, and some letters cannot be connected. While in Latin writing it is written from left to right. Letters in Latin script also consist of only uppercase and lowercase letters. Seeing this difference, it will be quite difficult for Indonesians to write Arabic scripts (Eltay, Zidouri, and Ahmad 2020).

External factors

Educational background

The results showed that the eighth-grade students of Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School had different experiences

and backgrounds in learning Arabic. This can be found in the documentation of the identity of eighth-graders. The findings were reinforced by the results of interviews with teachers and students. The results of the study showed, that five students had an elementary school education background and had never received education in the Qur'an education park (foreigners with Arabic language learning and could not read the Qur'an), seventeen students with elementary school education backgrounds but had received education in the Qur'an education park (a little familiar with Arabic language learning but not good Qur'an reading), three students with an educational background in Integrated Islamic Elementary School or Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (already familiar with Arabic language learning but not good at reading the Quran), ten students with an educational background in Integrated Islamic Elementary School and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (already familiar with Arabic learning and good Quran reading).

Based on my experience and background in different Arabic language skills, problems in Arabic lessons, especially in reading learning. In line with the results of the study, eighth-grade students who lack experience in learning Arabic, have not been able or have not read the Qur'an well have difficulty in reading Arabic texts when Arabic learning takes place in class.

Teacher

Based on interviews with students and teachers, information was obtained that the eighth-grade Arabic teacher of Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School experienced several teacher changes. This affects student learning because each teacher has different methods, techniques, and media for learning.

Incomplete media

The next factor is the lack of complete learning media. The Arabic textbook used at the Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School is not feasible, even on some pages, some words and sentences are

difficult to read. This makes them less focused on listening because they are less free to pay attention to reading texts in books. In addition to the problem of not being like a textbook, students also do not have student worksheets, so the opportunity to repeat lessons at home by doing exercises cannot be done.

The next lack of learning media is the lack of infocus media. The existence of infocus should be able to replace the role of textbook media and also allow teachers to display slides containing interesting and memorable images that can bring students' understanding closer to something abstract such as giving meaning to an abstract vocabulary. Because the focus is more attention-grabbing for students and clearer for students to see than when looking at or reading Arabic textbooks.

The lack of complete learning media, which is less like an Arabic textbook, and the lack of *focus* on learning will affect the efficiency of reading learning in the eighth grade of Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School. The teacher will run out of energy to organize and keep the focus of students to pay attention to the reading text being read, so there are fewer opportunities to explain the material.

Unconducive study time

The next factor related to the curriculum is inappropriate class hours and a dense school curriculum. The Arabic class hour at eight is at 10:00, which is after the P5 activity. The time after the P5 activity is the time when students are quite tired and need a break.

Frustration on Problems Experienced by Students

Researchers interviewed a ninth-grade Arabic teacher at Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School. From these interviews, researchers get views on solutions to overcome the problem of reading skills in Arabic texts experienced by eighth-graders. The solutions are as follows:

Collecting data on students who have difficulty in reading

To deal with problems experienced by students, data is needed. The data

was collected to find out students who had learning difficulties and what difficulties they experienced.

Conducting special training

After data related to the problems experienced by students were collected, students who experienced difficulties in learning in the form of difficulties in distinguishing the pronunciation of *hijaiyah* letters, difficulties in distinguishing the pronunciation of harakat, difficulties in regulating the short length of reading, and difficulty reading Arabic texts fluently, were given special training, namely the Qur'an reading improvement program or were directed to attend special reading training Qur'an at TPA or directed to join boarding program.

Increasing student motivation to learn Arabic

Teachers should strive to increase the motivation to learn from their students. Because learning motivation is the main capital to carry out an activity, especially thinking activities such as learning. The role of Arabic as a religious language, namely as the language of the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet, is a special feature of Arabic that other foreign languages do not have. This privilege can continue to be used as an attraction by teachers to motivate students and students.

Motivation in the context of acquiring a second language (foreign language) is divided into two categories, namely integrative motivation and instrumental motivation (Escobar Fandiño, Muñoz, and Silva Velandia 2019). Integrative motivation entails a positive attitude of students towards speakers of the target language and its culture. As for instrumental motivation, which is the encouragement to learn the target language to get something important for his life, such as a good education, or a job that can guarantee his future.

So teachers can choose to motivate their students in these two ways. If teachers want to provide integrative motivation, they can convey the privileges of Arabic to their students such as conveying how beautiful the science of *balaghah* is, how beautiful the Qur'an is, and so on. If the teacher wants to

provide instrumental motivation, it can be by conveying what professions can be done by Arabic linguists, such as being a translator, being a Hajj guide, being able to work in an Arab country, and so on

Providing and completing learning media

Procurement of learning media is very important to support the implementation of an effective and efficient teaching and learning process (Dwijayani 2019). Proper use of media and good mastery of a teacher over the use of media are key factors in achieving learning objectives

Improving learning design and study time management

Good lesson planning and study time management are carried out to give direction to learning towards better learning goals, with little risk, and avoid uncertainty of learning outcomes or objectives.

Repeating learning materials

Today, many teachers are reluctant to repeat learning material, because of the assumption that students already understand the material that has been delivered before. Repetition of material is very useful for students, to strengthen their memory of the understanding of the material taught, even though they have understood the material before. Because the memory of students will be better if the lesson is repeated.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it is known that the eighth-grade students of Insan Mulia Batanghari Integrated Islamic Junior High School experienced some difficulties in learning reading skills. Among these difficulties are: difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of hijaiyah letters, difficulty in distinguishing the pronunciation of harakat, difficulty in managing the short length of the reading, difficulty reading Arabic text fluently, and difficulty in understanding the meaning of Arabic text.

The difficulties experienced by these students are generally caused by

two main factors, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include a lack of student interest, a lack of mastery of *hijaiyah* letters, a lack of vocabulary mastery as well a lack of grammatical understanding of Arabic. External factors include educational background, teachers, learning media as well and curriculum.

The solutions suggested by researchers to overcome these problems are as follows: collecting data on students who have difficulty reading, conducting special training, increasing student motivation to learn Arabic, providing and completing learning media, improving learning design and study time management, and repeating learning materials.

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