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The Effect Of Usıng Decodable Books On Early Lıteracy Abılıtıes Of Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of the use of decodable books on the early literacy skills of first-grade students at SDN Duren Jaya XII, Bekasi City. Early literacy skills are an important foundation for student success at the next level of education. However, in practice, many elementary school students still have difficulty understanding the content of reading because the teaching materials used have not been fully adapted to the early cognitive development stage. This condition encourages the need for innovation in learning media that is more friendly for beginning readers, one of which is through the use of decodable books. The method used in this study is quantitative with a quasi-experimental design. The study population consisted of 40 students in class I.A and 39 students in class I.B with a purposive sampling technique. The post-test score showed that the average of the experimental class (99.06, standard deviation 2.27) was higher than the control (94.00, standard deviation 7.77). The Mann-Whitney test produced asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) 0.002 < 0.05, with gain analysis showing a greater increase in the experiment (13.87) than the control (6.80). In conclusion, decodable books are more effective in improving early literacy, with a significant effect (p = 0.001 < 0.05). So it is concluded that the use of decodable books is better than books without special intervention to improve students' early literacy. In the Mann-Whitney test, the significance value is 0.001 < 0.05. So it is concluded that there is a significant influence between the use of decodable books on the early literacy skills of first-grade students at SDN Duren Jaya XII, Bekasi City.

Keywords: *Decodable Books; Early Literacy Skills; Quasi-Experimental Design*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh penggunaan buku ramah cerna terhadap kemampuan literasi dini siswa kelas I di SDN Duren Jaya XII Kota Bekasi. Kemampuan literasi dini merupakan fondasi penting bagi keberhasilan siswa pada jenjang pendidikan selanjutnya. Namun, pada praktiknya banyak siswa sekolah dasar masih mengalami kesulitan memahami isi bacaan karena bahan ajar yang digunakan belum sepenuhnya disesuaikan dengan tahap perkembangan kognitif awal. Kondisi tersebut mendorong perlunya inovasi media pembelajaran yang lebih ramah bagi pembaca pemula, salah satunya melalui penggunaan buku ramah cerna. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kuantitatif dengan menggunakan desain *quasi-experiment*. Populasi penelitian terdiri dari siswa kelas I.A berjumlah 40 orang dan kelas I.B berjumlah 39 orang dengan teknik pengambilan sampel *purposive sampling*. Skor post-test menunjukkan rata-rata kelas eksperimen (99,06, standar deviasi 2,27) lebih tinggi dari pada kontrol

(94,00, standar deviasi 7,77). Uji Mann-Whitney menghasilkan asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) 0,002 < 0,05, dengan analisis gain menunjukkan peningkatan lebih besar di eksperimen (13,87) dibanding kontrol (6,80). Kesimpulannya, buku ramah cerna lebih efektif untuk meningkatkan literasi dini, dengan pengaruh signifikan (p = 0,001 < 0,05). Sehingga disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan buku ramah cerna lebih baik dibandingkan dengan buku tanpa intervensi khusus untuk meningkatkan literasi dini siswa. Dalam uji *Mann-Whitney* menghasilkan nilai signifikansi 0,001<0,05. Maka disimpulkan terdapat pengaruh yang signifikan antara penggunaan buku ramah cerna terhadap kemampuan literasi dini siswa kelas I di SDN Duren Jaya XII Kota Bekasi.

Kata kunci: Buku Ramah Cerna; Kemampuan Literasi Dini; Rancangan Eksperimen.

INTRODUCTION

Early literacy is a fundamental skill that determines academic success at later levels. At this stage, children must master basic skills such as phonological awareness, letter recognition, and vocabulary comprehension, which form the foundation for reading and text comprehension. Failure to develop these skills in the early grades puts students at risk of falling behind in all areas of learning, given that reading is a key skill for accessing knowledge across subjects (Neuman and Moland, 2021). This situation is more worrying in countries with low literacy rates, where early reading support is still limited or not systematically structured.

To address the literacy gap at an early stage, educators and researchers have explored various instructional materials, including the use of decodable books. These are specially constructed texts that emphasize phonics patterns and predictable spelling-sound relationships, allowing beginning readers to practice decoding skills in a meaningful context. Unlike leveled readers, decodable book offer controlled vocabulary that matches the phonics rules students are learning, thus reinforcing their decoding ability and promoting reading confidence (Mesmer et al., 2021).

Recent research has suggested that integrating decodable book into early literacy instruction can significantly improve students reading fluency and word recognition, especially when used consistently alongside systematic phonics teaching (Cheatham et al., 2022). Studies also show that decodable texts are particularly beneficial for struggling readers or students with reading disabilities, helping them build automaticity in decoding and supporting comprehension development over time (Wanzek et al., 2023).

Despite these promising findings, the implementation of decodable book in elementary school settings remains limited in certain regions, and further empirical evidence is needed to validate their effectiveness across diverse learning environments. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effect of using decodable book on the early literacy abilities of elementary school students. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on evidence-based reading instruction and provide practical implications for teachers aiming to strengthen early literacy outcomes (Smith and Taylor, 2024).

In the early years of schooling, literacy development becomes a central focus of instruction, as students are expected to acquire basic reading and writing skills that will support their learning across all subjects. However, many students, particularly those in low-literacy environments or who receive inadequate instructional support, struggle with decoding and word recognition. These difficulties can persist and widen over time if not addressed with appropriate teaching methods (García and Cain, 2020). A lack of foundational

literacy at this stage often correlates with lower academic performance and diminished confidence in learning activities.

To address this challenge, educators have turned to structured literacy approaches that emphasize systematic phonics instruction and controlled vocabulary texts. One such resource is the decodable book, which is constructed to align closely with phonics patterns that children are currently learning. Decodable book allow students to read independently while reinforcing the phoneme-grapheme relationships introduced during lessons. This consistent reinforcement is especially effective for early readers in developing accuracy, fluency, and comprehension (Moats, 2020).

Moreover, research highlights the importance of combining decodable text with explicit and sequential phonics instruction. When implemented together, these strategies support neural pathways for reading and help children internalize decoding as an automatic process (Shaywitz and Shaywitz, 2021).

Additionally, decodable book can help minimize guessing habits and reliance on pictures or context cues, which are often ineffective for long-term reading development (Torgesen, 2022). Instead, children learn to rely on their understanding of sound-letter correspondences, which is a more stable and transferable skill.

Despite these advantages, the adoption of decodable book in early education remains inconsistent, particularly in countries or schools that prioritize whole-language approaches or use unstructured texts in early literacy programs. In many contexts, there is still limited awareness or understanding among teachers about the pedagogical benefits of decodable texts.

This gap calls for more empirical studies that not only test the effectiveness of decodable book but also raise awareness of their practical implications for teaching and learning. Therefore, this study aims to provide empirical evidence on how the use of decodable book affects early literacy abilities among elementary school students. It is hoped that the findings of this research can contribute to enhancing literacy instruction strategies and informing educators, especially in early grade classrooms, about the significance of text selection in building reading skills (Henderson and Lee, 2024).

Literacy is a thinking ability that aims to increase individual capacity in both intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects, which is developed through reading habits, so it is important to instill it from an early age (Aryanto et al., 2024). Literacy skills are essential for stakeholders in education, especially students, as they are closely linked to reading skills, which ultimately lead to the ability to understand information analytically, critically, and reflectively. Unfortunately, literacy often ranks low in the classroom. The level of literacy culture in Indonesia is considered very worrying based on the results of research conducted by Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) in New Britain, United States in 2016 which showed that Indonesia was ranked 60th out of 61 countries in the report The World's Most Literate Nations (Meliyanti et al., 2021).

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on ensuring equitable access to high-quality early literacy resources, particularly for students from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds. Decodable book have emerged as a promising tool for closing the literacy gap by offering structured and accessible content that aligns with phonics-based instruction (Reed and Vaughn, 2022). These books are especially beneficial for students who

may not have exposure to rich print environments at home, as they provide repeated practice with specific phonetic patterns, thereby promoting confidence and independence in reading.

Moreover, neuroscientific evidence supports the idea that structured, phonics-aligned texts such as decodable book help stimulate and strengthen the neural circuits responsible for word recognition and decoding fluency. A study by Peters and Greene (2023) indicates that young readers who engage regularly with decodable book show increased activation in brain regions associated with phonological processing, suggesting a neurological basis for their effectiveness. This finding underscores the importance of incorporating research-backed materials into early literacy curricula to optimize student outcomes.

Another dimension to consider is teacher preparedness and perceptions regarding the use of decodable book (Tortorelli, Lupo, and Wheatley 2021). While the benefits of these texts are well-documented, their success in the classroom often hinges on teachers' understanding of how to integrate them effectively within a broader literacy framework. According to Johnson and Lee (2024) professional development focused on phonics instruction and the use of decodable texts significantly enhances teacher confidence and fidelity in implementing evidence-based reading practices, leading to better student outcomes.

Furthermore, longitudinal studies have demonstrated the sustained impact of early exposure to decodable texts on students' literacy trajectories. As highlighted by Thompson et al. (2025), students who consistently engaged with decodable book in the early grades maintained higher reading achievement scores in subsequent years compared to peers who relied solely on leveled readers. This long-term benefit supports the argument for integrating decodable book as a core component of early literacy programs, rather than using them as supplementary materials.

Finally, the role of digital decodable book is gaining attention in today's technology-driven learning environments. Digital platforms offering interactive and adaptive decodable texts have shown promise in engaging young readers and providing personalized feedback to support phonics acquisition. A recent study by Lin and Hartono (2024), found that students using app-based decodable readers exhibited greater motivation and demonstrated improved decoding accuracy compared to those using traditional print texts alone. As educational technology continues to evolve, leveraging digital decodable resources may further enhance literacy instruction, particularly in remote or under-resourced contexts.

At the national level, the latest data from the 2022 Public Education Report of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology reveals that less than 50% of elementary school students in Indonesia are able to achieve the minimum competency standards in reading literacy. This empirical reality indicates that we are facing a serious literacy crisis. The problem of low literacy rates becomes even more complex when we recognize that basic literacy skills are actually an absolute prerequisite for mastering other competencies.

In this context, literacy learning innovation through Decodable Book emerged as a potential solution. According to the International Literacy Association (ILA), decodable book are book that can encourage children to develop their understanding of the alphabet, characterized by easy-to-understand text or images, suited to the abilities of children at the early and early reading stages (Book Guidelines and Grading, 2022). The words in the books are chosen to suit children's understanding at each age level, and the images are designed to

meet the developmental needs of different ages. Early childhood literacy book typically contain simple stories and use easy-to-understand words, complemented by colorful, varied illustrations to stimulate children's imaginations. This demonstrates that literacy-decodable book are highly responsive to children's needs and abilities, particularly in the context of literacy activities.

Reading ability is not only recognizing letters and words, but also involves various interrelated aspects, such as speaking ability, print awareness, background knowledge, vocabulary, literacy, and phonemic awareness (Haryanti and Tejaningrum, 2020). Among all these aspects, literacy is a key element that underlies children's literacy skills, referring to the understanding and use of written symbols in everyday communication, including children's ability to recognize letters, understand the relationship between letters and sounds, and apply this knowledge in reading and writing (Purnamasari et al., 2019). Previous research shows that storybook-based interventions rich in illustrations have a significant impact on the development of phonemic awareness in first grade elementary school students (Haryanti and Tejaningrum, 2020).

This research focus on SDN Duren Jaya XII, Bekasi City, which has never been the site of a study on the use of decodable books or the implementation of phonics-based reading instruction. The research focused on early literacy as the primary variable, encompassing letter recognition, syllable construction accuracy, and simple reading comprehension. Based on observations and initial interviews with elementary school teachers, the school library already has a variety of fiction and nonfiction books with a variety of themes, content, and lengths, which have the potential to support student character development. However, the collection is not fully tailored to the needs of early reading learning, as no decodable books were found, and teachers admitted to not understanding the concept or function of these books in supporting systematic decoding skills.

This situation indicates that the selection of reading materials in schools does not consider students' phonological abilities and cognitive development in the early stages of learning to read. On the other hand, research literature consistently indicates that decodable books play a crucial role in improving decoding accuracy, fostering reading fluency, and contributing to reading comprehension when integrated with systematic phonics instruction. A synthesis of various studies shows that the effectiveness of decodable books is not limited to native English-speaking contexts but is also relevant in bilingual and multilingual learning environments like Indonesia, where decoding support is essential in early literacy stages.

Research gaps are evident across empirical, conceptual, and practical areas. Empirically, there is still limited data on the implementation of decodable books in Indonesian public elementary schools, including at SDN Duren Jaya XII, which lacks a collection or application of decodable books in the learning process. Conceptually, the theory and application of decodable books have been largely developed in English contexts with distinct orthographic characteristics, necessitating studies in EFL contexts like Indonesia. Practically, systematic phonics instruction has not yet become a routine part of reading instruction at this school, creating a gap between early reading learning theory and ongoing learning practices. This gap reinforces the urgency of research to examine students' early literacy status, the availability and utilization of reading materials, and the implications of the lack of decodable books on the development of early reading skills at SDN Duren Jaya XII in Bekasi City.

The findings of this study are expected to enrich the science of early literacy pedagogy, particularly in the development of teaching materials. These results can also serve as a reference for education practitioners in selecting effective literacy learning media, especially in schools with low literacy rates, and serve as an empirical basis for the government in formulating more targeted education policies. This research aims to provide solutions to literacy problems that hinder students' access to knowledge and critical thinking skills. Therefore, efforts to improve literacy through innovations such as the decodable book are an investment in building a more intelligent, critical, and globally competitive Indonesian generation.

METHODS

Type and Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a quantitative approach using a pre-test or post-test control group design. This design was chosen because the researcher lacked full control over class randomization, as class assignments at SDN Duren Jaya XII were determined by the school at the beginning of the school year. Therefore, a quasi-experimental design was the most appropriate choice to assess the effect of using decodable books on early reading skills in a natural classroom setting, while still allowing the researcher to compare two groups receiving different treatments. The two groups used in this study consisted of an experimental group receiving treatment using decodable books, and a control group using regular reading materials without systematic phonics treatment.

Before the treatment, both groups were given a pre-test to measure their early literacy skills. Subsequently, the experimental group received an intervention in the form of reading lessons using decodable books for six 30-minute sessions. Treatment activities included basic phonics instruction, decoding practice based on the phonics sequence in the book, guided reading, and independent reading practice using texts whose level of control was adjusted to the students' phonological development. Meanwhile, the control group participated in regular reading lessons using general reading books available in the classroom without a controlled phonics structure. After all sessions were completed, both groups were given a post-test to measure improvements in early reading skills. Study uses an experimental design with a quantitative approach, known as the Pre-test Post-test Control Group Design, involving two groups of students, namely the experimental group and the control group, to measure differences in reading learning outcomes before and after being given treatment. In this study, both groups of students will undergo a Pre-test stage given to both groups to measure their initial early literacy abilities, where the experimental group (KE) was given treatment using decodable book, while the control group (KK) used ordinary reading book without special intervention, after treatment, both groups will be given a Post-test to assess the improvement in early literacy abilities in reading.

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Control Group Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment (X)	Post-test
K. Experiment	O1	X	O2
K. Control	O3	X	O4

Description:
KE: Experimental Group (treated group)
KK: Control Group (untreated group)
X: Treatment
O^1: Pre-test (experimental group)
O^2: Post-test (experimental group)
O^3: Pre-test (control group)
O^4: Post-test (control group)

The purpose of this study was to obtain and determine the differences in reading learning outcomes in decodable book between classes that implemented treatment and those that did not implement treatment in students of SDN Duren Jaya XII Bekasi City. The population used was all first-grade students of SDN Duren Jaya XII Bekasi City using purposive sampling technique, namely by selecting samples based on certain considerations to suit the research objectives. The sample in this study was selected based on students who had relatively similar abilities seen from the average value of students, namely each class was selected as many as 30 people from both class I.A and class I.B.

Data and Data Sources

Primary data is data collected directly by researchers from primary sources for specific research purposes. The primary data in this study are the results of pre-tests and post-tests conducted to measure students reading ability.

Secondary data is data that has been collected and processed by another party before being used in the research. This data is usually available in the form of reports, articles, books, or other published documents. In this study, the secondary data consisted of school documentation and observations of learning activities.

Data collection technique

1. Test

   Conducted in the form of a pre-test and post-test to assess students early literacy skills in beginning reading, using the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) instrument. This test covers letter recognition, syllable recognition, nonsense and meaningful word reading, and reading comprehension. Each test is administered individually and lasts approximately 15 minutes per student.
2. Observation

   This technique was carried out through systematic observation of students conditions and behavior to identify their reading ability levels. Initial observations were conducted prior to the study to obtain accurate data on the reading abilities of first-grade students at SDN Duren Jaya XII, Bekasi City.
3. Documentation

   This method involves collecting data from notes, books, documents, and agendas related to the school profile, classes, and student activities. Documentation also includes student learning outcomes and photographs taken during the research.

Analisis Data

Data was collected through written test and learning observations, which were then analyzed. Data analysis was conducted by researchers to process and summarize the data

collection for accurate interpretation. The research data was processed using data analysis techniques, and conclusions were then drawn. The data analysis techniques used in this study were:

1. **Normality test**
   The aim is to determine whether the data to be analyzed is normally distributed. In this study, the researchers used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, with the following criteria:
   a. If the Kolmogorov-Smirnov < a = 0,05, then H_0 is rejected.
   b. If the Kolmogorov-Smirnov ≥ a = 0,05, then H_0 is accepted.
2. **Homogeneity test**
   To determine whether the sample groups taken come from samples with the same variation, the criteria used to reject or accept H_0 are based on the Levenne Statistic Sig. as follows:
   a. If Sig. Levenne Statistic ≤ a = 0,05, then H_0 is rejected.
   b. If Sig. Levenne Statistic ≥ a = 0,05, then H_0 is accepted.
3. **T-test (Paired T-test or Independent T-test)**
   After the samples are normally distributed and come from the same variance, the samples are then tested using a T-test or Sign Test. The T-test is used to observe changes between the two groups being tested, provided that the sample size and ratio remain the same (Kim & Park, 2019). If the data is not normally distributed, the Mann-Whitney test is used to test the mean difference. The conclusion of the T-test is that if the value is < 0.05, H_0 is rejected, and if the value is > 0.05, H_0 is accepted.
4. **Mann Whitney test**
   The mean test used the Independent-Samples T-Test for non-parametric statistics (Man-Whitney U-Test) with a significance level of 0.05. The test criteria are as follows:
   a. If the significance value is > 0.05, then H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected .
   b. If the significance value is < 0.05, then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. **Pre-test and Post-test Results Data**
   a. Pre-test results data

   This is done by students before being given treatment with the aim of finding out the initial literacy skills that each student has.

Table 2. Data on Pre-test Scores for the Control Class and Experimental Class

No	Description	Score	
		Control	Experimental
1	Average (Mean)	85,06	85,20
2	Standard	6,46	10,35
3	deviation	41,85	107,2
4	Variance	24	52
5	Range	68	48
6	Smallest value	92	100
	Largest value		

After calculating the results of the pre-test of the literacy skills of students in the control class, the smallest score was 68 and the largest score was 92. With an average score of 85.06. Meanwhile, in the experimental class, the smallest score was 48 and the largest score was 100. With an average score of 85.20.

b. Post-test Results Data

The post-test was administered to assess students final literacy skills after the treatment. The following data shows the post-test results for the control and experimental classes.

Table 3. Post-test Score Data for the Control Class and Experimental Class

No	Description	Score	
		Control	Exprimental
1	Average (Mean)	94,00	99,06
2	Standard	7,77	2,27
3	deviation	60,41	5,16
4	Variance	28	8
5	Range	72	92
6	Smallest value	100	100
	Largest value		

After calculating the results of the post-test in the control class, the smallest value was 72 and the largest value was 100. With an average value of 94.00. Meanwhile, in the experimental class, the smallest value was 92 and the largest value was 100. With an average value of 99.06, a standard deviation of 2.27 and a variance of 5.16.

2. Normality Test Results

Data normality testing is performed to determine whether the data is normally distributed. The results of the pre-test and post-test data normality test can be seen in the table below:

Table 4. Results of the Pre-test and Post-test Normality Test

Class	Pre-test			Post-Test			Description
	N	Sig.	α	N	Sig.	α	
Control	30	0,001	0,05	30	0,000	0,05	Sig. *Shapiro-Wilk* < α
Experimental	30	0,000	0,05	30	0,000	0,05	Data is not normally distributed

The table above shows that the results of the pre-test and post-test normality tests for students in the control and experimental classes have a sig value smaller than the significance level (α) of 0.05 (Sig. < 0.05) so it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected, which means the results of the normality test for both classes are not normally distributed. Because the data is not normally distributed, a homogeneity test was not carried out.

Table 5. Results of the Normality *Gain* Test

Test	Class	Sig.	Description
Gain	Control	0,000	Not Normally Distributed
	Experimental	0,001	Not Normally Distributed

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test show a significance value for the control class of 0.000 < 0.05, thus rejecting Ho. Meanwhile, the significance value for the experimental class is 0.000 < 0.05. Therefore, both the control and experimental classes are not normally distributed because their values are less than 0.05.

3. Mann-Whitney test

Based on the normality test conducted on the post-test results of the control and experimental classes, it was found that the distribution was not normal. Therefore, a non-parametric statistical test using the Mann-Whitney test was used to test the hypothesis, as this non-parametric hypothesis test does not require the data to be normally distributed.

Table 6. Hypothesis Test Results for Pre-Test Scores in the Control Class and Experimental Class Using the Mann-Whitney Test

Mann-Whitney Test Data		Description
Sig. (2-tailed)	**A**	Sig.(2-tailed) < α
0,612	0,05	So is accepted

Referring to the table above, the significance value is 0.612 > 0.05. Therefore, H_o is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no difference in early literacy skills between the control and experimental classes. In other words, the abilities in the control and experimental classes are the same.

Table 7. Hypothesis Test Results for Post-Test Scores in the Control Class and Experimental Class Using the Mann-Whitney Test

Mann-Whitney Test Data		Description
Sig. (2-tailed)	**A**	Si Sig.(2-tailed) < α
0,002	0,05	So H_o is rejected, H_a is accepted.

The resulting significance value is 0.002 < 0.05, so H_o is rejected, H_a is accepted. This means that there is a difference in the average post-test score between the class that learned to read using decodable book and the control class with books without special intervention. It can be concluded that there is a significant influence between the use of decodable book on the early literacy skills of first-grade students at SDN Duren Jaya XII, Bekasi City.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate a clear difference in literacy skill development between students who used decodable book and those who used regular reading materials.

Although both the control and experimental classes started with similar average scores during the pre-test, the significant improvement shown in the post-test of the experimental class reveals the potential impact of using more accessible, student-friendly reading materials. This reinforces the understanding that early-grade reading achievement is not solely influenced by students cognitive readiness, but also heavily dependent on the appropriateness of instructional materials used in the classroom.

In early literacy development, the use of decodable book texts plays a vital role. These types of book are designed with controlled vocabulary, repetitive sentence structures, and meaningful illustrations all of which serve to reduce cognitive load for beginning readers. When children encounter texts that match their phonological awareness and vocabulary knowledge, they are more likely to engage actively with reading, build confidence, and experience comprehension success. Conversely, texts that are too complex or abstract may discourage struggling readers and hinder their progress. Therefore, the selection of teaching materials, especially in first-grade classrooms, must prioritize accessibility and alignment with developmental stages.

Furthermore, structured literacy environments that integrate visual support and oral reading strategies (such as read-aloud sessions) have been shown to significantly improve phonemic awareness and decoding skills. The interaction between text and illustration helps children construct meaning more effectively, while listening to fluent reading provides a model for pronunciation, intonation, and expression. These elements work synergistically to support early readers, especially in classrooms where student abilities may vary widely.

To support these findings, a number of recent studies have emphasized the importance of material selection and instructional strategy in literacy development. For instance, (Handayani and Purwanto, 2022). Found that the use of simplified texts with accompanying images could significantly enhance beginner reading performance. Similarly, (Sari and Ningsih, 2023). Observed that the use of read-aloud techniques not only increased comprehension but also improved classroom engagement and vocabulary retention among first-grade students.

In this study, the post-test average score of the experimental class reached 99.06, significantly higher than the 94.00 average of the control class. This suggests that decodable book, which are designed with simple, repetitive language and meaningful illustrations, provide better scaffolding for students learning to read. According to (Fauziah and Lubis 2022), reading materials that are adapted to the child's reading level help foster decoding skills and reduce reading anxiety, especially for students who are just beginning to develop literacy abilities. The consistency between text complexity and students phonological awareness allows for smoother reading experiences and higher comprehension levels.

Additionally, the implementation of read-aloud activities during the intervention phase contributed to the improvement in students literacy performance. Read-aloud sessions not only expose students to fluent reading but also stimulate listening comprehension and vocabulary development. This finding is supported by (Yuliana and Ramdani 2023), who emphasized that storytelling and read-aloud activities enhance student engagement and strengthen narrative understanding, particularly when supported with expressive intonation and teacher guidance.

The average pre-test score for the control class was 85.06 and the experimental class 85.20, indicating good initial literacy skills. However, the experimental class had a greater variation in ability. After treatment using the decodable book, the average post-test score for the control class increased to 94.00, while the experimental class reached 99.06, indicating a positive contribution to students literacy skills. The decodable book is effective in learning because it has a simple sentence structure and illustrations that support understanding according to (Aryanto et al., 2023) this book strengthens students character and improves literacy through relevant material. The read-aloud method also significantly contributes to literacy development, increasing student understanding and emotional engagement.

The normality test showed that the data were not normally distributed, so test was used to compare the pre-test and post-test. The results showed a significant difference between the two classes, with a sig value of 0.000. The hypothesis test using Mann-Whitney produced a sig value of 0.002, indicating that the use of decodable book was more effective than regular reading book. In conclusion, there is a significant influence of the use of decodable book on the early literacy skills of first-grade students at SDN Duren Jaya XII, Bekasi City, in line with research (Aryanto et al., 2023) studies show that the decodable book is effective in improving student literacy skills. With its simple sentence structure and supportive illustrations, this book helps students better understand the material and strengthens their character through relevant and contextual learning.

Another contributing factor to the success of decodable book in this study is their ability to foster independent reading habits among early learners. When student are able to decode words with minimal external help, they tend to develop a sense of autonomy and ownership over their reading journey. This independence builds self-confidence and encourages students to engage more frequently with texts, which in turn reinforces literacy skills through repeated exposure. As highlighted by Thomas and Wijaya (2023), students who feel empowered to read independently are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation and exhibit sustained reading behaviors over time.

In addition, classroom environments that support differentiated instruction where materials like decodable book are matched to students specific reading levels have been shown to be particularly effective in mixed-ability settings. This study reflects that approach, allowing learners with different proficiency levels to progress at their own pace. According to Rahmawati and Chen (2024), differentiated reading instruction using level-appropriate and phonics-based resources contributes to more equitable literacy outcomes, especially for students at risk of reading failure in early grades.

Moreover, the integration of student-centered reading practices such as peer reading and guided small-group sessions using decodable texts amplifies the impact of phonics instruction by adding elements of collaboration and support. These social interactions enhance language development and deepen understanding, particularly when students are encouraged to discuss the content of the book they read. Research by Nugroho and Allen (2022), indicates that combining structured texts with cooperative learning strategies leads to improvements in oral language skills and reading comprehension, making literacy instruction more holistic and engaging.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the decodable book significantly improves the early literacy skills of first-grade students at SDN Duren Jaya XII, Bekasi City. The average post-test score for the experimental class reached 99.06, higher than 94.00 for the control class. Mann-Whitney test showed significant differences (sig 0.000 and 0.002), confirming the book effectiveness compared to regular reading book. With its simple sentence structure and supporting illustrations, the decodable book not only improves student understanding but also strengthens their character.

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