

Teaching Skills for Intellectual Disabilities Students in India

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Abstract

Reading is important in the process of acquiring knowledge, therefore in basic education students are taught reading, writing and arithmetic. However, the reading ability of children in regular schools in India is very low, based on the results of a study by The International Association for the Evaluation Achievement, on all children in the world in 2015 showing that on average Indian children are in 41st place out of 45 countries in the world. Still the same source, research on 4323 grade 3 students showed that 50% of students could read but only half of the results understood the content of the reading. This reading ability is much lower in intellectual disabilities children where the results of studies in one special school are 92.16% cannot read. This is because the reading method used so far is not in accordance with the structure of the Indian language, so it is difficult for children to be able to read. This research uses a qualitative method and a literacy study. The purpose of this study is to analyze the causes of the low reading ability of intellectual disabilities students in India.

Keyword: method, reading, intellectual disabilities

Introduction

Reading is a complex skill as a prerequisite for living in a society, where a lot of information is communicated in written form (Rayner & Reichle, 2010). The first step to being able to read and write is to have linguistic awareness and a writing system to transcribe (Mann, 1993). It serves to understand the rules of the relationship of letters and the order of letters into spoken words and the alphabetic writing system takes advantage of the fact that spoken words can be broken down into phonological units called phonemes. This is in line with Diana Mahoni's statement in her paper that two components of spoken language for written language are very important, namely sound and meaning. Written language is always a representation of one or the other, for example, representing sound components called phonemes, representing sound components called syllables, representing meaning components called morphemes (Mahony, Singson, & Mann, 2000).

Teaching reading is easy because along with the cognitive development of students (Ampuni, 1998), but this does not happen to students with disabilities, this can be seen from the data in one special school, the number of all students is 105 and 60.95% do not. can read, 23.80% fluent in reading, 13.33% in beginning reading and 1.90% fluent in reading but not meaningful. Details of data on students who cannot read are 1.56% blind, 7.81% deaf, 73.53% mentally retarded, 4.68% physically disabled and 12.50% autistic. Intellectual disabilities students cannot read at the elementary, junior high and high school levels. The inability to read in students with other disabilities is caused by intellectual disorders, therefore it can be said that those who have difficulty reading are due to intellectual barriers. Reading ability is influenced by intellectual capacity, this is conveyed by Carver (1990) intelligence is an important causal factor that affects reading ability, this is in line with what was conveyed by (Stanovich, Cunningham, & Feeman, 1984) in his paper saying that there is

a relationship between intelligence with reading skills. Intelligence is a general mental ability that functions to reason, solve problems, and learn. Due to its general nature, intelligence integrates cognitive functions such as perception, attention, memory, language or planning.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that intellectual capacity affects a person's reading ability, thus if someone has intellectual disabilities, it is certain that they have low reading skills. This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Koritsas & Iacono (2011), individuals with intellectual disabilities, trying hard in learning to read, in a large-scale survey, reading difficulties in individuals with intellectual disabilities as the most common secondary condition, namely 67% of the sample. (Channell, Loveall, & Conners, 2013). Secondary conditions are defined by experts as conditions that can be prevented. Research states that reading difficulties in children with intellectual disabilities can be prevented, this is in accordance with research conducted by (Joseph & Seery, 2004) The literacy potential of individuals with intellectual disabilities has been underestimated by many educators and researchers, even though they have the ability to understand and generalize. phonetic analysis of skills from one context to another.

This potential allows educators to teach reading to students with intellectual disabilities, but the facts show that there are still many who cannot read, this can be caused by inappropriate learning methods or lack of understanding of the potential of children. According to (Joseph & Seery, 2004) teachers of students with intellectual disabilities should consider including teaching about letter-sound relationships, as well as prerequisite skills such as phonemic awareness

in their literacy programs. The intellectual disabilities process the information received slowly (Baumeister & Kellas, 1968). Fast and slow response to information on intellectual disabilities depends on the amount and form of information received. The intellectual disabilities can remember image information well, this can be seen in the intellectual disabilities ability to recognize icons, for example intellectual disabilities people know the YouTube icon on smartphones, laptops, computers or 2D images, thus intellectual disabilities people can generalize the meaning and function of the icon. Research conducted by (Cihak, McMahon, Smith, Wright, & Gibbons, 2015) tested the use of e-mail on intellectual disabilities students, the results of this study were that all participants succeeded in accessing, compiling, and responding to e-mails and successfully generalizing the ability to use e-mail on various platforms. This potential can be used for learning, where general image-based learning is easy to generalize with intellectual disabilities. Thus we need the right method to teach reading to the mentally retarded. Research on reading methods for intellectual disabilities students has been carried out, one of which was conducted by Laurice M. Joseoh and Mary Ellen Seerya, with the results showing that the potential of intellectual disabilities individuals related to reading has been underestimated by many educators and researchers. The findings of this study indicate that the intellectual disabilities have the ability to understand and generalize phonetic analysis from one context to another (Joseph & Seery, 2004). These findings illustrate that intellectual disabilities students can be taught reading if they use appropriate methods and techniques.

Research methods

The research method used is qualitative and literacy studies. The place of research is at the Cinta Asih SLBN, with the research subjects being all 105 Cinta Asih SLBN students. The details are as follows: TKLB is 1 person, SDLB is 67 students, SMPLB is 19 students and SMALB is 18 students. There are 51 intellectual disabilities students. To find out the objective condition of reading ability in intellectual disabilities students, interviews were conducted with 12 homeroom students of intellectual disabilities students. Analysis using Miles and Huberman.

Findings and Discussion

The objective condition of reading ability is carried out in one special school, initial SLBCA. Data were obtained by observing and interviewing all teachers in the school, the total number of students was 105 people. Based on the results of observations and interviews with each homeroom teacher at SLBCA, the results are as follows:

Data on students who cannot read are described based on disabilities with the following details:

Blind	: 1 student (1.56%)
Deaf	: 5 students (7.81%)
Mental retardation	: 47 students (73.43%)
Physical disability	: 3 students (4.68%)
Autism	: 8 students (12.50%)

The number of intellectual disabilities students is 51 students out of 105 students, 47 or 92.16% of intellectual disabilities students cannot read. The data shows that most of the intellectual disabilities students cannot read. This problem is in accordance with what was conveyed by (De Jonge & De Jong, 1996) working memory capacity and reasoning ability affect reading ability. Because intellectual disabilities students have low intellectual abilities that affect working memory and reasoning, this opinion is in line with (Chussurur, Hidayat, & Agustin, 2011) that intelligence affects coding and sensors to short-term memory. The speed of encoding affects the ability to remember the information received.

The large number of intellectually disabled children who cannot read can be caused by the inaccuracy of teaching reading to intellectually disabled children, namely not considering the weaknesses and potentials of intellectually disabled children in reading skills. According to (Channell et al., 2013). Orthography is a reading skill that is consistent with the level of verbal ability and is not a specific barrier to the acquisition of reading skills. Orthography is a spelling system of a language in the form of writing or symbols. Orthography includes problems of spelling, capitalization, word beheading, and punctuation (Wahyu Agustina, 2014). If orthographic problems are not a barrier, this ability can be a potential for intellectually disabled students to learn to read. However, this potential has not become an important thing that must be known by educators so that most educators take the reading method that is not appropriate.

Spelling in learning English is separate from learning to read and is a different process from reading, the ability to spell depends on the level of phonological awareness skills (Lewis, Freebairn, & Taylor, 2002). Spelling is a strengthening of letter-sound associations and it is not very important in the reading process especially for children with expressive speech sound disorders. In learning Indian, spelling is part of learning to read beginning. Teaching reading at the beginning by spelling is an absorption from the teaching of reading in the Dutch era. The structure of Indian and Dutch is different, the Dutch language consists of elements of letters (Soewargana & Singgih, 1963). The five methods above are methods taken from learning to read Dutch, so that it causes difficulties in adapting Indian reading teaching. The difficulty of learning to read for intellectually disabled children today is that they require children to understand (analyze) that sentences consist of words and words consist of syllables, then syllables consist of letters. This becomes the hypothesis of failure and slow reading in children. Children with intellectual disabilities will find it easier if the

writing is read according to what is spoken, especially if it is in the form of symbols that represent objects.

Based on the results of the homeroom interview, there were intellectual students with the initials R, this student could not read but could sign and communicate with deaf students, and a graphic design champion, R could remember icons on computers and smartphones. This is in accordance with the statement of (Alfredsson gren, Kjellberg, & Hemmingsson, 2020) The ability to recognize icons was clearly seen in intellectually disabled participants who had difficulty reading, even though using more than one device. This can be a superior potential for students with intellectual disabilities, that intellectuals with disabilities have visual awareness, especially discrimination and visual memory. Interviews about reading difficulties and media with the same 12 teachers yielded the following data:

Table. Difficulties and Reading Media for Intellectual Students with Disabilities

1	AN	Child not focus	Cards, books, posters
2	SC	Limited time	Syllable and word cards
3	EM	Easy to forget and change letters	Syllable and word cards
4	IR	Don't want to take lessons	Laptop to view pictures
5	AM	students often forget	Laptop to view pictures
6	SA	students often forget	Read books, flash cards, letter puzzles
7	SN	Read complex syllables (bru-swa-brom)	Read books, textbooks
8	EN	Difficulty stringing letters into syllables or words	Picture card media, video and reading text
9	IY	Difficulty stringing letters	Letter card media
10	MH	students often forget, Child not focus	Depends on the method used
11	AS	students often forget	Draw letters with attractive colors
12	SK	Not all words can use pictures, for example conjunctions	Letter image card media

Five teachers mentioned that reading difficulties are often forgotten, intellectual disabilities have difficulty in remembering and processing information because the working memory of intellectually disabled people is different from people in general (Henry & Maclean, 2002). While four teachers stated that reading difficulties were stringing letters into syllables and words, the difficulty of forgetting and arranging letters into syllables was a common problem faced by intellectuals with disabilities in reading, this is a weakness that teachers must pay attention to in choosing a method. In addition, teachers do not pay attention to reading prerequisites in children, before children are taught to read children must already have linguistic awareness and visual perception (Rochyadi, 2010), if the prerequisites have not been met, then the teaching of reading is not directly related to reading material, the teacher must teach reading prerequisites first.

Based on the data above, the superior potential of intellectually disabled students in reading is that intellectuals with disabilities have visual awareness, namely discrimination and visual memory, especially image-based. While the weakness in reading is often forget and difficult to assemble letters into syllables and words. Thus, it can be concluded that the large number of intellectually disabled children at SLBN Cinta Asih cannot read because the reading method used is the spelling and syllable method, and does not see the potential and weaknesses of the students.

The reading method in India is divided into 2, namely the initial reading method and the advanced reading method. The initial reading method is intended for children who have just learned to read. The reading methods that are widely used by teachers in India are spelling, syllable, word, global and SAS methods. The spelling method is learning to read the beginning that begins with spelling letters. Students are introduced to letter symbols. The stages of the spelling method consist of recognizing letters/alphabets and recognizing letter sounds (Halimah, 2014). The spelling method becomes a reference for Beginning Reading and Writing Learning (MMP) with the learning stages, namely by introducing letters. The letters were asked by students to be memorized according to their sounds, then followed by practice activities to write letter symbols. After memorizing the letters the students continued by combining two letters into syllables, and then into words. There are many weaknesses in the spelling method for reading the beginning, one of which was conveyed by (Yohana, ., & Uliyanti, 2015), remembering letter symbols and combining them into words requires a long process and children will forget if they are not repeated. In addition, according to (Soewargana & Singgih, 1963), the spelling method was taken from the Netherlands, where the Dutch language structure can be spelled, while the Indian language structure is different from the Dutch. So it is natural that students have difficulty and take a long time when learning to read with the spelling method. The spelling method is even more difficult to apply to learning to read for intellectually disabled students, this method requires children to be able to remember and analyze, children must understand that syllables consist of letters and so on, besides that children must analyze when there is a difference in the

sound of the phoneme with what is written, for example when written in the syllable ba, if it matches the writing and pronunciation, it should be written bea, the Indian structure that causes this. It is possible that one syllable in Indian is a phoneme.

Methods All the methods described above have a decomposition process, even though the decomposition includes an analytical process as clearly stated in the SAS method, the analysis that must be carried out in the four methods is not an analysis that is appropriate for the age of the child, the analysis leads to a linguistic analysis.

The analysis that must be mastered by the child in this method is that the child must understand the difference between the sound of the phoneme and what is written, the child must understand that this sentence is a unity of small components, namely words, syllables and letters. The complexity of this method can be analogized if we teach a car, then we explain that this car consists of many parts, namely mirrors, steering wheel, tires, engine, and so on. Finally, children are more concerned with the small parts of the car but do not know the functions and benefits of the car itself. In reading children, it is complicated with sentence parts, so that when they can read they will go through a long stage, and children have difficulty interpreting reading, for that reason it is natural that in many schools students have difficulty answering questions about story questions in various lessons due to errors in early reading learning.

The complexity of the process of using the reading method that requires students to analyze has resulted in many students in the advanced class still lagging behind in reading, this happens to students in regular schools, this difficulty will be higher for students who are in extraordinary schools who have the complexity of acquiring language, let alone for students with intellectual disabilities, where these children have limited thought processes because their IQ is below normal. With the description above, it is necessary to reform the early reading learning method in India in order to increase the reading ability of students in India, especially for students with disabilities who have more complex barriers.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the superior potential of intellectually disabled students in reading is that intellectuals with disabilities have visual awareness, namely discrimination and visual memory, especially image-based. While the weakness in reading is often forget and difficult to assemble letters into syllables and words. The difficulty of learning to read for intellectually disabled children today is that they require children to understand (analyze) that sentences consist of words and words consist of syllables, then syllables consist of letters. This becomes a failure and slow reading in children. Children with intellectual disabilities will find it easier if the writing is read according to what is spoken, especially if it is in the form of symbols that represent objects. Thus, it can be concluded that the large number of intellectually disabled children cannot read due to the reading methods used, namely spelling syllables, global words and SAS methods, where these methods are not appropriate for use by intellectuals with disabilities who have weaknesses in analysis.

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