Correlation of The Application of *Teaching At The Right Level* (Tarl) With Students' Basic Literacy Outcomes

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the correlation between the implementation of the TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) approach and the improvement of grade I students' basic literacy learning outcomes. Using a quantitative correlational method, the study involved 25 students grouped into four ability levels: Special Intervention, Basic, Proficient and Advanced. The test results showed that 17 students were at the Special Intervention level, 1 student at the Basic level, 7 students at the Advanced level and none at the Proficient level. Meanwhile, to get data on learning outcomes, students were given multiple choice questions to measure their abilities. Data analysis using the Pearson Product Moment test showed a correlation value of 0.812, which is higher than the critical value of 0.396 at the 5% significance level. This indicates a very strong correlation between the application of TaRL and the improvement of basic literacy learning outcomes based on correlation interpretation. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0: no correlation) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1 : correlation) is accepted. In conclusion, the application of the TaRL approach is positively related to the improvement of students' basic literacy learning outcomes, demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach in literacy learning.

Introduction

Since the launch of the Merdeka Curriculum after the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the Indonesian government has continued to improve the quality of education to prepare for the Golden Indonesia 2045. One focus is to improve students' basic literacy skills based on global literacy evaluations. The literacy evaluation is held by international institutions, one of which is the Program for International Students Assessment (PISA). The institution conducts regular evaluations every 3 years by the Organization for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) which is attended by students from all over the world aged 15 years (OECD, 2019). Various information can be obtained after the PISA results are published about 1 year after the test, such as the quality of education, both at the student level and school level. Based on this,

the PISA 2022 data, which was released in 2023 yesterday, placed Indonesia in 71 out of 81 countries surveyed, with a score, especially in reading literacy, of 359 (OECD, 2023). This figure is relatively low, so there needs to be an appropriate solution to improve the quality of education in Indonesia

Literacy refers to an individual's ability and skill in reading that is required on a daily basis (Sunaryati et al., 2024). Literacy is the process of absorbing knowledge-based information from texts and oral with the aim of improving children's cognitive abilities through reading and writing (Wahyuni & Darsinah, 2023). Literacy is a process of learning process that is carried out comprehensively to identify, understand information, communicate, and compute using printed and written materials in a variety of contexts (Lestari et al., 2021). Along with the rapid development of education, basic literacy in reading and writing has become an essential skill that is very important in this modern era. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture defines reading and writing literacy as knowledge and skills in reading, writing, searching, browsing, processing and understanding information. With this literacy, students are expected to be able to analyze, respond to and utilize written texts to achieve goals, develop understanding and potential, and participate in the social environment. Reading literacy is claimed to contain important meaning in language skills (Sari, 2020). Reading and writing literacy is the ability to be proficient in literacy, writing, searching, manipulating and processing information data (Maryono et al., 2021). Literacy is said to be something very important, considering that literacy skills help individuals to navigate a variety of complex information and make the right decisions (Dadang & Damaianti, 2021). Reading literacy is referred to as an influence on patterns of thought and action, to support professional self-development, problem solving and self-confidence (Rintaningrum, 2019).

Education plays a vital role in shaping the future of individuals and society as a whole. However, a major challenge often faced by education systems is ensuring that every student receives learning that is appropriate to their abilities and needs. The concept of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) has emerged as an innovative approach to address this challenge. This method emphasizes the importance of tailoring the learning process according to each student's level of understanding, thus ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in the educational process. Pedagogically, it focuses on assessing students' basic abilities and customizing learning strategies according to individual or small group needs (Hiryanto, 2017). TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level), first introduced by the Pratham Education Foundation in India, has shown significant results in improving basic reading and math skills among disadvantaged students (Pratham, n.d.). TaRL has been adapted and applied in various countries with different educational contexts, demonstrating its flexibility and effectiveness in improving learning outcomes. TaRL is learning done by considering learners' level of learning readiness, rather than just following a predetermined class structure. It emphasizes the adaptation of learning approaches according to learners' individual developmental stages (Kemdikbud, 2024). This approach focuses on learning that is tailored to each student's ability level, not just based on the class they are enrolled in.

In Indonesia, TaRL is adopted as part of the Merdeka Curriculum, which is a new national curriculum that emphasizes the learning climate not only on student development, but also on improving teachers' capacity in implementing learning in schools (Wahyudin et al.,

2024). With applications in schools such as SD Unggulan Hamzanwadi which uses this approach in the After School class program. The program is a form of school effort to improve the quality of student learning. The diverse abilities of students are a challenge for teachers to provide appropriate learning for students. With a large number of students, classroom management becomes the most important part, so that students get effective learning. Previously, educators assessed students to determine their initial abilities. Students are grouped based on initial abilities according to the results of the assessment, after which they enter the After School class learning program to optimize student learning. This study aims to explore the extent to which the TaRL approach has an impact on students' basic literacy learning outcomes at the school.

Research Method

This research uses a quantitative approach, which involves the use of numerical data and statistical analysis to describe and analyze social phenomena, behavior, and views of individuals or groups based on the philosophy of positivism, which assumes that phenomena can be classified, measured, and observed concretely, aiming to test hypotheses that have been formulated using statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2017). The research design used is correlational, a quantitative method that aims to evaluate and measure the relationship between variables based on the correlation coefficient, useful for observing the relationship between changes in various variables, especially in complex studies or those that are not possible to do with experimental methods (Abdullah et al., 2022).

The research was conducted at Hamzanwadi Primary School located in Selong, East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. The school has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum system. The sample of this study consisted of 25 students. In determining the sample, the researcher used the Simple Random Sampling method. Simple Random Sampling is an approach that uses each member of the population to be at the same opportunity to be selected as part of the sample called (Sugiyono, 2022). The data collection process is divided into two ways, namely tests and documentation. Data collection using tests is divided again into two stages, namely a test to determine the initial ability of students' basic literacy, using the KoboToolbox Literacy Assessment System Application (ASI-ASLI) instrument, and a learning outcome test by giving 10 items. Meanwhile, data obtained from documentation, in the form of school profiles, the number of educators, and students.

Data analysis was conducted using a quantitative approach. The first step taken was the data normality test, which was carried out using the Chi-Square method. This normality test aims to ensure that the data used in the study follow a normal distribution, which is an important requirement before proceeding to hypothesis testing (Suryani et al., 2019). To test the proposed hypothesis, the Pearson Product Moment statistical test was used. This test is used to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, namely the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach and the improvement of basic literacy learning outcomes of grade I students at Hamzanwadi Unggulan Elementary School. The hypothesis proposed is H_0: There is no relationship between the TaRL approach and the improvement of basic literacy learning outcomes of grade I students at Hamzanwadi Unggulan Elementary School. H_1: There

is a relationship between the TaRL approach and improving the basic literacy learning outcomes of grade I students at Hamzanwadi Unggulan Elementary School.

Result and Discussion
TaRL Identification and Implementation Process

This study identified and grouped students based on their initial ability or basic literacy level as a form of implementation of the TaRL approach (Mubarokah, 2022). This process was carried out using the KoboToolbox ASI-ASLI application, an open-source application that provides users with the opportunity to conduct surveys and collect data in real-time (Poloju et al., 2022). The use of the application allows researchers to collect data related to students' literacy skills in a more structured and efficient manner. Based on the test results, out of 25 students, 17 students fell into the Special Intervention category, 1 student was at the Basic level, and 7 students reached the Proficient level, while no students were at the Proficient level.

The data obtained from this identification process was initially qualitative data, which was then converted into quantitative data. This conversion was done by giving an ordinal scale to each student's basic literacy level. An ordinal scale is a type of measurement mapping variable categories by showing the difference in levels between these categories by indicating that one category is higher or lower than another category and using numbers as a representation (Syafril, 2010). The ordinal scale is used to rank or sort values based on certain attributes from highest to lowest (Misbach, 2013). The ordinal scale is a measurement scale that not only states the category but also states the rank being measured (Nurhasanah et al., 2022). Giving an ordinal scale aims to make it easier for researchers to process data, allowing for more in-depth and measurable statistical analysis.

Data Analysis Results

Students who have been grouped, then researchers give 10 questions to measure the achievement of students' basic literacy learning outcomes. Each question given has a weight of 10 points for each correct answer, so the maximum score that students can get is 100 points. This assessment provides a clear quantitative picture of students' basic literacy skills, which can then be further analyzed to see the effect of the approach used in the learning process. Using this data, researchers can evaluate the effectiveness of the learning approach applied and identify the relationship between students' initial literacy level and their improved learning outcomes.

The data normality test in this study was carried out using the Chi-Square method. This test aims to determine whether the data obtained is normally distributed. Based on the test results, the data is declared normally distributed if the $X2calculated < X2tabel$. In this study, the significance value obtained was $0.01 < 0.05$. This shows that the data has a normal distribution, because there is a significant relationship between the two variables tested.

Table 1. Data Normality Test Table

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	33,163[a]	18	,016
Likelihood Ratio	38,190	18	,004
Linear-by-Linear Association	15,840	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	25		

To test the proposed hypothesis, the Pearson Product Moment test was used, which measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. The test results show that the rcount value is greater than rtabel which is $0.812 > 0.396$. Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, which states thatthere is a significant relationship between the two variables, and the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected.

Table 2. Hypothesis Test Table

Correlations			
		TaRL	**Hasil Belajar**
TaRL	Pearson Correlation	1	,812[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	25	25
Hasil Belajar	Pearson Correlation	,812[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	25	25
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

When viewed from the correlation interpretation table, the rcount value of 0.812 indicates a very strong correlation strength. This indicates that there is a strong and positive relationship between the variables tested in this study.

Table 3. Correlation Interpretation

Coefficient Interval	Relationship Level
0,00 – 0,199	Very Weak
0,20 – 0,399	Weak
0,40 – 0,599	Medium
0,60 – 0,799	Strong
0,80 – 1,000	Very Strong

Source: Sugiyono (2017)

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, there is a positive correlation between the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach and the basic literacy learning outcomes of grade I students at Hamzanwadi Unggulan Elementary School. The hypothesis test results show that the calculated rrr value of 0.812 is greater than the rrr table value of 0.396 at the 5% significance level, indicating a significant relationship between the two variables. This study indicates that the implementation of a targeted learning approach, such as TaRL, has a positive impact on students' learning process, especially in basic literacy. Conversely, if this approach is not supported by important factors such as teaching media and teacher competence, then the correlation may be weak or even insignificant, which will have a negative impact on student learning outcomes. This conclusion underlinesthe importance of full support in the implementation of the TaRL approach to achieve optimal results.

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