



(MUDIMA)



## Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Determining the Main Idea of Narrative Reading Text in Class IV SD Inpres 1 Birobuli

Ma'sita<sup>1\*</sup>, Herlina<sup>2</sup>, Nuraini<sup>3</sup>, Zulnuraini<sup>4</sup>, Muhammad Fasli<sup>5</sup>

Universitas Tadulako Palu

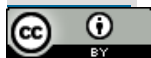
**Corresponding Author:** Ma'sita [sita88399@gmail.com](mailto:sita88399@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze students' difficulties in determining the main idea in narrative reading texts among fourth-grade students of SD Inpres 1 Birobuli. The research used a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed that students struggled to distinguish between main and supporting sentences, comprehend vocabulary, and identify the main idea across multiple paragraphs. These difficulties stemmed from internal factors such as low critical thinking skills, lack of reading interest, and low self-confidence, as well as external factors including monotonous teaching methods, limited instructional media, and an unsupportive learning environment. Although teachers attempted to address these challenges through explanation, lecturing, and examples, the strategies still require improvement to become more effective and interactive. This research is expected to serve as a reference for teachers in designing more targeted and student-centered reading instruction strategies

## **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesian has an important role in education, especially as an effective communication tool to understand various information and knowledge. One of the basic skills in learning Indonesian is reading skills, which includes the ability to understand the content of reading, including determining the main idea in the text. The ability to find the main idea is very important for students to be able to capture the core information conveyed in a text, especially narrative texts that are often used in learning in elementary schools.

According to Whorter (2019), the main idea is the core of the paragraph that describes the main idea that the author wants to convey. Therefore, mastering the ability to determine the main idea is not only important for improving reading comprehension skills, but also as a provision for students in developing critical and logical thinking skills.

However, the reality in the field shows that many elementary school students, especially grade IV, still experience difficulties in determining the main idea in narrative reading texts. This difficulty has an impact on students' low understanding of the content of the text as a whole. Previous research also revealed various causes of this difficulty, such as low critical thinking skills, lack of interest in reading, limited vocabulary, and less varied learning strategies (Fadilah, et al., 2019; Iskhaqy, et al., 2023).

In addition, changes in learning culture in the digital era are increasingly affecting students' literacy skills. Children now interact more often with gadgets than with reading books. The habit of playing gadgets without control causes students to be less trained to read deeply and critically. A national survey conducted by Kemendikbudristek (2023) also shows that Indonesian students' literacy skills are still relatively low, especially in the aspect of understanding the main idea and implied information in the text. A family environment that does not support a culture of literacy is also a factor inhibiting the development of students' reading skills (Puspitasari & Maulidina, 2022).

In the context of learning at SD Inpres 1 Birobuli, preliminary observations show that grade IV students are still often mistaken in distinguishing between the main sentence and the explanatory sentence in a paragraph. They also tend to copy the first or last sentence as the answer to the main idea without understanding the content of the paragraph thoroughly. This shows the need for more effective and innovative learning strategies so that students can understand the concept of main idea better and be able to apply it independently.

Based on these problems, this study aims to analyze the difficulties of fourth grade students of SD Inpres 1 Birobuli in determining the main idea in narrative reading text, identify the factors that cause it, and evaluate the teacher's strategy in overcoming these difficulties. This research is expected to contribute to teachers and schools in improving the quality of Indonesian language learning, especially in the skill of understanding reading text critically and deeply.

## **METHOD**

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach which aims to reveal students' difficulties in determining the main idea in narrative reading texts. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is suitable for describing symptoms that occur naturally and in depth based on facts in the field. The subjects in this study were fourth grade students of SD Inpres 1 Birobuli, consisting of 28 students in the odd semester of the 2024/2025 school year. The research location is located in Palu City, Central Sulawesi. The researcher chose this class based on the results of preliminary observations that showed students' difficulties in determining the main idea of narrative text.

### **Data Collection Techniques:**

#### **1. Observation**

Observations were made directly to the learning process and students' activities while doing reading assignments. The researcher recorded the symptoms that appeared related to students' difficulties in determining the main idea of reading.

## **2. Interview**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the class teacher and several students. The purpose was to dig deeper information related to the causes of students' difficulties and the learning methods used by the teacher.

## **3. Documentation**

Documentation was used to collect data in the form of student work, teacher notes, and teaching materials used during the learning process.

### **Data Analysis Technique:**

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman technique, which consists of three main stages:

#### **1. Data Reduction**

This stage is done by simplifying and selecting data that is relevant to the focus of the research.

#### **2. Data Presentation**

Data that has been reduced is organized in the form of narratives, tables, or interview quotes to facilitate interpretation.

#### **3. Drawing Conclusions**

In the final stage, the researcher draws conclusions based on the patterns found from the whole data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the research obtained through observations, interviews, and documentation show that fourth grade students of SD Inpres 1 Birobuli experience various difficulties in determining the main idea of the narrative reading text. These difficulties can be grouped into two main factors, namely internal and external factors, each of which consists of the following aspects:

### **1. Inability to Distinguish Main Sentences and Explanatory Sentences (Internal Factors)**

Based on observations and student assignment documents, many students choose explanatory sentences as the main idea. This shows

that they do not understand the difference between the main sentence that states the main idea and the explanatory sentences that support the information. In interviews, students admitted to choosing the most interesting sentence or the one at the beginning of the paragraph, without paying attention to the main content.

### **2. Vocabulary Limitations (Internal Factors)**

The interview results show that students have difficulty understanding the meaning of words in reading. Unfamiliar vocabulary makes it difficult for students to capture the content of the paragraph as a whole, so they are unable to identify the main idea correctly. In addition, students tend to guess the meaning of words based on conjecture, not based on the context of the sentence.

### **3. Lack of Reading Comprehension Practice (External Factors)**

Teachers admit that reading comprehension exercises have not been done regularly. The focus of learning is still dominant on the mechanical reading aspect, not reading comprehension. This causes students to not be accustomed to analyzing the content of reading and have not been trained to draw conclusions from the content of paragraphs. The lack of practice also causes students to not have a strategy to find the main idea systematically.

### **4. Lack of Variety in Learning Methods and Media (External Factors)**

Indonesian language learning tends to use conventional methods with limited media, such as textbooks without visual or contextual support. The lack of use of interactive media such as images, videos, or digital exercises makes students less motivated and difficult to understand the content of the text in an interesting and digestible way. The lack of variety in methods also limits students' opportunities to learn different strategies for finding the main idea.

Table 1. Factors Causing Students' Difficulties in Determining the Main Idea

No	Aspect	Factor	Category
1	Understanding the concept of main idea	Does not understand the definition of main idea, has difficulty distinguishing main and explanatory sentences, and is unable to summarize the content of the paragraph.	Internal
2	Active student participation	Low activeness in asking and answering questions, lack of initiative to seek additional information	Internal
3	Obstacles faced by students	Frequent confusion, dependence on teacher assistance, and lack of self-confidence	Internal
4	Learning environment	Less varied teacher methods, lack of individualized evaluation, limited learning resource facilities and a classroom atmosphere that does not fully support active participation.	External

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that students' difficulties in determining the main idea in narrative reading texts do not only originate from within students (internal factors), but also from outside students (external factors). The inability to distinguish main and explanatory sentences and limited vocabulary reflect the weak mastery of reading strategies and language comprehension which are part of the internal factors. This shows that students still need explicit learning about paragraph structure and the meaning of vocabulary in the context of sentences.

On the other hand, the lack of reading comprehension practice and the use of less varied learning methods show the important role of external factors, namely teachers and the learning environment. Teachers tend to still focus on learning mechanical reading and have not provided sufficient stimulus to shape students' critical thinking skills towards reading content. The learning media used has also not been able to attract students' attention or help them understand the content of the text visually and contextually.

This finding is in line with the results of previous studies by Suherli (2020) and Hasanah (2020) which emphasize the importance of analytical, systematic and contextual reading learning strategies. In addition, this study also strengthens the findings of Fadilah, et al. (2019) and Iskhaqy, et al. (2023), which state that the difficulty in determining the main idea in elementary school students is influenced by a combination of internal

and external factors. In the current digital era, the habit of playing gadgets without control also exacerbates the weak reading culture among students.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that students' difficulties in determining the main idea in narrative reading texts in class IV of SD Inpres 1 Birobuli are influenced by various complex factors, both from within the students and from the surrounding environment. The most dominant internal factor is the limited ability of students' critical thinking. Students have not been able to understand and distinguish between main sentences and explanatory sentences in a paragraph. In addition, low interest in reading causes students to be less accustomed to interacting with various types of reading, so that the ability to find core information in the text is limited. Another important factor is students' lack of confidence in expressing their opinions or answering questions related to the content they have read.

On the other hand, external factors that influence students' difficulties are learning strategies that are still conventional. Teachers still dominantly use the lecture method and practice questions without being supported by varied and interesting learning media. The use of visual media such as pictures, mind maps, or learning videos that can help students understand reading content is still very limited. The learning environment, both at school

and at home, is also less supportive of the growth of a literacy culture, so the habit of reading among students has not been well formed.

Therefore, this study recommends teachers to develop more creative, interactive and contextual learning methods by involving various learning media that can attract students' attention. For example, by using concept maps, educational games, and digital technology relevant to the material. In addition, it is important for schools to create a literate school environment, such as providing reading corners, daily literacy programs and competitions related to reading skills. The role of parents is also crucial to guide their children in building reading habits at home through providing appropriate reading materials and creating a pleasant reading atmosphere.

With the collaboration between teachers, schools and parents, it is expected that students' ability to understand reading texts, especially in determining the main idea, can improve significantly. This improvement will not only affect Indonesian language subjects, but will also have an impact on students' academic abilities in general.

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