



# Application of Reading Corner Media and Literacy Tree in Improving Literacy Skills of Elementary School Students in Makassar

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## Abstract

This study aims to determine the level of literacy skills of elementary school students in Makassar through the application of reading corner media and literacy trees. The type of research used is classroom action research. The population of the study included elementary school students with a total of 63 students. The research sample was drawn from the total number of students by applying a random sampling technique of 10 students in each of three different classes. Research data were collected using observation, interview, and documentation techniques. The data analysis technique used the Miles and Huberman model which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The results of the study showed an increase in literacy skills, especially reading in elementary school students with a good level of completion (83%). This is supported by a significance value of  $p > 0.05$  in the calculation of the difference test (t) which illustrates that the application of reading corner media is considered capable of improving the literacy skills of elementary school students in Makassar.

## Keywords

Reading corner, Literacy tree, Literacy skills

## INTRODUCTION

The use of advanced structured learning techniques to analyze and interpret complex data patterns contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing literacy levels and informs targeted interventions for educational development (Degadwala et al., 2025). Process literacy as a critical component of ocean literacy and explores its relationship to spatial equity (McKinley & Fradera, 2025).

Humans are social creatures who always need help from others, both to work together and to share feelings or problems. Therefore, humans need language as a medium to communicate with other humans. Language for humans is a tool to express their thoughts and feelings to other people or their conversation partners. Thus, language for humans is two things that cannot be separated because both play a role together in developing human skills in the language process (Suhardi, 2013:21-22).

There is an interdependent relationship of language skills, between reading ability and speaking ability in German and the partner language in Grade 4 (Preusler et al., 2025). The need to improve early childhood education skills and educate school management about the importance of teaching movement and language skills to young children (Cunningham et al., 2025). In terms of language skills in children with DCD, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence

structures is a conscious process at first that becomes intuitive over time (Kisjes et al., 2025). Language can help children communicate, represent, and remember mathematical concepts, while on the other hand, practicing mathematics can provide opportunities for children to also practice their language skills (Chan et al., 2025). In the language process, every human being as a language learner must absolutely master language skills. Mastery of language skills is known as language competence. According to Tarigan (2015: 1), "mastery of language competence includes at least four skills, namely listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills. Each of these skills is interrelated with each other in relation to the thought processes that underlie language."

Reading is one of the four language competencies, which requires skilled mastery of reading materials. Hodgson (in Tarigan, 2015:7) defines reading as a process carried out and used by readers to obtain messages that the author wants to convey through the media of words or written language. Meanwhile, according to Lado (in Tarigan, 2015:9), "reading is understanding language patterns from their written descriptions. Thus, reading can be concluded as a process to understand what is implied in what is written, to understand ideas/thoughts contained in written words."

Type of reading that must be mastered by elementary school students is early reading/beginning reading. Early reading is learning that is oriented towards early grade reading skills when children enter school, which includes recognizing symbols or signs related to letters until children understand words or sentences in their entirety (in Tri Astutik, Kuntarto, & Hayati, 2021:13)

According to Dalman (in Tri Astutik et al., 2021:13) states that "initial reading is the initial stage for someone to be able to read. Initial reading is considered to be in a lower order. Initial reading is an initial skill that must be mastered and learned by readers". Initial reading is done by training children to pronounce correctly and use intonation correctly. At this initial reading stage, attention is focused on the correspondence between writing and existing sounds, fluency and clarity of voice, and understanding of content or meaning. Preparation for reading at this level is also supported by literacy experiences such as reading books or frequently using writing, symbols, and even pictures during learning.

Based on the results of observations and interviews of researchers with elementary school students in Makassar, it can be concluded that students' early reading ability competency is still considered low. This is caused by low learning motivation factors which affect students' interest in reading. In addition, teacher teaching techniques to improve reading, writing, and arithmetic skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic) are still conventional, monotonous, and tend to be less creative. In this case, students do not understand reading materials that only rely on text, without visualization of concepts in the form of images that support the implementation of students' reading abilities. In addition, the lack of use of technology makes student learning less innovative and varied. As a result, students' early reading abilities cannot be optimized properly. This statement is evidenced by the assessment of the criteria for reading letters, spelling words and sentences which are still relatively low where there are still many students who are unable to achieve the minimum completion criteria for reading, writing, and arithmetic competencies.

From these problems, researchers conclude the need for the use of media that can attract students' attention and interest in supporting the improvement of early reading skills in elementary school students in Makassar. The selection of innovative learning media and criteria is considered capable of improving students' early reading skills. The selection must be based on the characteristics and needs of each student.

Among the learning media that can be used by teachers/educators to improve early reading skills in lower grade students are reading corners and literacy trees. A reading corner is a small library that utilizes a corner of the classroom consisting of fiction and non-fiction books. Further explained by the Ministry of Education and Culture (in Aprilia, 2018:7), a reading corner is a corner or place in the classroom that is used to organize books or other learning resources in order to increase interest in reading and learning through fun reading activities. Meanwhile, the literacy tree According to Idris Apandai and Sri Rosdianawati (in Artisa, 2021), a literacy tree is a kind of tree picture whose leaves are the titles of books or materials that have been read by students. Children who have read books only need to attach the leaves to the branches of the tree. In addition, students are asked to conduct book studies and write the results and then present them in front of the class. In practice, the use of these two media is often implemented together in order to improve students' reading, writing and arithmetic competencies, especially in improving reading skills.

Based on the statement above, the researcher tried to apply the reading corner and literacy tree media to elementary school students in Makassar. The purpose of implementing these two media is none other than to improve students' skills in early reading as part of the School Literacy and Numeracy Movement program. Thus, it is hoped that the implementation of these two media will be able to improve the distribution of students' mastery of early reading competencies to support students' cognitive potential in the learning process in the classroom.

## METHOD

This research is a type of classroom action research with a qualitative descriptive type. According to Arikunto (in Warsiman, 2022:5), classroom action research is a research activity carried out in the classroom in order to solve problems that can hinder the success of learning. In short, classroom action research is a controlled investigation process to find and solve learning problems in the classroom with the aim of improving the quality of learning (Akbar in Warsiman, 2022:5).

This study uses an action research design by studying the causes of the lack of early reading competence of lower grade students and then providing treatment through the application of reading corner media and literacy trees to improve students' reading skills. The research sample was selected using a random sampling method from a total of 63 students. In

this case, to make the research efficient according to the objectives, the researcher only randomly took 10 students to be used as samples in each lower grade (grades 1-3) in public elementary schools in Makassar. In short, the total sample selected was 30 students from the lower grades with sample selection according to the selected criteria.

The data collection in this study used observation and interview techniques, and documentation. Observations in this study were in the form of controlled observations of research subjects (lower grade students) with assessment indicators on students' initial reading competencies. While the interview technique was carried out through collecting interview data from teachers and students regarding obstacles to early reading learning and the difficulties faced by students in learning to read. The documentation includes coverage of activities in the form of photos or pictures, from the beginning to the end of the research activity.

The data collected from the research activities were then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analysis model. According to Miles & Huberman (in Pradita, 2013:37), data analysis consists of three simultaneous activity flows, namely: data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions /verification. Data reduction is carried out by collecting, selecting, and organizing data regarding the level of students' ability in early reading in the lower grades. At the data presentation stage, the data that has been collected is then presented in the form of pictures, tables, or charts. The last stage is the conclusion/verification stage which is carried out by processing the data that has been collected to then conclude whether the application of reading corner media and literacy trees is able to improve early reading skills in lower grade students of public elementary schools in Makassar.

In this study, to determine whether there is an increase in students' reading ability through the application of reading corner media and literacy trees, a statistical calculation of the difference test (t) is carried out with  $p > 0.05$  if the hypothesis is accepted or  $p < 0.05$  if the hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, the researcher also used the SAS method (structural analytical synthetic) as an approach to see the development of students' early reading abilities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Description of Research Results

#### *Implementation of Reading Corner Media in Improving Early Reading Skills of Lower Grade Elementary Schools in Makassar*

A reading corner is a small library that utilizes a corner of a classroom that contains books that are usually filled with fiction and non-fiction books. The reading corner is one of the programs in the School Literacy Movement and as a reinforcement of character education in students (Aprilia, 2018). Further explained by the Ministry of Education and Culture (in Aprilia, 2018:7), a reading corner is a corner or place in the classroom that is used to organize books or other learning resources in order to increase interest in reading and learning through enjoyable reading activities.

The reading corner is a school program implemented in order to foster a culture of literacy among all school members (especially students). The reading corner program implemented in state elementary schools in Makassar focuses on organizing literacy and numeracy content in lower grades including grades 1, 2 and 3.

In this case, the implementation of reading corners in lower grades in public elementary schools in Makassar is carried out through the arrangement of reading spaces in the corners of the room. To attract the interest of lower grade students in reading, the reading corners in each class are decorated as creatively as possible by utilizing recycled materials and graphic images with literacy and numeracy content. In addition, the arrangement of reading corners in lower grades, especially in grades 1, 2, and 3 is adjusted to the characteristics of the age and needs of the students.

The implementation of reading corners in grade 1 is adjusted to the characteristics and needs of students where to attract students' interest in reading, creative, colorful, interesting and intuitive graphic content to support students' creativity and innovation in their reading learning at an early stage. In addition, the use of recycled used goods in the reading corner is also applied to increase innovation for students who are still learning at an early stage.



**Fig. 1** Reading Corner in Class 1

In grade 2, the implementation of the reading corner is done through the arrangement of reading materials or reading books. Reading materials are categorized based on their types which are adjusted to their characteristics and preferences for certain reading or genres. In other words, reading books are sorted from fiction genres (fairy tales and story books), to non-fiction books (such as textbooks, thematic books, reading, writing and arithmetic guide books, illustrated literacy books, and so on).



**Fig. 2** Reading Corner in Class 2

Meanwhile, in grade 3, the implementation of the reading corner is more emphasized on strengthening the literacy and numeracy aspects. The emphasis is more diverse on numeracy literacy content that focuses on improving Calistung (Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic) competencies. Thus, the literacy content presented is a visualization of the reading concept to strengthen students' memory in studying literacy materials.



**Fig. 3** Reading Corner in Class 3

### ***Implementation of Literacy Tree Media in Improving Early Reading Skills of Lower Grades in Elementary Schools in Makassar***

Literacy tree is a tool or learning media made of paper that is formed into a tree image (2 dimensions) or can also be made from a dry tree branch with several pieces of paper added in the form of leaves, flowers or fruit (3 dimensions). By applying this, it will improve children's learning in reading. The paper used for leaves, flowers or fruit will be better if you use paper in various colors or choose a striking color, so that students are more interested in applying the existing literacy tree. This literacy tree aims to build student creativity and encourage students to always read so that they become accustomed to it in everyday life. The use of literacy trees is expected to improve students' literacy skills.

According to M. Ziyah Takhqiqi Arsyad (in Niantari, 2021:365), the use of literacy trees is intended as something that reflects what students have read and is focused on reading an understanding to organize ideas. The implementation of learning using literacy tree media as a learning medium, giving assignments by teachers to students with the media being studied.

The application of literacy tree media at the lower grade level in public elementary schools in Makassar is integrated with their learning as an auxiliary media to visualize lesson concepts that are only understood in text form. In grade 1, literacy tree media is applied to the classroom wall by applying paint to form a 2-dimensional tree image complete with branches, leaves, and fruit. The application of literacy content on the literacy tree is applied to the fruit of the tree by adding letters to each fruit. This helps children to remember and learn the letters more often until they understand them perfectly which then has an impact on students' reading development.



**Fig. 4** Literacy Tree in Class 1

In grade 2, the literacy tree media is applied with a more creative and innovative arrangement of literacy content to improve reading skills and the habituation of literacy culture to children as early as possible. In addition, the integration of religious values is also applied to the infographic content embedded in the literacy tree.





**Fig. 5** Literacy Tree in Class 2

Meanwhile, in grade 3, the literacy tree media is used as an enrichment learning media to understand abstract concepts that are only explained by the teacher without concept visualization. This literacy content application is presented in the form of a picture of a tree with flowers and tree branches. The tree branches are filled with lesson materials such as understanding animals from pictures accompanied by text explanations. The use of this media is quite effective in instilling a reading culture and fostering student creativity and innovation.



**Fig. 6** Literacy Tree in Grade 3

### Discussion of Research Results

Based on field data generated through observation, interview, and documentation techniques, it can be concluded that the implementation of reading corner and literacy tree media is considered effective in improving the reading ability of lower grade students of public elementary schools in Makassar. This is proven through a comparison of students' reading abilities before and after the implementation of reading corner and literacy tree media.

Before the implementation of the reading corner and literacy tree media, from each of the 10 students sampled in three different classes, the average level of their reading literacy ability only got a score of 65 from the results of the AKM pre-test conducted. This score is considered not to have reached the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) that has been set. On the other hand, when the reading corner and literacy tree media were implemented, students have shown a fairly satisfactory increase in literacy where as many as 25 students or around 83% (from classes 1-3) who were sampled were able to achieve a score range of 80-90 on the AKM post-test results. This can be seen in detail in the completion table below.

**Table 1** Classification of the Level of Completion of Lower Grade Students in Early Reading by Applying Reading Corner Media and Literacy Trees in Makassar State Elementary Schools

Mark	Frequency	Percentage	Level of Completion
Value above 70	25	83,00%	Complete
Value below 70	5	17,00%	Not Completed
<b>Aount</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	

From the results of the difference test (t) to determine the homogeneity of the data using Levene's statistics, a significance value (p) of 0.071 was obtained. This means that the data tested is considered the same or homogeneous with  $p > \alpha = 0.05$ , which indicates that the application of reading corner media and literacy trees is considered capable of improving the early reading skills of lower grade students of public elementary schools in Makassar.

From the results of the analysis of student ability data and discussion of the research results, it can be concluded that the application of reading corner media and literacy trees is considered effective in improving the reading skills of lower grade students of public elementary schools in Makassar. Thus, research on the application of reading corner media and literacy trees in lower grades of public elementary schools in Makassar has succeeded in improving students' reading skills.

### CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study can be seen as follows.

- Without the implementation of reading corner media and literacy trees, the average level of students' reading ability is only in the range of 60 scores. This score does not meet the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM)

standards that have been set ( $\geq 70$ ). This shows the low level of ability of lower grade students in early reading at public elementary schools in Makassar.

- b. Through the implementation of reading corner and literacy tree media, students have shown a fairly satisfactory increase in literacy where as many as 25 students or around 83% (from grades 1-3) who were sampled were able to achieve a score range of 80-90 on the AKM post-test results. This shows that reading corner and literacy tree media are effectively implemented in the lower grades of public elementary schools in Makassar to improve students' early reading skills.
- c. Based on the results of the analysis of student ability data and discussion of the research results, it can be concluded that the application of reading corner media and literacy trees is considered capable of improving the reading skills of lower grade students of Makassar state elementary schools. This statement is in line with the results of data homogeneity testing with a significance value of 0.071 with  $p > \alpha = 0.05$ .

## SUGGESTIONS

There are several suggestions that researchers can provide to several parties involved in this research, namely as follows.

- a. For teachers

It is expected to utilize learning media that are appropriate to the characteristics and abilities of each student as a guideline in improving reading skills at an early stage, especially in public elementary schools in Makassar.

- b. For students

For students, the use of reading corner media and literacy trees is expected to improve students' abilities and competencies in reading, especially in lower classes who are still at the stage of mastering language competencies. The use of this media is also expected to foster students' creativity and innovation in exploring learning resources that can improve students' knowledge.

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