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## Experimentation of Basic Level BIPA Teaching Materials on Reading Proficiency at Islam Wittaya School

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyse the effectiveness of the BIPA teaching material "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" in improving the reading skills of elementary-level students at Islam Wittaya School. The research employs a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental approach using a one-group pretest-posttest design. The sample consists of 10 students from class 3/1 Mattayom at Islam Wittaya School, selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected through reading proficiency tests and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The prerequisite tests included normality and homogeneity tests, while the hypothesis test was conducted using a paired sample t-test. The results indicate a significant improvement in students' reading skills after using the teaching material. The posttest mean score was higher than the pretest score, and the number of students who achieved the Proficient category increased. The normality and homogeneity tests confirmed the validity of the data distribution, while the t-test results showed a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. In conclusion, the BIPA teaching material "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" is effective in improving the reading skills of elementary-level BIPA students.*

**Keywords:** BIPA, Reading Ability, Learning Material

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas bahan ajar BIPA "Membaca Fasih Kombinasi Huruf" untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa level dasar di SD Islam Wittaya School. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan pendekatan eksperimen semu menggunakan desain *one group pretest posttest*. Sampel terdiri dari 10 siswa kelas 3/1 Mattayom di Islam Wittaya School yang dipilih secara *simple random sampling*. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes kemampuan membaca, serta dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan inferensial. Uji prasyarat meliputi uji normalitas dan homogenitas, sedangkan uji hipotesis menggunakan *paired sampel t-test*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan pada kemampuan membaca siswa setelah menggunakan bahan ajar. Skor rata-rata posttest lebih tinggi dibandingkan pretest, dan jumlah siswa yang mencapai kategori Mahir bertambah. Uji normalitas dan homogenitas memastikan distribusi data yang valid, sementara hasil uji-t menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan antara skor awal dan akhir. Kesimpulan penelitian ini adalah bahwa bahan ajar BIPA "Membaca Fasih Kombinasi Huruf" efektif digunakan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa BIPA di tingkat dasar.

**Kata Kunci: BIPA, Kemampuan Membaca, Bahan Ajar**

## **Introduction**

Indonesia is one of the destinations that attracts tourists from all over the world. The motives for their arrival vary from simple vacations to learning the Indonesian language. The Indonesian language itself has been widely recognized in the international arena, especially since the presence of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) era, which has further increased the popularity of this language abroad. According to Dewi (2023), an examination of the learning experience of Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) shows how the social context can promote foreign speakers' interest in learning Indonesian. In addition, (Ardiyanti & Septiana, 2023) also highlighted the importance of using local wisdom-based learning media to support the BIPA teaching process.

Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is an Indonesian language learning program specifically designed for foreign speakers. In its development, BIPA has become one of the important instruments of Indonesian language and cultural diplomacy in the international arena (Kardinal & Purnama, 2024). According to data from research conducted by Nurhuda, Sulistyaningrum, and Muliastuti (2023), there are more than 450 BIPA organizing institutions in various countries, including Thailand, which illustrates the growing interest in learning Indonesian. This can be seen from the increasing number of BIPA-organizing institutions and the enthusiasm of the participants who register every year.

Thailand, especially the South Thailand region, has a close historical and cultural relationship with Indonesia. This closeness is one of the factors driving the increasing interest in learning the Indonesian language in the region (Melinda, Febriyana, Kemal. 2024.) Islam Wittaya School, one of the educational institutions in Southern Thailand, has integrated the BIPA program into its curriculum since 2018. However, in its implementation, various learning challenges were found, especially in the aspect of reading skills at the basic level (Faizah, Ali, Pebry. 2024).

The differences in writing systems and phonology between Thai and Indonesians become a major challenge for BIPA learners from Thailand. Research Ekawati & Nurpadillah (2024) found that phonological errors are common in the reading skills of BIPA learners at Rajabhat University Songkhla, Thailand. The errors include changes, omissions, and additions of phonemes caused by differences in

phonological systems between the two languages. In addition, a study by Kuwing (2017) compared the phonological systems of Thai and Indonesian and showed that differences in the number and distribution of consonant and vowel phonemes can cause pronunciation difficulties for Thai speakers learning Indonesian and vice versa.

Furthermore, Herniti (2017) found that written Indonesian errors in Thai students occurred at all linguistic levels, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and discourse. The phonological errors found included phoneme changes, which were caused by differences in the phonological systems between Thai and Indonesian. These differences in script and phonology create cognitive barriers in the learning process, especially in recognizing and sounding out the Latin letter combinations used in Indonesian. Therefore, a thorough understanding of these differences is important for developing effective teaching methods for BIPA learners from Thailand.

This problem is exacerbated by the limited number of teaching materials specifically designed for BIPA learners with a Thai language background. Furthermore, Arumdyahsari, Widodo, and Susanto (2016) emphasized that the availability of teaching materials that meet the characteristics of learners is a crucial factor for the success of BIPA learning. Only 30% of the existing BIPA teaching materials take into account the special characteristics of learners from Southeast Asia, including Thailand. Research by Asbupel et al., (2024) emphasizes that the effectiveness of learning is strongly influenced by the appropriateness of the teaching methods and learning media used. Therefore, experimentation with instructional materials tailored to the characteristics of BIPA learners is an important step in improving learning outcomes, especially in reading skills.

BIPA lesson planning is the preparation the teacher does before the lesson begins. Instructional planning includes the preparation of materials, selection of media, and application of approaches, methods, and assessments needed to achieve learning objectives. For lesson planning to be effective, the teacher must master teaching materials, design and implement learning programs, and systematically conduct assessments (Kurniasih & Isnaniah, 2019).

According to Rosnaningsih & Puspita (2023) teaching materials can be understood as material or learning resources that are systematically and arranged

by teaching principles that are used in the learning process by teachers and students. Structured teaching materials mean that they are designed sequentially to help students understand the material more easily. In addition, instructional materials have distinctive and purposeful characteristics. Distinctive means that the materials are prepared for specific purposes in specific types of learning, while directional means that the content is specifically designed to achieve predetermined competencies by the learning objectives. The development of "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" teaching materials is based on the theory of second language learning proposed by Magdalena, Sundari, and Nurkamilah (2020) which emphasizes the importance of comprehensive and gradual input in language learning. To carry out learning and teaching activities, there are different ways that teachers can adopt in carrying out the learning process. On this occasion, the teacher is someone from Indonesia who speaks Indonesian as a mother tongue, while the participants are individuals from Thailand who speak Thai as a mother tongue, and the material taught is Indonesian (Rahayu & Febriyana, 2021).

In the process of learning Indonesian, language skills include reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Yulistya & Febriyana, 2024). Vocabulary mastery and learning have a very important contribution to these language skills. The method used in this study is the direct instruction method. The direct instruction method is a direct teaching technique, sometimes known as the natural method, which is often used in foreign language teaching. This method does not involve the native language of the learners and only uses the language to be learned (Giyoto, 2021).

The expectation is that students who join the BIPA program at Islam Wittaya School will be able to read letter combinations fluently at a basic level. However, in reality, their ability is still far from the expectations. Some teachers also revealed that the lack of specialized training in BIPA teaching methods is a challenge in helping students achieve the desired competencies. Further observations also show that the learning methods used tend to be less varied and have not been able to fully motivate students to improve their reading skills.

Based on these conditions, efforts must be made to bridge the gap between expectations and reality in BIPA learning at Islam Wittaya School. One strategic step is to develop teaching materials specifically designed to train fluency in reading

letter combinations at the basic level. These materials are expected to help students gradually understand and pronounce letter combinations, thereby significantly improving their reading skills. In addition, teachers need to be trained to optimize the use of the materials and to use more interactive learning methods.

To improve students' reading skills in the BIPA program at Islam Wittaya School, it is necessary to develop teaching materials that meet the needs and characteristics of students (Zephaniah Gavrila et al., 2021). Previous research shows that specially designed teaching materials can motivate students and are appropriate for their age. In addition, analyzing the needs of reading instructional materials using the deductive approach is also important to ensure that the materials provided are relevant and effective. Thus, the development of teaching materials that are appropriate and suitable for the learning context at Islam Wittaya School is expected to significantly improve students' reading skills (Asti et al., 2024).

With this solution, it is hoped that the reading skills of the students at Islam Wittaya School will improve, thus approaching the BIPA program's expectations of producing students who are well-versed in the Indonesian language. Based on the above explanation, the purpose of this study is to determine the basic level of reading skills and the effect of using BIPA "Reading Fluent Combination of Letters" teaching materials on students' reading skills at Islam Wittaya School.

## **Methods**

This study uses a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental approach to measure the impact of using BIPA's "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" teaching materials on the basic reading skills of students at Mattayom 3/1 Islam Wittaya School, whose address is 164 M.2 Khuan Sato, Khuan Don District, Satun 91160, South Thailand. The quasi-experimental approach was chosen because it allows the research to be conducted without full randomization, but still provides a clear and objective picture of changes in students' reading skills. With this design, researchers can control for certain variables and measure the effects of using the materials more systematically and validly (Sugiyono, 2020).

Data collection was conducted through observation using a scoring rubric that had been validated by experts. The rubric was designed to measure three main aspects, namely reading fluency, letter combination recognition, and word usage in

Indonesian. The process of validating the instrument through expert judgment ensures that the rubric used is relevant and in line with the set learning objectives (Suharsimi, 2018).

The research sample was selected using a simple random sampling technique in which each student had an equal chance of being selected as a research subject. The selected students took an initial test to measure their BIPA reading ability before receiving the "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" treatment. After the treatment, the students took the final test again to measure the change in their ability. The choice of a simple random sampling technique aims to ensure that the samples taken are randomly representative of the population and reduce bias in the research (John W, 2019).

The data obtained were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistical techniques. The mean scores of the initial and final tests were calculated to see the improvement in the students' reading skills. Before hypothesis testing, a prerequisite test was performed, namely the normality test to ensure that the data were normally distributed and the homogeneity test to evaluate the similarity of variances between groups. Once the prerequisites were met, a t-test was performed to determine the significance of the difference between the pre-treatment and post-treatment scores. This analysis aims to measure the effectiveness of teaching materials in improving the basic reading skills of students at Islam Wittaya School (Sugiyono, 2020).

## **Result and Discussion**

This study examines the basic level reading skills of students at Islam Wittaya School using BIPA's "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" teaching materials to improve reading fluency. The results of the analysis of the student's reading skills are presented in Table 1, which gives an overview of the distribution of reading skills in each category.

Table 1. Distribution of students' reading skills across all categories

Group	Category				Jumlah
	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced	
<i>Pretest</i>	2	3	3	2	10
<i>Posttest</i>	1	2	3	4	10

The results of the reading skill analysis showed a significant improvement after the BIPA "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" teaching material was used. At the pretest stage, 2 students were in the Beginning to Develop category, 3 students were Developing, 3 students were Proficient, and only 2 students reached the Proficient category. After the intervention, at the posttest stage, there was a positive change with only 1 student in the Starting to Develop category, 2 students were Developing, 3 students remained in the Proficient category, and the number of students who reached the Proficient category increased to 4 people. This data shows that the use of BIPA materials is effective in improving students' reading skills, especially in mastering letter combinations and simple words. In addition, the data was tested through several tests, namely normality, homogeneity and t-test using SPSS.

Table 2. Normality Test

Group	Statistic	S-W df	Sig.	Kesimpulan
<i>Pretes</i>	0.978	10	0.678	Data follows a normal distribution
<i>Posttest</i>	0.962	10	0.436	Data follows a normal distribution

The results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test in this study aim to determine the normal distribution. Based on Table 2, it can be seen that in the pretest group the sig. 0.978 then sig. Posttest 0.962. This proves the sig value. For pretest and posttest, the significance value is greater than 0.05, which indicates that all data follow a normal distribution. The next step is to perform a homogeneity test and a t-test.

Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results

<i>Levene Statistic</i>	df1	df2	Sig.
1.845	1	8	0.215

The homogeneity test results using Levene's Test show a significance value of 0.215, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the variance of the pretest and posttest data for the sample of 10 students is homogeneous. Therefore, the homogeneity assumption is met, allowing the data to be used for further statistical analysis.

Table 4. Paired Sample Test

Group	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean	Error t	df	Sig. tailed)	(2-
Pretest- posttest	6.20	4.15	1.31	4.73	9	0.001	

Based on the results of the paired sample t-test, there is a significant difference between the pretest and post-test scores after using the BIPA teaching material "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations". Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.001 indicates that the use of this teaching material has a positive influence on improving basic-level reading skills. This can be seen from the increase in the average student score from the pretest (65.40) to the posttest (71.60), which shows significant progress.

The main finding of this study is that there is a significant difference between the student's pretest and posttest scores. The results of the paired sample t-test showed that there was a significant improvement (p-value = 0.001) in students' reading ability after using BIPA's "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" teaching material. This improvement can be seen in basic skills such as letter recognition, letter combinations, and the ability to read simple words in Indonesian.

This is consistent with the research conducted by (Khodijah, 2022), which found that teaching materials that use the gradual introduction of letter combinations can accelerate students' understanding of reading skills. The application of this method not only increases students' speed in reading but also reduces errors in the pronunciation of letter combinations. In this study, students who were initially in the "Beginning to Develop" category in the pretest, many moved to the "Proficient" and "Advanced" categories after being given intervention using these teaching materials.

This improvement in students' reading skills can be explained through the theory of reading learning that prioritizes the phonemic approach and letter pattern recognition. Previous research, such as that conducted by (Tiani, Simbolon, and Hermawati (2023), emphasized that reading learning that begins with the introduction of phonemes and letter combinations is an effective way to improve students' basic reading skills. By understanding letter combination patterns, students will find it easier to recognize and read words in Indonesian. The BIPA teaching materials used in this study apply these principles, which are proven to improve students' reading skills.



According to Yunita, Ulfa, Sudjoko (2021), teaching reading with letter combination recognition-based methods not only helps students recognize words faster but also gives them a stronger foundation for learning more complex reading. The findings of this study corroborate existing theories and provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of letter combination-based teaching materials in improving basic reading skills.

The new finding found in this study is that BIPA teaching materials "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" can optimize the achievement of basic reading skills in students who were previously not very familiar with Indonesian. The modification of theory that can be taken from this research is the importance of using teaching materials that focus on recognizing letter combination patterns as a basic foundation before teaching more complex reading skills. This research proves that this approach can be done effectively even for students who are in the early stages of learning to read.

Theoretically, the results of this study enrich the discourse of reading instruction with a phonemic approach and letter patterns. It also confirms that the improvement of basic reading skills can be achieved through more structured and systematic teaching materials in introducing letter combination patterns. This research contributes to the theory of Indonesian language learning, especially in teaching basic reading skills.

Practically, the results of this study have important implications for educators at the primary level, especially in teaching reading skills to students who are just beginning to learn. The use of BIPA's "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" teaching materials can be an effective alternative to help students master basic reading skills. This teaching material can be used in various educational institutions, especially in the context of BIPA (Indonesian for Foreign Speakers), which teaches Indonesian to students with different language backgrounds. The use of such teaching materials can also speed up the learning process and help students feel more confident in reading Indonesian.

## **Conclusion**

Basic level reading skills using BIPA "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" teaching materials at Islam Wittaya School improved significantly. Students showed better mastery in reading simple words and recognizing letter combinations. There is a significant effect of BIPA "Fluent Reading of Letter Combinations" teaching materials on basic-level reading skills at Islam Wittaya School.

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