Research article

Developing Individualized Education Program (IEP) on Early Reading for Special Needs Students in Inclusive Primary Schools in Magetan Regency

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Abstract.
This research describes and explains (i) the condition of early reading for special needs students in inclusive primary schools in Magetan regency, Indonesia; (ii) the teachers' need for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for early reading; and (iii) the development of IEP in early reading for special needs students. The study is developmental research introduced by Borg dan Gall. The research was planned to be conducted in four steps: exploration, model development, model testing, and dissemination. However, the current study explains the development of IEP at the exploration step. A descriptive qualitative method was used in the exploration step. Data were collected through document study, observation, and interview, and analyzed using the interactive model. The research at the exploration step showed the following results: First, teachers faced many constraints while teaching early reading to special needs students; each special needs student faced a different obstacle which only a few teachers understood and tackled well. In addition, some obstacles also came from parents who are unaware of their children's needs and cannot contribute to their studies. Second, teachers need IEP in early reading for special needs students to tackle the different obstacles. Based on the research results, a prototype for IEP in early reading for special needs students at inclusive primary schools in Magetan Regency was designed at the development step.

Keywords: Individualized Education Program (IEP), early reading, special need students, inclusive primary school

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1. Introduction

Special need student is an individual with disability in completing a certain task or doing something on his/her own. *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amandement* (IDEA) classifies disability into three classifications namely (a) physical disability which includes hearing impairement, vision impairement (blind) and quadriplegic; (b) emotional and behavioral disabilities including mental retardation, communication disorders and hyperactivity; and (c) intellectual disability, including intelectual and cognitive retardation, slow learner, learning difficulties, children with special needs, and indigo [1].

Children with special needs or extraordinary children are children who have differences in mental characteristics, sensory, physical and neuromascular abilities, social and emotional behavior, communication skills, or a mixture of two or more of those dissabilities above the average of general children who need changes that lead to improvements in school assignments, learning methods or other services, which aim to develop their potential or abilities to the fullest [2]. Therefore, an inclusive education is needed for them to enable them to develop properly.

There are 60 inclusive schools in Magetan regency in which 42 of them are inclusive primary schools. Inclusive education is an organized learning model which implements inclusive policies and practices in schools [3]. Inclusive education is used as one of the considerations in designing special regulation in developed and developing countries.[4-5]. The purpose of inclusive education is to ensure that all children with special needs and disabilities effectively receive special and general facilities from early childhood to high school, in order to fully participate in society while they are studying in school [6]. Good management is highly necessary in the implementation of inclusive education. Educational acceptance in school depends on the school and class management. Without good school and class management systems, obstacle to the implementation of inclusive education will easily arise. The research result [7] shows that the success of inclusive education is determined by the availability of special assistant teachers, parents' participation, social interaction, and supports from the environment.

In this Covid-19 pandemic time, the early reading learning in inclusive primary school is facing some obstacles one of which is online learning with asynchronous technique which resulted in difficulty to inslill early reading skills to students, especially those with special needs.

Early reading activities is reading activity for 1st and 2nd grade primary school students. At the initial reading stage, children need to pay attention to 2 important things, the regularity of the shape and the combination pattern of letters. A child as a novice reader understands the concept of printed letters and the concept of a book if (1) understands that a book is to be read, (2) understands that printed letters (not pictures) carry messages, (3) understands that we read printed letters. , (4) understands that we read the print letters from left to right, (5) able to identify titles, authors, and illustrations [8]. [9] added that novice readers understand the concept of reading by understanding printed letters and the concept of a book.

The initial reading mastery of elementary school students has not been maximized during this pandemic time. This happens due to various reasons such as differences in exercise format due to teacher factors, social environment, background, and the

unavailability of learning facilities that students are interested in [10]. The learning of early reading begins with developing students' self-awareness of the importance of reading skills, as well as exploring the surrounding environment to build the reading awareness. This is aimed to develop students' reading skills at an early age and awareness of the importance of literacy [11].

There are 4 important factors to start the early stages of teaching early reading, they are; physical, perceptual, conceptual, linguistic, and environmental [12]. [13] adding 5 important areas in early reading activities which are awareness, phonetics, phonemics, vocabulary, and comprehension. These five areas have focused on early reading learning across the country and the results have shown improvements for all readers. [14] stated early reading activity should encourage students to have self-confidence and increase their reading interest. Types of reading topics, reading materials and exercise models must be in accordance to the students' psychological development. According to [15] teachers should provide various ways of teaching, one of which is the method of early reading and writing (MMP). This method is optimally conducted in the lower grades of primary schools which includes receptive and productive aspecs. The emphasis in this method is on students' abilities in reading aloud and writing words. The learning of early reading is one of reading skills implemented in lower level of primary school, primary 1 and 2. This skill is the main key for them to obtain the advanced reading skills in upper primary level. The focus of early reading is emphasizing the reading skill technics, emphasizing on pronunciation and intonation. Thus, techniques and materials for the early reading should be adjusted to the lower level students' development.

Early reading learning is adjucted to the students' psychological ability and development especially for students with special needs. Therefore, the learning should be oriented to the Individualized Education Program. Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Individualized Education Plan which is a written plan for each student with additional needs to help special need students to develop. IEP is an important document for the education of students with special need in the form of written document for each special need student to be developed and improved, analysed and revised in each meeting [16]. The aim of IEP is to accommodate service to students with special need who study in public school [17]. IEP includes some information such as basic information of students identity, IEP development and implementation team, assessment that have been conducted, student's obstacle and strength, needs and treatment that need to be developed, supporting and inhibiting factors, specific targets for children, and assistance that must be provided for the child to achieve the target [9, 18].

Based on the observations and interviews results, there are many teachers in inclusive elementary schools who have not developed and managed IEP for students with special needs, especially in early reading learning. Therefore, it is necessary to develop IEP in early reading learning for students with special needs. The purpose of this study is to describe and explain: (1) the conditions of early reading learning for students with special needs in inclusive primary schools in Magetan Regency, (2) the needs of teachers regarding the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for early reading, (3) the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) preliminary reading for students with special needs at an inclusive elementary school in Magetan Regency, East Java.

2. Research Methodology

This research is a developmental research developed by Borg and Gall. According to [19], the core of the research and development model is that research and development is a process used to develop and validate educational products. Explained by [19], the term product refers not only to material objects, such as textbooks, learning films, etc., but also the procedures and processes, such as learning methods or methods used for organizing learning.

According to [19], research and development steps include 10 steps namely: (1) initial study, (2) research planning, (3) design development, (4) preliminary field test, (5) revision of field test result, (6) main field test, (7) revision of extended field test result, (8) feasibility test, (9) final revision of feasibility test, (10) dissemination and implementation of the final product. The ten steps are divided into 4 main, each of which includes several operational steps. The four steps are (1) preliminary stage, (2) model development stage, (3) model testing stage, and (4) model dissemination and implementation stage [20]. This study only conducted 2 stages, namely the preliminary stage and the model development stage (up to expert assessment).

3. Result and Discussion

Data collection in exploration/initial stage is conducted in 2 months. There are 43 inclusive primary schools in Magetan Regency with 374 special need students. Twelve inclusive primary schools were purposively selected as sample of this research. The sample are selected based on the area which include, 4 inlusive primary schools in city

areas, 4 inclusive primary schools in sub-distric areas, and 4 inclusive primary schools in mountainous areas.

An in-depth study was conducted on the condition of the Inclusive Elementary School in Magetan Regency and the implementation of early reading learning at the exploration stage. The purpose of this activity is to obtain a comprehensive description of the conditions of early reading learning and the needs of students and teachers for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) in early reading in the selected research setting. This research reveals the conditions of the implementation of early reading learning conducted by teachers, as well as the needs of teachers and students for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for early reading.

Data was collected through interviews with teachers, observations in schools, and document studies on the syllabus, lesson plans (LP), and other documents related to early reading learning. The data that has been collected is then analyzed using an interactive analysis model, which is done in two stages, namely during the data collection and after the data collection.

According to the teachers and based on the data from the Education and Sports Department of Magetan Regency, an assessment of the types of disorders or dissabilities for all students with special needs at Inclusive Primary School in Magetan Regency has been conducted by a psychological institution. Based on the results of interviews with teachers and documents at school, the types of disorders experienced by students of research subjects can be mapped as follows:.

TABLE 1: Disorders or Disabilities Type Experienced by Students With Special Needs in Inclusive Primary Schools in Magetan Regency.

No	Disorder Type	Total	Percentage(%)
1	Slow Learning	58	80,55
2	Learning Difficulty	2	2,74
3	Autist	2	2,74
4	Medium Mental Retardation	5	6,84
5	Dyslexia	1	1,37
6	ADHD	2	2,74
7	Down syndrome	1	1,37
8	Light quadriplegic	1	1,37
	Total	72	100

Based on the field data, there are 15 special assistant teachers in inclusive schools in which only one of them has the special education background, whereas the rest of them are coming from various backgrounds. The proportion of the students and teachers numbers are consider to be good, which is 1 to 4,9. This means that there

is 1 teacher who assist 5 inclusive students. Ability and skills enhancement of those teachers are conducted by the Ministry of Sport and Education of Magetan through training of inclusive student mentoring

Teacher stated that the implementation of early reading was conducted in two methods. The first is learning without book, using media other than book, while the second is learning using books as the source of learning.

The teacher informed that to regular students, early reading subject is given in lower level, grade 1 and 2 of primary level. However, in inclusive school, early reading subject is also given to the upper level students. This is due to the fact that there are many special need students in upper level of inclusive schools still face difficulties in reading.

The main obstacles in the implementation of the early reading in inclusive schools is due to the implementation of the early reading subject to special need students which is conducted together with regular students. This resulted in extra guidance which is needed by the special need students. Before the pandemic hit the country, early reading was implemented through drilling method, by training to continuously reading. Moreover, teachers also used letter cards and picture cards to help students understand the words. There are many difficulties faced by teachers in teaching the early reading skills to students in inclusive schools. Special need students have different limitations while most of the teachers have very limited knowledge about those limitation and what the special students' needs. For instance, when students gave materials through drilling in school, students and parents did not implement that at home. Parents have very little attention to the children's need and study. Based on the data obtained from the school, most special need students are coming from poor families with low education. In addition, schools do not have representative learning media to support the learning of early reading, although they understand the importance of the learning media to help students to improve their early reading skills.

The informant stated in the interview that he had not been able to do early reading lessons online because of equipment constraints. Not all students can use smatrphone, and there are some who do not even have smartphone. The socio-economic conditions of parents of those students with special needs at inclusive elementary schools in Magetan Regency are mostly come from poor families. During the pandemic, the early reading activities are conducted through limited face to face meeting and visiting the students' houses. Teachers also gave exercises and assignment for students to read at home with the guidance of their parents. However, these did not work very well. If the city is stated as the red zone of the pandemic, teachers will not be able to visit the students and all the teaching learning activities will be suspended.

Informants stated that online learning has caused many problems to arise. Online learning expect students to have sufficient equipment to support their learning while their parents have very limited abilities to fulfilled their needs. Most parents complained as to support the online learning, they have to spend more money to buy the internet data plan and other gadgets. Parents also complained that they were not able to spend time to accompany their children as they have to work. In addition, students also felt bored with the long duration of holiday time.

The implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia is currently deemed not to be running as it should. The implementation of learning is only paying attention to regular students without paying attention to the abilities and needs of children with special needs in the school, so it can be said that children with special needs do not receive appropriate services. This kind of learning practice is not the soul of inclusive education, but instead the soul of integration education, where children with special needs must adapt to learning instead of learning tailored to their unique learning needs.

Learning that is in accordance with the abilities and needs of children is believed to be able to develop the children's potential. One way that can be done to help students with special needs is by developing the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). An Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) is a plan written for each child with additional needs, to help them make progress. Information that needs to be contained in the IEP, including basic information, children's strengths and difficulties, areas that need to be developed, specific targets for children, and assistance that must be provided so that children can achieve targets.

There are still many inclusive schools that have not developed and managed IEP for students with disabilities until now, so those special need students have to participate in general education programs regardless of their conditions and needs. Therefore, it is important to develop and manage IEP for students with disabilities in inclusive schools. This is supported by research which states that one of the tools to assess students with special needs is to create an IEP program. Through the IEP, it is hoped that students with special needs will still be able to attend public schools even though the curriculum treatment is somewhat different from other students [21].

Based on the results of interviews with 12 teachers at 12 Inclusive Primary Schools in Magetan Regency, there is only 1 teacher who has used the Individualized Education Program (IEP), at Sukowinangun 2 Primary School, while the rest do not understand the Individualized Education Program (IEP) yet. The teacher stated that they only had IEP specifically for children with autism, ADHD, and slow learners, while for other obstacles

they did not have any. All of this is due to the limited number of teachers with special educational backgrounds (PLB). Ideally, there should be at least a teacher with a Special educational background in an inclusive school.

According to all teachers being interviewed, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) is urgently needed. Early Reading Learning with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each of the barriers faced by students with special needs will greatly help the success of Early Reading Learning. This is supported by the research results which states that students with special needs need IEP to ensure that students with special needs can adapt in the classroom together with regular students, and the implementation of the IEP has a positive impact on the learning process of students with special needs so that they can achieve optimal development and provide the same opportunities as students in general in class [22-23].

Various obstacles have been previously explained in conducting earlyl reading lessons, especially during the covid 19 pandemic. Face-to-face learning in schools is impossible, especially if Magetan Regency is in the covid 19 red zone. Teachers have done online learning but the success rate is very low. According to teachers, the barriers to online learning are numerous. The teacher once used a video call for half an hour but the students were busy with themselves, some were even lying down and some were angry. Extra high patience is needed to guide students with special needs.

Based on the results of the exploratory study, a prototype of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) was prepared for pre-reading for students with special needs at the Inclusive Elementary School. In this study, the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) was conducted in 2 stages, namely the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prototype and the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prototype based on expert's judgment, while the development and improvement of the Individualized Education Program (IEP)) based on limited trials and extensive trials will be conducted in further research.

The preparation of the initial draft (prototype) of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) was conducted in three stages, namely: (1) exploration phase, (2) literature study, and (3) preparation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The results of the exploratory study are the empirical basis for the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to be developed. Based on the results of the exploratory study, the next step is to conduct a literature study. The literature study was conducted to obtain a conceptual basis for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to be developed. Therefore, the library materials studied are those related to the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

After the empirical and conceptual foundations have been compiled through an in-depth exploratory study and literature review, the next step is the preparation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prototype. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) prototype, in full, contains: (1) student's identity, (2) development and implementation teams, (3) past assessments, (4) barriers and strengths, (5) needs and treatment, (6) supporting and inhibiting factors, (7) treatment plan, (8) modification of the early reading learning device. The resulting product is a learning tools arranged in the form of an Individualized Education Program (IEP). This study was conducted up to the introducing stage on a small scale, namely introducing the IEP that had been developed to the IEP implementers (class teachers and special assistant teachers).

The IEP development process was conducted by using research and development model specifically designed to develop IEP. The IEP development in this research is based on the guidance book developed by [24] while the IEP development step done by the researcher are as follow:

1. *Assessment*

There are two purposes of educational assessment, namely assessment for learning and assessment of learning. Assessment can be done in several ways, including observation, analyzing the student's development data owned by the school, interviews with subject teachers and special assistant teachers (GPK), as well as formal and informal tests (such as quizzes, examination and diagnosis of abilities, standardized reference tests, norm standard tests, and alternative tests such as oral tests, descriptions, handwriting, and using electronic devices) (Ministry of Education British Columbia, 2009: 7-8). At the time this research was conducted, the school had conducted an assessment in collaboration with the Ceria Madiun Psychological Institute. Therefore, the types of disorders for students with special needs were available in schools.

Based on the research conducted to students with special need, the students' identities and the psychological barriers faced by students, including barriers or weaknes and strength. Those data can be used to determine the students' needs and the treatment that will be given so that it will be in accordance to the interest, needs, and ability of the students. The data obtained from the assessment will be used to develop IEP for students with special needs.

1. *Collaboration*

Collaboration was conducted by researchers with classroom teachers, principals, heads of curriculum sections, and special assistant teachers. This collaboration is incorporated in the form of an IEP development team. Cooperation is conducted to solve

problems occuring during the development of the IEP. Each team member has a stake in their area of expertise. Each has a share in developing a good IEP, that is in accordance with the interests, needs, and abilities of students with special needs..

1. *Writing*

The IEP writing format consists of the student's identity (name, gender, date of birth, name of parent/guardian), name of the school, class, program compilers who are the IEP development team, implementation team, assessments that have been conducted, special needs, services that have been given and are being given, the special equipment needed, barriers and strengths (known from the results of the assessment), needs and treatment (adjusted to the barriers and strengths they have), supporting and inhibiting factors (at school, at home, and in other places), long-term and short-term targets, and evaluations to be conducted. The identity of slow learner students will be disguised to protect the privacy of the students concerned.

Each student with special needs has its own IEP. This is because each child has different barriers and strengths, so they require different treatment. However, for this development research, only one modified learning device was developed consisting of syllabus excerpts, annual programs, semester programs, and Lesson Plan. Learning tools have been modified according to student's needs, to ensure that these learning tools can be used for all students with special needs in different classes.

1. *Introducing*

The introduction stage was done by the researcher to the implementing parties, the class teachers and special assistant teachers. The steps taken in introducing IEP to teachers are done during the interviews and during observations. When the researcher conducted the interviews at the beginning of the study, the researcher briefly explains what an IEP is and why it needs to be developed.

1. *Monitoring*

At the supervision stage, researchers and teachers collect and assess student response data about strategies and student development towards the goals to be achieved in the IEP. Monitoring provides the feedback needed to identify possible adjustments to implemented goals, strategies, and stakeholder interventions.

1. *Reviewing*

The aim of the IEP review are to determine the feasibility and the effectiveness of the IEP that have been developed, share information related to the students' development, and help to identify the effective strategy to prepare for the transition process.

1. *Reporting*

Reprting the development show the portrait of the development od students with special needs toward the intended goals, such as the subjects, courses, or the class level. The report is arranged objectively and short. The report need to be made by the class teachers, special assisting teachers and researcher.

After the Individualized Education Program (IEP) has been compiled, then a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) will be held with a special assistant teacher. The purpose of this FGD is to provide input on the prototype of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) that has been prepared by the research team. Various inputs and suggestions given by the 12 special assistant teachers were in accordance with the experiences the teachers had while teaching early reading to students with special needs. The teachers stated that they had difficulty in identifying the obstacles and strengths of each student with special needs because the assessments that had been conducted had not touched these aspects. Likewise, in determining the needs and treatment in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) form, teachers find it difficult to formulate it.

The prototype of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) that has been prepared is then consulted to the experts. The expert assessment was conducted so that the developed Individualized Education Program (IEP) has substantive truth and its quality can be accounted for from a scientific point of view. This expert assessment activity was performed before the prototype of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) was piloted. The results of discussions with experts and inputs from experts are used as a reference to make improvements to the developed Individualized Education Program (IEP).

To perform the assessment, the following assessment grids have been provided.

Two experts were selected to validate, consisting of experts in the field of psychology and counseling guidance to validate the quality of the IEP, which focused on the suitability aspect of the IEP which was compiled with the concept of psychological theory, the concept of counseling guidance, and the concept of the ability of IEP to improve students' initial reading ability.

Based on the results of the first expert assessment, there are 3 aspects out of the 18 aspects that need to be improved, namely: (1) the identity section must be completed regarding the background of students with special needs, (2) the different between

Table 2: Assesment Grids of *Individualized Education Program (IEP)*Prototype.

No	Rated Aspect	Description of the Rated Aspects
1	Identities	This section contains the student's full name, gender, date of birth, class, school, name of parent/guardian, program planning team, program implementer, class teacher, special assistant teacher, assessments that have been performed, types of student's barriers, special services that have been givrn to the students, special services that are being given to students.
2	Barriers and strenths in cognitive aspect	Describe the barriers and strength af the students in cognitive aspect.
3	Barriers and strenths in emotional aspect.	Describe the barriers and strength af the students in emotional aspect.
4	Barriers and strenths in social aspect.	Describe the barriers and strength af the students in social aspect.
5	Barriers and strenths in motoric aspect.	Describe the barriers and strength af the students in motoric aspect.
6	Barriers and strenths in behavioral aspect.	Describe the barriers and strength af the students in behavioral aspect.
7	Need analysis in cognitive aspect	Describe the students' need analysis in cognitive aspect.
8	Need analysis in emotional aspect	Describe the students' need analysis in emotional aspect.
9	Need analysis in social aspect	Describe the students' need analysis in social aspect.
10	Need analysis in motoric aspect	Describe the students' need analysis in motoric aspect.
11	Need analysis in behavioural aspect	Describe the students' need analysis in behavioral aspect.
12	Things to consider regarding supporting and inhibiting factors at school.	Describe the supporting and inhibiting factors in school.
13	Things to consider regarding supporting and inhibiting factors at home.	Describe the supporting and inhibiting factors at home.
14	Things to consider regarding supporting and inhibiting factors in other places.	Describe the supporting and inhibiting factors in other places.
15	Long-term treatment plan	Describe the treatment plan given to the students in long-term.
16	Short-term treatment plan.	Describe the treatment plan given to the students in short-term.
17	Evaluarion result and recommendation.	Describe the whole evaluation result and the recommendation given.
18	Language	Using the right and proper Indonesian language according to the language rules.

emotional and behavioral arriers and strengths must be visible and (3) the results of the evaluation and recommendations must be presented concretely based on the various

aspects that have been described. Based on these inputs, improvements were made to the IEP prototype until it was declared feasible and approved by the expert.

In addition, the expert also provided several suggestions related to the implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) in the field, as follows.

1. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be prepared by a team, at least by researchers, classroom teachers, and special assistant teachers.

2. The preparation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) must accommodate and suit each type of disorder experienced by students with special needs.

3. In early reading learning, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be integrated with the Thematic Learning Implementation Plan prepared by the teacher.

The second expert is an expert in the field of language teaching who assesses the LessonPlan (LP) for Early Reading with a blended learning model. Based on the second expert's assessment, the Lesson Plan (LP) for Early Reading that was developed was considered good and feasible to be used. Some inputs for area of improvement from experts are as follows.

1. Note the consistency of the term used: learning or teaching.

2. The Lesson Plan (LP) for early reading is recommended to accommodate 21st century innovative learning, namely HOTS-based, character development, literacy development, information technology usage.

Based on the discussion results, these inputs are used as the basis for improving the IEP and Lesson Plans (LP). The outputs of this stage are the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the Lesson Plan (LP) for pre-reading.

4. Conclusion

Based on the result and discussion, it can be concluded that:

1. There are two important things found at the exploration study stage, namely the early reading learning for students with special needs at the Inclusive Elementary School in Magetan Regency that had not been going well, especially during the Covid 19 pandemic. In addition, it was also found that teachers needed an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in early reading learning because the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each of the barriers of students with special needs will greatly help the success of early reading learning.

2. Based on the exploratory study, a prototype of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) was prepared for pre-reading for students with special needs. The prototypes that have been compiled are then discussed in FGDs attended by special assistant teachers, to obtain input and suggestions. Furthermore, the prototype of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) was assessed by 2 experts to obtain feasibility considerations.

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