THE APPLICATION OF QUALITY READING MATERIALS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS

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Abstract

The Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia aims to foster critical, creative, and independent thinking, with a focus on improving literacy and numeracy. However, students in Class IV C at SD Negeri 135 Palembang face challenges in understanding reading materials and applying numeracy concepts in daily life. This study examines the impact of high-quality reading materials on enhancing students' literacy and numeracy skills. Classroom Action Research (CAR) was used, conducted in cycles to improve these skills through high-quality reading materials. Each cycle consists of two meetings and four learning stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The study took place from October to November 2024. Data was collected through tests, observations, and documentation, with analysis using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Research instruments included literacy and numeracy test questions and observation sheets. The results show a significant improvement in the learning interest and skills of Class IV C students. Specifically, literacy and numeracy skills were enhanced with the use of high-quality reading materials. The cycle analysis revealed an increase in average scores from 64.64 in Cycle I to 76.63 in Cycle II. Additionally, learning completeness improved from 54.54% of students mastering the material in Cycle I to 96.9% in Cycle II.

Keywords: High-Quality Reading Materials; Literacy; Numeracy

Introduction

The Merdeka Curriculum implemented in Indonesia aims to develop critical, creative, and independent thinking skills in students. The primary focus of this curriculum is the improvement of literacy and numeracy, which are fundamental in the learning process of various subjects. SD Negeri 135 Palembang, as one of the elementary schools in the city, faces challenges in improving these skills, particularly for students in Class IV C. Students often struggle to understand reading materials and apply numeracy concepts in everyday situations. To address this issue, the use of high-quality reading materials is expected to serve as a solution to strengthen their literacy and numeracy skills.

This study focuses on the impact of high-quality reading materials as a tool for improving students' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Good reading materials not only provide information but also encourage students to think critically, creatively, and understand various contexts of information. According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, literacy is defined as the ability to understand and use information from various sources. Strong literacy and numeracy contribute to students' character development, in line with the goals of national education. This aligns with research by Nurhayati (2020), which shows that selecting appropriate reading materials can increase students' interest and ability in reading and arithmetic. Additionally, Widiastuti (2021) found that high-quality reading materials positively affect students' learning motivation.

Initial observations at SD Negeri 135 Palembang showed that Class IV C students still face difficulties in answering questions related to reading comprehension and applying numeracy concepts. This situation is concerning as these skills are essential for supporting learning at higher levels. Supriyadi (2021) emphasizes that low literacy and numeracy skills can negatively affect overall academic performance. Santoso (2022) adds that students with strong literacy skills are more likely to solve numeracy problems effectively.

This study aims to identify how the application of high-quality reading materials can influence the literacy and numeracy skills of Class IV C students at SD Negeri 135 Palembang. The research findings are expected to provide a clear picture of how much high-quality reading materials contribute to improving students' basic skills. These findings may also serve as a reference for teachers in designing more effective and engaging teaching strategies.

The urgency of this research lies in the pressing need to improve the quality of education at the elementary level, particularly in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation. In the digital era, which offers easy access to information, the challenge for students is to filter and understand information critically. The abundance of unfiltered information can cause confusion and hinder analytical thinking skills. The PISA survey (2018) shows that the literacy and numeracy of Indonesian students are still below international standards. The UNESCO report (2021) also highlights the challenges in improving literacy and numeracy education in the country. Furthermore, national exam results from the National Education Standards Agency (BSNP) reveal low skills in these areas among elementary students. If not addressed, low literacy and numeracy may hinder students from competing at a global level. This research is expected to contribute to the development of innovative teaching methods that meet the needs of students. As Sari (2022) stated, using relevant and high-quality reading materials can significantly improve students' motivation and learning outcomes.

Thus, this research is expected to benefit not only the students of SD Negeri 135

Palembang but also provide insights for the development of curriculum and teaching methods in elementary schools more broadly. This urgency is increasingly pressing, given the importance of literacy and numeracy as the foundation for learning and the nation's character development in the future.

Methods

This study is a Classroom Action Research (CAR). In general, Classroom Action Research can be understood as a type of research that focuses on the implementation of concrete steps to improve quality or address problems in the group of subjects being studied. This research involves observing the effectiveness or impact of the actions taken, as well as providing follow-up actions to improve or adjust those actions for more optimal results (Fadhilaturrahmi, 2019). Furthermore, Classroom Action Research is also an approach developed to address issues that arise during the learning process, with the main goal of improving and enhancing the teaching and learning process in the classroom (Marta, 2019).This research will be conducted at SD Negeri 135 Palembang, in Class IV C, with a total of 33 students. The school's address is Jl. Lukman Idris No.1400, Sukodadi, Kec. Sukarami, Palembang City, South Sumatra 30154.

This Classroom Action Research (CAR) will be conducted in cycles, with two meetings per cycle, each consisting of 2 x 35 minutes. The research will continue until an improvement in students' literacy and numeracy skills is achieved. According to Mulyasa (2020), there are four stages in Classroom Action Research: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. These four stages will be carried out in each research cycle. The following is the implementation of Classroom Action Research (CAR);
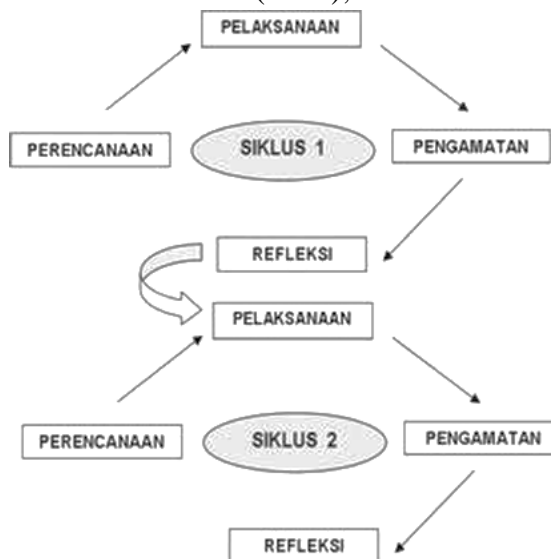
Figure 1. Stages of Classroom Action Research (CAR)

Based on Figure 1. This research comprises several main stages that illustrate the systematic process of classroom action research. These stages include planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Planning Stage In this stage, the teacher begins by identifying the literacy and numeracy skills of the students in the class. Initial observations reveal that many students struggle to comprehend reading texts and apply numeracy concepts. Once the issues are identified, the teacher develops an action plan to address these problems.

The plan involves selecting quality reading materials tailored to the students' needs. The teacher selects storybooks, simple articles, and digital resources as reading materials and prepares assessment instruments, including literacy and numeracy tests, to be conducted before and after the intervention.

Implementation Stage, The action starts by introducing reading materials relevant to the students' ability levels. These materials, such as stories or articles containing literacy and numeracy elements, are presented to engage students in learning activities. After reading, the teacher connects the content to numeracy problems, such as calculating the total cost of items or solving basic math problems. Additionally, supporting activities like turn-taking reading, discussions, and summarizing are conducted to enhance the students' understanding. These activities aim to develop literacy skills, expand vocabulary, and improve communication skills. Furthermore, the teacher provides numeracy exercises related to simple calculations and measurements. The teacher also offers guidance to students requiring additional assistance. Observation, The teacher observes the students' overall engagement, including behavior, participation, and responses during the learning process. Data from literacy and numeracy tests are collected post-action to measure students' skill improvement.

Reflection Stage, The teacher analyzes the results obtained during the implementation phase. Observation and test data are reviewed to assess the effectiveness of the quality reading materials in improving students' literacy and numeracy skills. If the results indicate significant improvement, the action is considered successful. If the results are unsatisfactory, the teacher plans adjustments for the next cycle. Adjustments may involve selecting more appropriate reading materials, modifying teaching methods, or providing more intensive support to students in need. This cycle repeats until sufficient improvement in literacy and numeracy skills is achieved.

Data Collection Techniques, The data in this study is gathered using several techniques. First, literacy and numeracy tests are conducted before and after applying quality reading materials. Literacy tests measure students' understanding of texts, while numeracy tests relate to math problems embedded in the readings. The second technique is observation, where the teacher records student engagement during the learning process. Interviews are also conducted with selected students to gain insights into their learning experiences, along with surveys to gather students' perceptions of the use of reading materials. Additionally, documentation such as classroom journals, student work, and photos or videos of the learning process are used to support the collected data. This documentation provides visual and written evidence of classroom activities, complementing the observation and interview data.

Data Analysis Techniques, Data analysis in this study is conducted using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. For quantitative data, literacy and numeracy test results are analyzed descriptively. This analysis includes average scores, the percentage of learning mastery, and students' score ranges. Test results are compared to identify improvements after the actions are implemented. Techniques such as score improvement tests are used to show significant changes in students' learning outcomes across cycles. Meanwhile, qualitative data from observations, interviews, and surveys are analyzed using content analysis techniques. Observation notes are examined to identify patterns in student behavior, their responses to learning, and challenges faced during the teaching process. Student interviews provide deeper insights into their experiences, while surveys help evaluate the effectiveness of quality reading

materials in enhancing literacy and numeracy. According to Kunandar (2019), data analysis in a study can include calculating the percentage of student learning mastery using the following formula:

$$Persentage = \frac{Number\ of\ Student\ Who\ Mastered\ the\ Material}{Total\ Number\ Of\ Students} \; x \; 100\%$$

The percentage of this classroom action research is considered successful if all students achieve the Criteria for Learning Objectives (KKTP) and each student falls into the "Good" or "Very Good" categories.

Table 1. Data on Criteria for Learning Objectives Achievement (KKTP)

Score	Explanation	Category of Mastery
85 – 100	Very Good	Completed
75 – 84	Good	
65 – 74	Satisfactory	
< 64	Needs Guidance	Not Completed

Source: Interview with Mrs. Ashfi, S.Pd., Gr., on November 5, 2024.

Results

This classroom action research was conducted through several cycles until there was an improvement in students' literacy and numeracy outcomes using quality reading materials. Each cycle consisted of two meetings, with each meeting comprising two lessons (2 x 35 minutes). The research began with the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection. In every meeting, quality reading materials were used to observe their impact on the literacy and numeracy of 33 students in Class IV C at SD Negeri 135 Palembang.

Cycle I

The action in Cycle 1 began with the researcher first understanding the characteristics of the students in Class IV C. The researcher conducted observations to assess the characteristics and literacy and numeracy abilities of the students in the class. After the observations, the researcher developed the steps to be implemented during the teaching and learning activities in the class.

In the planning stage, the action in Cycle 1 began with the researcher observing the characteristics and literacy and numeracy abilities of the students in the class. After the observations, the teacher designed the learning activities to be carried out in two meetings using the mathematics subject. The teacher then formulated specific learning objectives to develop the students' literacy and numeracy skills. The teacher then prepared high-quality reading materials that were engaging and relevant, containing stories or concepts related to numbers and place value in mathematics, which would help students connect the reading context with simple mathematical operations. Additionally, the researcher designed assessment instruments in the form of observation sheets to monitor student participation in each meeting. An interview sheet was also created to be conducted at the end of each session. These observation and

interview sheets were used as reflection tools to measure the development of students' literacy and numeracy.

In the implementation stage, Cycle 1, Meeting 1: The teacher began the learning activity with greetings, prayers, taking attendance, ice-breaking, and then proceeded with the introduction of the reading material. Students were then asked to read and discuss the content of the reading related to the concept of whole numbers. The students were also invited to discuss in groups to deepen their understanding. Following this, the students were given numeracy problems relevant to the reading material, such as word problems involving numbers, number comparisons, and basic arithmetic operations. Below are the learning activities that took place in Cycle 1, Meeting 1.

Figure 2. Cycle I, Meeting 1 Learning Activity Implementation

Figure 2 shows the learning activities in Cycle 1, Meeting 1. In this stage, the students were given one reading material and a set of questions to be worked on with another student. This was done to observe student collaboration while solving the problems. This stage was designed so that students could integrate their understanding of literacy from the reading with the numeracy skills they were learning. The lesson then continued with the implementation of Cycle 1, Meeting 2.

In Meeting 2, the teacher began the learning activity with greetings and prayer, followed by informing the students about the objectives of the session. The teacher explained that the students would be learning mathematics by practicing understanding place value through a story and problems that had to be solved independently. The teacher then provided reading material to the students and allowed time for them to read and comprehend the content. Below are the learning activities for Cycle 1, Meeting 2.

Figure 3. Cycle I, Meeting 2 Learning Activity Implementation

Figure 3 shows the students reading and working on literacy and numeracy questions individually. The teacher emphasized the importance of accuracy and independence in solving the problems. During this process, the teacher also walked around to monitor and provide support or additional explanations if any students seemed to struggle with understanding the

questions or the concept of place value.

Implementation Phase, Cycle I, Meeting 1, The teacher began the lesson by greeting the students, praying, taking attendance, conducting an ice-breaking activity, and doing a pre-lesson reflection. Then, the teacher introduced the reading material, and the students were asked to read and discuss the content related to the concept of whole numbers. The students were also invited to engage in group discussions to deepen their understanding. Next, the students were given numeracy problems related to the reading material, such as word problems involving numbers, comparisons, and simple calculations. In this first meeting of Cycle I, the students were given one reading material and a set of questions to work on with a partner. This approach was used to observe the students' collaboration while solving the problems. The goal was to allow the students to integrate their literacy understanding from the reading with the numeracy skills they were learning.

Implementation Phase, Cycle I, Meeting 2. In Meeting 2, the teacher began by explaining the activity's objective to the students, explaining that they would practice understanding place value through a story and problems to solve independently. The teacher then provided the reading material and allowed the students time to read and understand the content. After the students finished reading, they were given literacy and numeracy problems based on the material to solve on their own. The teacher emphasized the importance of accuracy and independence in solving the problems. During this process, the teacher also walked around to monitor and provide support or additional explanations if any students seemed to struggle with the problems or the concept of place value.

Observation Phase, Cycle I, Meeting 1. The teacher and the researcher conducted direct observations to assess student participation and understanding during the lesson. The teacher recorded how well the students were able to connect the reading material with the concept of whole numbers and monitored any difficulties that might arise. Additionally, the teacher and researcher assessed the students' progress in literacy and numeracy, observing if there was an improvement in reading comprehension, understanding, and solving the questions based on the reading material. During the observation phase of Cycle I, Meeting 1, the researcher found that several students did not participate in solving the questions from the reading material. As a result, these students were distracted by other activities and even disrupted their peers during the task.

Observation Phase, Cycle I, Meeting 2. The learning environment was more conducive in Meeting 2. The students were focused on solving the problems independently. This helped develop their critical thinking skills. However, the teacher encountered an issue with the instructions on the problems, as they were unclear and not well-directed. As a result, some students felt confused and repeatedly asked questions. The following are the results of the literacy and numeracy abilities of the fourth-grade students in Cycle I, Meeting 1 and 2.
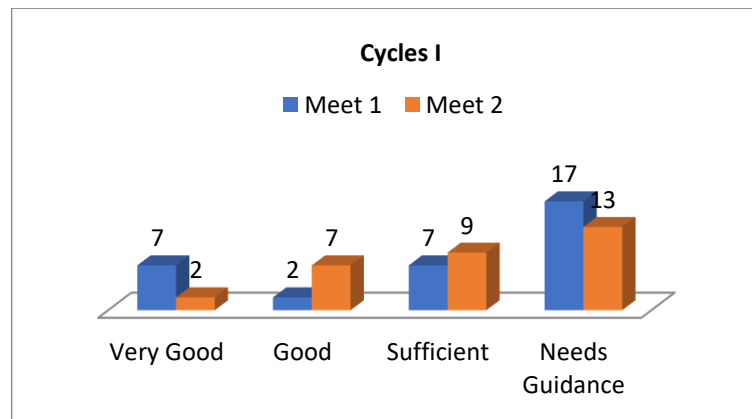
**Figure 4.** Evaluation Results of Cycle 1, Meeting 1 and 2

Figure 4 explains the graph of literacy and numeracy abilities using quality reading materials in line with the Learning Achievement Criteria (KKTP). In Meeting 1, the results showed that 7 students were categorized as excellent, 2 as good, 7 as sufficient, and 17 students still needed guidance in solving the literacy and numeracy problems. Meanwhile, in Meeting 2, the literacy and numeracy abilities of the students using quality reading materials showed that 2 students were in the excellent category, 7 in the good category, 9 in the sufficient category, and 13 students still required guidance in understanding the literacy and numeracy problems. Following Cycle 1, which consisted of 2 meetings, the following student completion results are observed:

Table 2. Literacy and Numeracy Completion in Cycle 1

Learning Mastery	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	KKTP
Completed	16	18	65
Not Completed	15	13	
Absent	2	2	
Total	31	31	
Minimum Score	40	40	
Maximum Score	100	85	

Here is the translation of the paragraph you provided: From Table 2, the completion of literacy and numeracy skills of students using quality reading materials in the first meeting shows that 16 students completed the tasks, and 15 students did not complete them, with a minimum score of 45 and a maximum score of 100. In the second meeting, the completion of literacy and numeracy skills using quality reading materials resulted in 18 students completing the tasks and 13 students not completing them, with a minimum score of 40 and a maximum score of 80. In terms of completion rates, there was an increase from the first meeting to the second, rising from 51.6% to 58.06%, reflecting an improvement of 6.46%. As for the average results of students' literacy and numeracy skills using quality reading materials, the following results were obtained:
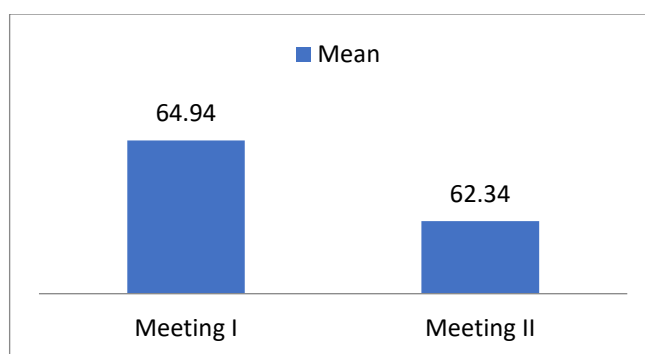
Figure 5. Average Results of Cycle 1

Based on the data in Figure 5, the average literacy and numeracy skills of students using reading materials in the first meeting resulted in a score of 64.94, while in the second meeting, it resulted in 62.34. Based on this data, the average score in meetings 1 and 2 in Cycle 1 decreased. This decline was caused by a change in the learning strategy: in the first meeting, students worked on the problems collaboratively, while in the second meeting, students worked on the problems individually, accompanied by unclear instructions. This led to students not being fully prepared to complete the tasks independently.

The literacy and numeracy results of students in Cycle 1 were further confirmed by an interview with Mrs. Ashfi Rayhanu, S.Pd., along with students, who stated that the distribution of quality reading materials and literacy and numeracy tasks should ideally be done individually to enhance critical thinking skills, so there is no disruption caused by students not participating in solving the tasks. The interview with the students revealed that the tasks were actually easy, but the instructions were unclear, so there was a need for validation to avoid errors when completing the tasks.

Reflection Stage. In the reflection stage, the teacher analyzes the results of observations and assessments during the learning process. The teacher evaluates the effectiveness of using quality reading materials, identifying aspects that were successful and parts that need improvement. Based on the reflection from Cycle 1, several issues were identified, such as the strategy for handling tasks and unclear instructions. In light of these issues, the teacher considers improvements for the next meeting, such as providing tasks individually, giving clearer task instructions, and adjusting the reading materials to improve literacy skills. The teacher and researcher agreed to continue to the next cycle with the aim of making improvements and achieving better results.

Cycle II

In Cycle 2, the teacher made improvements based on reflections from the previous cycle, with a new focus on integrated science lessons (IPA) along with literacy and numeracy. From the analysis of Cycle 1, it was found that the decline in literacy and numeracy results was due to unclear task instructions. Therefore, in this cycle, the teacher improved the instructions to make them more directed and specific, enabling students to complete them independently without confusion. The focus in this lesson was on further improving the quality of tasks, reading materials, and the implementation system to enhance student understanding.

Planning Stage. The planning stage began with revising the reading materials to make them more engaging and suitable for the students' level of understanding. The reading materials

were also designed to include more challenging content related to literacy and numeracy but still contextual, allowing students to learn and apply science concepts in depth. The teacher also refined the task instructions to ensure each step was detailed and easy to understand. In addition, the observation instruments were improved to provide a more comprehensive monitoring of students' learning process and any challenges they might face.

Implementation Stage. In Cycle II, Meeting 1, the teacher started the lesson with greetings and prayer, then explained the learning objectives, emphasizing the importance of reading and analyzing data in science (IPA). Students were asked to read and discuss the content of the reading materials. They were also invited to discuss in groups to deepen their understanding. Afterward, the teacher distributed quality reading materials and provided tasks to assess their understanding of the scientific text. Students then worked on the literacy and numeracy tasks independently.

In Cycle II, Meeting 2, the teacher explained the learning objectives again, emphasizing that this activity aimed to further enhance their literacy and numeracy skills with richer, more informative reading materials. Afterward, the teacher provided revised reading materials and evaluation tasks, giving additional explanations to ensure every student understood the steps they needed to follow. Students then worked on the tasks individually, with the teacher providing personal support as needed, ensuring each student followed the steps well and understood the context of the reading materials.

Observation Stage. In Cycle II, Meeting 1, the teacher and researcher conducted direct observations to assess student participation and understanding during the lesson. The teacher observed students' comprehension and engagement in the activities of solving literacy and numeracy tasks. From the observations, the learning activities were more conducive and focused. Students were more concentrated on completing the literacy and numeracy tasks independently. Additionally, the task instructions and reading materials were more directed, making it easier for students to understand the tasks. This was evident in the documentation of students working on the literacy and numeracy tasks as follows:

Figure 6. Implementation of Learning in Cycle II, Meetings 1 and 2

From Figure 6, it can be seen that during Meeting 2, students worked on literacy and numeracy tasks. A significant improvement is visible, as students became more focused on completing the literacy and numeracy tasks. Additionally, they showed positive development, such as increased enthusiasm for reading and understanding the text, as well as the ability to solve numeracy problems more accurately and confidently. The level of student engagement and attention to detail in every learning activity also increased, and they became more active in discussing and asking questions about the material being studied.

Based on the results of the implementation and observations in Cycle II, Meetings 1 and 2, and the standards for achieving learning objectives (KKTP), the literacy and numeracy

skills of students using quality reading materials yielded the following results:
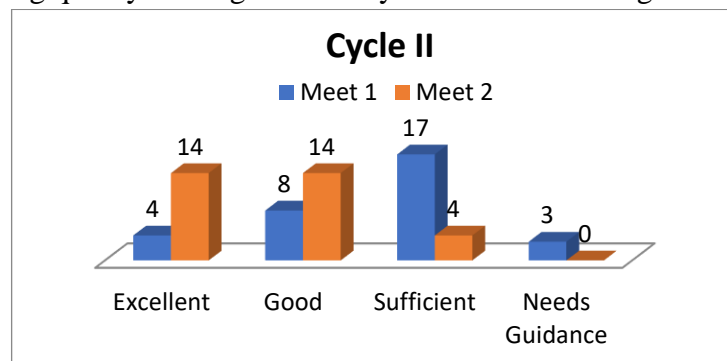

Figure 7. Literacy and Numeracy Results in Cycle 2

Figure 7 explains the graph of literacy and numeracy abilities using quality reading materials in accordance with the learning objective achievement criteria (KKTP) in Cycle 2. In Meeting 1, the results showed that 4 students were categorized as excellent, 8 as good, 17 as sufficient, and 3 students still required guidance in completing literacy and numeracy tasks. In Meeting 2, the literacy and numeracy abilities of students using quality reading materials showed improvement, with 14 students categorized as excellent, 14 as good, 4 as sufficient, and no students needing further guidance in understanding the literacy and numeracy tasks. From the two meetings in Cycle 2, the student achievement results are as follows:

Table 3. Student Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy in Cycle II

Learning Mastery	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	KKTP
Completed	29	32	65
Not Completed	3	0	
Absent	1	0	
Total	32	32	
Minimum Score	55	65	
Maximum Score	95	100	

From Table 3, the learning mastery of literacy and numeracy of students using quality reading materials in Cycle 1, Meeting 1, showed that 29 students achieved mastery and 3 students did not. The minimum score was 55, and the maximum score was 95. Meanwhile, in Meeting 2, the mastery of literacy and numeracy of students using quality reading materials showed that 32 students achieved mastery, with a minimum score of 60 and a maximum score of 100. In terms of mastery levels, there was an increase from 90.6% in Meeting 1 to 100% in Meeting 2, which represents an improvement of 9.37%. The average results of the students' literacy and numeracy skills using quality reading materials are as follows:
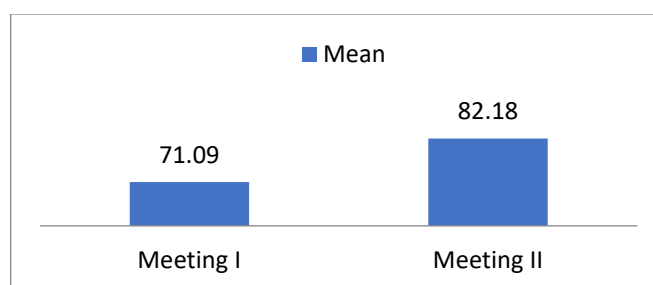

Figure 9. Average Results of Cycle 2

Based on the data in Figure 9, the average literacy and numeracy skills of students using reading materials in Cycle II showed the following results: in Meeting 1, the average score was 71.09, and in Meeting 2, it increased to 82.18. This data indicates that there was an improvement in the average scores from Meeting 1 to Meeting 2 in Cycle II. This improvement is also reflected in the increase from the average scores in Cycle I to Cycle II, showing the following results:
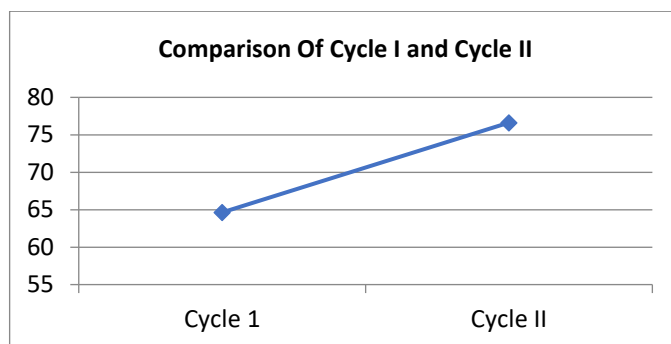
Figure 10. Comparison of Cycle I and Cycle II

Based on Figure 10, the comparison of the average literacy and numeracy abilities using quality reading materials showed a result of 64.64 in Cycle I, and an improvement in Cycle II to 76.63. From this figure, it can be concluded that the evaluation of literacy and numeracy abilities of students using quality reading materials in Cycle II has met the expectations, with 96.9% of students achieving mastery. This is in line with Irfadhila's (2023) statement that action is considered complete if it reaches a mastery criterion of 80%.

At the reflection stage, the teacher assesses whether the literacy and numeracy learning outcomes of students using quality reading materials have improved significantly with the corrections made. Based on the evaluation results of literacy and numeracy abilities through the use of quality reading materials and observations from the results, it can be concluded that the learning objectives in Cycle II, Session 2, have been achieved as expected. This is indicated by a significant change in results from Cycle I to Cycle II, and a positive shift in observation activities, such as increased enthusiasm in reading and understanding texts, as well as the ability to complete numeracy tasks more accurately and confidently. The level of student involvement and attention in each learning activity also increased, and they became more active in discussions and asking questions about the material being studied. Therefore, this cycle can be concluded because the target improvement in literacy and numeracy has been achieved.

DISCUSSION

This research shows that the use of quality reading materials significantly improves students' literacy and numeracy abilities. This result is evident through a series of learning activities from Cycle I to Cycle II. In the first learning session of Cycle I, the average literacy and numeracy score of students reached 66.94. However, in the second session of Cycle I, the average dropped to 62.34. This decrease was due to individual work on the questions, unlike the first session which was done in groups. After evaluating this, the teacher and researcher agreed to improve the teaching method, and the results showed significant improvement in Cycle II. In the first session of Cycle II, the average increased to 71.09, and continued rising to 81.18 in the second session of Cycle II.

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Improvements in literacy and numeracy abilities using quality reading materials were also observed in each category of the Achievement Criteria for Learning Objectives (KKTP). In the "very good" category, there was an increase from 21.2% in Cycle I, Session 1, which decreased to 15.14% in Cycle I, Session 2 due to independent work on the questions, resulting in some students being unprepared. After improvements were made, in Cycle II, Session 1, the "very good" category rose to 12.12% and continued to increase to 42.4% in the second session of Cycle II.

The "good" category also showed a significant change, starting at 6.06% in the first session of Cycle I, which then increased to 21.21% in the second session of the same cycle. This category continued to increase in Cycle II, reaching 24.24% in the first session and further rising to 42.42% in the second session.

The "sufficient" category showed fluctuations. In the first session of Cycle I, 21.21% of students were in this category, which then increased to 27.2% in the second session. In Cycle II, Session 1, the "sufficient" category increased to 51.5%, but then significantly decreased to 12.1% in the second session of Cycle II, indicating that students who were previously in the "sufficient" category successfully moved to the "good" and "very good" categories.

Meanwhile, the "needs guidance" category decreased from 51.5% in the first session of Cycle I to 13.3% in the second session, and continued to drop to 9.09% in the first session of Cycle II, and to 3% in the second session of Cycle II. This was mostly due to the absence of students who previously needed guidance.

From the increase in averages in each cycle, and the increase in the "very good" and "good" categories, along with a decrease in the "sufficient" and "needs guidance" categories, it can be concluded that there has been an improvement in students' literacy and numeracy abilities using quality reading materials. This is also supported by the ongoing improvement observed in student behavior and understanding. Students appeared more focused and independent in completing literacy and numeracy tasks. Additionally, they showed other positive developments, such as increased enthusiasm for reading and understanding texts, as well as being able to complete numeracy tasks more accurately and confidently. The level of student involvement and attention in each learning activity also increased, and they became more active in discussions and asking questions about the material being studied.

This research shows that the application of quality reading materials significantly improves students' literacy and numeracy abilities. This improvement is not only reflected in learning outcomes but also in students' attitudes and involvement during the learning process. Further explanation of this study on improving students' literacy and numeracy can be seen from the perspective of one theory that supports this research, namely the constructivism learning theory introduced by Vygotsky and Piaget. This theory explains that students build their knowledge through active interaction by collaborating and discussing during the learning process, asking questions, and being enthusiastic, which creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment. This aligns with the research observations, where improvements in focus, independence, and active involvement of students in completing tasks, especially literacy and numeracy tasks, indicate the application of constructivist principles. Students actively participate in the learning process and construct their understanding. Thus, this not only impacts the increase in scores but also leads to improved behavior and understanding through the application of quality reading materials in a more positive direction.

This finding is in line with previous research conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2024), which shows that the availability of quality reading books is positively related to improvements in student learning outcomes. This study emphasizes the importance of books that match children's preferences and have diverse themes that stimulate imagination and cultural understanding. Dwi Fadhila Damayanti (2021) developed picture storybooks aimed at improving students' digital literacy, with results showing that these books helped students understand literacy and numeracy concepts through engaging narratives.

Research by Andayati Nabila (2023) also supports this finding by analyzing students' literacy and numeracy skills in solving story problems, discovering that although students' abilities were fairly good, there was still room for improvement. Additionally, Dyah Worowirastri Ekowati (2019) explored the implementation of a literacy and numeracy program at Muhammadiyah Elementary School, showing that the program could be implemented regularly and included enjoyable reading activities and problem-based learning.

A study at Sidotopo I Public Elementary School by Kemdikbud (2024) reported a significant increase in students' literacy scores after applying quality reading books in learning. Through methods like reading aloud and creative assignments from the readings, students became more engaged and motivated to learn. Research by Amanda Dhea (2023) also showed that applying book stages could improve students' interest and literacy skills. Furthermore, a study by Astuti (2023) highlighted the importance of teacher training in utilizing quality reading books to improve students' reading interest.

Other research by Qomariah et al. (2023) examined the impact of using quality reading books on students' numeracy skills in grade IV elementary school, finding that the use of appropriate books helped students better understand mathematical concepts. Furthermore, research by Anugerah Ayu (2024) showed that a child-friendly reading environment significantly influenced students' reading interest. Nuraeni (2020) revealed that parental involvement in guiding children to read also contributed to improved literacy skills. Additionally, studies by Sari (2019) found that using technology to present quality reading materials could attract students' attention and improve their literacy skills. Similarly, research by Lestari (2024) demonstrated that innovative learning strategies using quality reading materials could enhance students' motivation to learn.

Based on this study's results, it can be concluded that the application of quality reading materials significantly contributes to improving literacy and numeracy abilities in students of Class IV C SD Negeri 135 Palembang. This improvement is reflected not only in better learning outcomes but also in positive changes in student attitudes, active involvement, and independence during the learning process. These findings are supported by the constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of active interaction and collaboration in building students' understanding. The results of this study align with various previous studies, showing that quality reading materials can improve students' motivation, attention to detail, and confidence in completing literacy and numeracy tasks. Therefore, the application of quality reading materials is considered an effective learning strategy to holistically improve students' literacy and numeracy competencies.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in class IVC at SD Negeri 135 Palembang showed an improvement in literacy and numeracy skills through the use of quality reading materials. This result is evident through a series of learning activities from Cycle I to Cycle II, with the average score increasing from 64.64 in Cycle I to 76.63 in Cycle II. The learning completion rate also improved, from 54.54% of students completing the tasks in Cycle I to 96.9% in Cycle II.

The limitations of this study include the access and availability of quality reading materials, as well as the limited learning time to optimize the use of these materials. Additionally, the varying levels of students' abilities can make it challenging to tailor reading materials that suit all students.

To address these limitations, it is recommended that teachers diversify reading sources by utilizing various media, such as books, articles, or quality digital content. Teachers can also make use of technology, such as e-books or learning apps, to facilitate access to materials for students. Furthermore, it is important to prepare reading materials at different levels to accommodate students' varying abilities so that all students can learn with appropriate content.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. All ethical considerations have been addressed, including issues of plagiarism, research misconduct, data falsification or fabrication, redundant publication and/or submission, and authorship integrity. If there was no funding, the following wording should be used: This work received no specific grant from any public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agency.

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Author Contributions

Hafizah: Conceptualization, methodology, and original draft preparation; **Ida Sriyanti:** Supervision, writing – review and editing; **Yenny Anwar**: Validation and formal analysis; **Leni Marlina:** Resources and data curation; **Ashfi Reyhanu**: Visualization and project administration; **Tiara Pebriani**: Investigation and formal analysis; **Tesiah Ariantika**: Funding acquisition and supervision.

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