Implementation of Reading Aloud Strategy to Improve Students' Reading Skills in Indonesian Language Learning at SMP Negeri 1 Woyla

Musliadi[1], SMP Negeri 1 Woyla, Indonesia
Harwida [2], SMP Negeri 1 Woyla, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of the Reading Aloud strategy to improve the reading skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Woyla. The research was motivated by the observation that many students encounter difficulties in reading fluently and comprehending Indonesian texts, which negatively affects their academic performance. The study employed a classroom action research design carried out in two cycles, each consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The participants were 30 students of class VIII, who actively engaged in reading aloud activities designed to enhance pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and comprehension. Data were collected using observation sheets, performance assessments, and teacher field notes. The results showed that the Reading Aloud strategy significantly improved students' reading ability. In the first cycle, only a limited number of students achieved the minimum fluency and comprehension criteria, while the majority still faced challenges. After adjustments in teacher guidance and reading practice, cycle II demonstrated a substantial increase in performance. Students became more confident in reading aloud, their pronunciation and intonation improved, and comprehension scores rose markedly. The findings indicate that Reading Aloud is an effective strategy to support reading skill development in Indonesian language learning. Therefore, this strategy is recommended for teachers seeking to improve students' fluency and comprehension through engaging and interactive classroom activities.

Corresponding Author:

Musliadi
SMP Negeri 1 Woyla, Indonesia
musliadi45@guru.smp.belajar.id

Introduction

Reading is a fundamental skill that plays a crucial role in students' academic success. In the Indonesian education system, reading comprehension serves as a core competency that influences the mastery of other subjects, particularly in the middle school stage (Ricardo & Meilani, 2017). Without sufficient reading ability, students struggle to

understand concepts, solve problems, and achieve optimal learning outcomes. In the context of Indonesian language learning, reading not only involves recognizing words but also understanding, interpreting, and evaluating texts (Rahman et al., 2022). For junior high school students, especially in grade VIII, the ability to read fluently and comprehend written material is essential to meet the demands of the curriculum. However, many students still face challenges in reading effectively.

Observations at SMP Negeri 1 Woyla reveal that a significant number of students have difficulty reading fluently and comprehending Indonesian texts. Some students read haltingly, mispronounce words, or fail to capture the meaning of passages. These issues hinder their ability to participate actively in classroom discussions and limit their academic progress. Fluency is an important aspect of reading, as it bridges word recognition and comprehension (Mardhiyah et al., 2021). Students who lack fluency often experience difficulty in understanding texts, resulting in low motivation and poor academic performance. Therefore, interventions are needed to strengthen both fluency and comprehension in Indonesian language classes.

One strategy that has gained attention in reading pedagogy is Reading Aloud. This strategy involves students reading texts audibly, guided by correct pronunciation, intonation, and expression. Research suggests that reading aloud can build fluency, increase motivation, and enhance comprehension (Lubis & Wangid, 2019). Reading Aloud also provides opportunities for teachers to give immediate feedback on pronunciation and intonation. Such guidance helps students develop confidence and improve their ability to convey meaning while reading (Fatimah & Maryani, 2018). By practicing regularly, students can internalize language structures and vocabulary more effectively.

In addition, Reading Aloud promotes active engagement in learning. Rather than passively listening to teachers, students become participants in constructing meaning from texts. This aligns with the student-centered learning approach emphasized in the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka Belajar policy (Pebtiyanti et al., 2023). The strategy also fosters social interaction in the classroom. When students read aloud, their peers listen, correct mistakes, and engage in discussions about meaning. Such collaborative activities enhance not only reading skills but also communication and critical thinking (Dasopang et al., 2022).

Previous studies highlight the effectiveness of Reading Aloud in improving literacy. For example, Elisyah et al. (2024) demonstrated that integrating interactive reading methods increased student engagement and comprehension in primary school contexts. Similar strategies can be adapted for junior high school students to strengthen their reading competence. Moreover, Reading Aloud addresses affective aspects of learning. Students often feel anxious when asked to read silently for comprehension

tests. However, guided reading aloud activities provide a supportive environment that reduces anxiety and builds confidence (Hamka, 2023).

Another advantage is that reading aloud supports phonological awareness, which is crucial for developing fluency and comprehension. Students who can connect sounds and symbols are better equipped to decode texts and grasp their meaning (Lubis et al., 2022). Despite these benefits, many teachers underutilize Reading Aloud in their classrooms. Instead, they rely heavily on silent reading tasks and comprehension questions, which may not sufficiently develop students' fluency (Ningsih et al., 2023). Therefore, innovative and consistent implementation of Reading Aloud is necessary.

At SMP Negeri 1 Woyla, the need for effective strategies is pressing. Students' reading assessments indicate that fluency and comprehension remain below the expected standard. Teachers acknowledge these challenges but often face limitations in choosing suitable pedagogical approaches. This study seeks to address these challenges by applying Reading Aloud as a classroom action research strategy. The approach allows teachers to design cycles of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection to continuously improve students' reading performance (Arikunto, 2002).

By applying Reading Aloud systematically, the research aims to identify whether students' pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and comprehension can improve across learning cycles. Such improvements are expected to have a positive impact on overall language learning outcomes. Furthermore, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on literacy development in Indonesia. While many studies focus on technology-based or gamification strategies (Lubis & Dasopang, 2020; Elisyah et al., 2024), fewer emphasize the foundational strategy of Reading Aloud, particularly in junior high schools. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical implications for Indonesian language teachers. By adopting Reading Aloud, teachers may foster not only students' technical reading ability but also their confidence, motivation, and appreciation for texts. In conclusion, strengthening reading ability through Reading Aloud is a timely and relevant endeavor. This study is therefore designed to explore its effectiveness in improving the reading skills of grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 1 Woyla, with the broader goal of enhancing literacy competence in Indonesian language education.

Methods

This research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR), which is designed to solve practical problems in the teaching-learning process through systematic cycles of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The approach was selected because it allows the teacher to improve students' reading abilities while continuously evaluating and refining instructional strategies (Arikunto, 2002).

The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Woyla, involving grade VIII students as participants. A total of 30 students took part in the research, representing a heterogeneous mix of reading abilities. This sample was chosen purposively because it reflects the actual challenges encountered in Indonesian language classes at the school.

The research consisted of two cycles, each cycle lasting for two meetings. In every cycle, the teacher implemented the Reading Aloud strategy with structured activities. The first cycle focused on guided reading aloud with teacher modeling, while the second cycle emphasized student independence, peer correction, and expressive reading. The data collection techniques included observation, performance assessment, and documentation. Observation sheets were used to record students' participation, confidence, pronunciation, and intonation during reading activities. Performance assessments were conducted to measure students' fluency and comprehension at the end of each cycle. Documentation in the form of photos and field notes was also gathered to enrich qualitative data.

Instruments for data collection were designed carefully to ensure reliability. Observation sheets contained indicators such as accuracy in pronunciation, clarity of voice, use of intonation, and level of comprehension. Performance tests were aligned with the Indonesian language curriculum to ensure validity (Sugiyono, 2018). The data analysis used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative data from observations and field notes were analyzed descriptively to capture the dynamics of classroom interaction. Meanwhile, quantitative data from reading assessments were analyzed by calculating the percentage of students achieving the minimum mastery criteria (KKM).

To ensure research trustworthiness, triangulation was employed. The researcher cross-checked findings from observation, student performance, and documentation to confirm the consistency of results (Dasopang et al., 2022). Additionally, teacher reflection and peer discussions were conducted to validate interpretations. Ethical considerations were also taken into account. Permission was obtained from the school principal and Indonesian language teacher before conducting the study. Students were informed that their participation aimed at improving their learning, and all data were used solely for research purposes without disclosing personal identities.

The success indicator of this research was defined as an increase in students' reading ability, both in terms of fluency and comprehension. Specifically, the study targeted at least 75% of students achieving the KKM after the second cycle. Improvements in confidence and motivation during reading aloud activities were also considered important indicators of success (Ricardo & Meilani, 2017). Through this methodological framework, the research was expected not only to improve students'

reading performance but also to provide practical insights for Indonesian language teachers in implementing Reading Aloud as an effective classroom strategy.

Result

The implementation of the Reading Aloud strategy in the first cycle revealed that students still faced difficulties in pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. During the initial activities, many students read with hesitation, mispronounced words, and lacked confidence when reading in front of the class. Only 40% of students were able to achieve the minimum mastery criteria (KKM) in both fluency and comprehension.

Observation in the first cycle also indicated that student participation was uneven. A small group of students actively engaged in reading aloud activities, while others were reluctant to volunteer. This reluctance was often due to anxiety and fear of making mistakes. The teacher's role in modeling and giving corrections was crucial, but students still needed more time to adjust to the method. Despite these challenges, some positive changes were observed in cycle I. Students began to recognize the importance of correct pronunciation and intonation in conveying meaning. Feedback sessions after reading exercises helped students become more aware of their errors, and a few demonstrated progress in fluency compared to the pre-cycle stage.

In the second cycle, significant improvements were evident. With more structured practice, peer support, and teacher guidance, students became more confident in reading aloud. Participation increased, with more students volunteering to read in front of the class. As a result, 80% of students achieved the KKM in fluency and comprehension by the end of cycle II. The increase in student performance was also reflected in their motivation. Classroom atmosphere became more interactive and supportive, as students encouraged each other during reading activities. Errors that occurred were treated as part of the learning process, reducing the anxiety that had been observed in the first cycle.

Performance assessments showed that students improved not only in fluency but also in comprehension. They were able to interpret the meaning of passages more accurately and could answer comprehension questions with higher precision. Pronunciation and intonation scores also improved significantly, reflecting the effectiveness of continuous practice. Documentation in the form of photos and teacher notes supported these findings. Notes indicated that the frequency of teacher corrections decreased in the second cycle, suggesting that students were becoming more independent in self-correcting and applying proper reading techniques.

Overall, the results confirmed that the Reading Aloud strategy effectively enhanced students' reading skills. The transition from low participation and limited fluency in cycle I to high engagement and improved comprehension in cycle II demonstrated that

consistent application of this strategy can significantly strengthen students' Indonesian reading competence.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that the Reading Aloud strategy effectively improved students' reading fluency and comprehension. The progression from 40% of students achieving the KKM in the first cycle to 80% in the second cycle indicates that consistent practice and structured guidance can significantly enhance performance. This finding aligns with Ricardo and Meilani (2017), who emphasized the importance of motivation and practice in strengthening learning outcomes.

Reading Aloud allowed students to focus not only on decoding text but also on delivering meaning with appropriate pronunciation and intonation. These elements are crucial in developing reading fluency, as fluency serves as the bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Mardhiyah et al., 2021). By modeling correct reading and giving immediate feedback, the teacher provided a scaffolding process that supported students' gradual improvement.

Another important aspect of Reading Aloud is its impact on student confidence and classroom atmosphere. Initially, many students felt anxious about making mistakes, which limited their participation. However, through supportive peer interaction and continuous encouragement, students became more willing to take risks in reading. This supports Hamka (2023), who found that supportive learning environments reduce anxiety and foster active participation. In addition to improving fluency, the strategy enhanced comprehension. As students practiced reading aloud, they engaged more deeply with the text, paying attention to meaning rather than simply decoding words. This echoes Rahman et al. (2022), who argued that reading in language learning should focus not only on recognition but also on interpretation and evaluation of texts.

The interactive nature of Reading Aloud also aligns with student-centered learning approaches promoted in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum (Pebtiyanti et al., 2023). Instead of passively receiving knowledge, students became active participants in constructing meaning, collaborating with peers, and reflecting on their learning process. Such experiences strengthen not only academic skills but also communication and social interaction.

This research further supports previous findings that Reading Aloud contributes to literacy development across educational levels. For instance, Elisyah et al. (2024) found that interactive strategies increase student engagement in primary schools. The present study extends these findings to junior high school students, showing that Reading Aloud can also be effectively adapted at this stage. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of using simple yet powerful strategies like Reading Aloud to address

literacy challenges. While technological innovations in education are valuable (Lubis & Dasopang, 2020), this study shows that traditional strategies, when implemented systematically, can yield substantial improvements in students' language skills and confidence.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Reading Aloud strategy significantly improved the reading fluency and comprehension of grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 1 Woyla, as evidenced by the increase in mastery from 40% in the first cycle to 80% in the second cycle. Through consistent practice, teacher modeling, and peer support, students became more confident, improved their pronunciation and intonation, and developed a better understanding of texts. These findings confirm that Reading Aloud is not only effective in enhancing technical reading skills but also in fostering motivation and active participation, making it a recommended strategy for improving literacy in Indonesian language education.

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