



The Read-Aloud Method to Develop Reading Literacy at the School's Educational Park

Endah Wredati Rahayu *, Ali Mustadi

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. Jl. Colombo No. 1, Karangmalang, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia *Corresponding Author. E-mail: endahwredati.2021@student.uny.ac.id

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Abstract: This study aims to improve students' reading literacy through the Read-Aloud method. Students' reading literacy has decreased due to the implementation of Learning-From-Home activities as an effect of the Covid-19 pandemic. Learning in this study was done outdoor that concerned literacy activities in a School's Education Park. This research used the Classroom Action Research (CAR). The subjects of this study were 18 graders of elementary school. Data were collected through observation, test questions, and documentation. The research instrument consisted of student observation sheets in reading activities, reading performance test items, and documentation guidelines. The data were analyzed following the descriptive qualitative techniques. The results indicated that the implementation of Read-Aloud activities at the Educational Park could improve students' reading literacy, particularly in the aspects of fluency and comprehension. For reading fluency, the students were able to read fluently in a clear intonation with correct pronunciation and use punctuation marks appropriately. While for comprehension, the students showed the ability to find the main idea, answer questions based on the reading, and conclude the reading content. The increase in the students' reading literacy was also supported by the assessment results, which climbed from the 'low' to the 'excellent' category. **Keywords:** reading literacy, read-aloud

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Introduction

Literacy is an essential matter that, currently, has been a remarkable concern at SDN Tileng I Gunungkidul Yogyakarta. Ineffective learning during the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a decline in student literacy skills which led to the students' sagging academic abilities. This can be observed in the achievement of student learning outcomes as stated in the school evaluation reports year 2019 and 2020. The dropping outcomes before and after the pandemic is a pivotal issue to resolve.

Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, calculate and solve problems at a certain level that everyone must achieve (Frankel et al., 2016). Reading literacy is an individual's ability to understand, use, reflect on, and engage with written texts to achieve goals, develop knowledge and self-potential, and participate in society (OECD, 2015). Quoted from https://perliban.kemendagri.go.id, the 2015 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, resulted in an agreement that every nation must have and master basic literacy consisting of reading and writing literacy, numeracy literacy, scientific literacy, and financial literacy, digital literacy, cultural literacy, and civic literacy. Of all the literacy, the fundamental lies in reading and writing literacy.

Reading literacy is the primary key to gaining knowledge (Nurkaeti et al., 2019). Reading comprehension is no longer limited to placing letters in words, reading words in sentences, and reading paragraph by paragraph in a conversation (Ariawan & Winoto, 2021). Reading and writing skills acquired by elementary school students will be the basis for learning to read and write in the next classes (Suastika, 2019). Reading is essential for children as it is the foundation for acquiring other language skills. The reading literacy referred to in this study is reading in high-grade students, i.e., advanced reading whose purpose is to improve students' ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing (Iv et al., 2016). The reading characteristics of high-grade students must meet several criteria,



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including 1) fluency and speed of reading; 2) the use of punctuation and word groups; 3) understanding the meaning; 4) telling the reading's sequence of events in their language; 5) predicting the reading content; 6) criticizing the reading content; 7) creating assumptions about the story and 8) showing the courage to read (Fauzi, 2020). Of these indicators, the research focused on reading fluency and comprehension of reading content.

Read-Aloud is a method of reading stories for children with an aloud voice. Introduced by Jim Trelease in his book *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (Trelease, 2017), Read-Aloud is an effective reading method for children as it could adjust a child's brain to associate reading as a fun activity and create knowledge that forms the basis for the child's and builds vocabulary (Desipriani, 2013). Read-Aloud has proven successful in primary schools; thus, can be a favorable method to implement in obtaining basic scores and early learning literacy (Marchessault & Larwin, 2013). This study's Read-Aloud steps used to improve reading literacy refer to the interactive Read Aloud repetition component, namely: 1) Reading introduction, the teacher provides reading materials and then informs students; 2) Reading the materials, the teacher gives an example of Read-Aloud followed by students taking turns; 3) Simple discussion about the reading content (Mcgee & Schickedanz, 2007). The Read-Aloud is expected to improve their fluency and comprehension.

In the 2018 Alibaca National Reading Literacy Activity Index report, none of the 34 provinces in Indonesia was categorized as having a high literacy activity category. A total of 9 provinces were in the medium category, 24 provinces were in a low category, and 1 province was in the very low category (Kemendikbud, 2019). Moreover, the results of the *Asesmen Kompetensi Siswa Indonesia* (AKSI)/Indonesia National Assessment Programme (INAP) scores revealed that the students' reading ability was 46.83% (Kemendikbud, 2017). Even worse, Indonesia is in the bottom 10 countries having low literacy levels, referring to the results of the 2019 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development where the achievement in reading, arithmetic, and science scores below average (OECD, 2019). These several survey results have illustrated the general condition of Indonesian students' low literacy which is indicated by the low reading skills and comprehension.

Responding to the poor literacy level, the Ministry of Education and Culture, through the National Literacy Movement, seeks to elaborate on the literacy movement within the family, school, and community. Among these elements, schools become the center of literacy activities since it is generally considered an effective place for forming good virtues in children; hence, various activities and policies carried out in them may have an impact on other elements (Antoro, 2017). School Literacy Activities in Elementary Schools are part of the school curriculum. This activity includes planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up, which are supervised directly by the school principal (Kemendikbud, 2017). Based on the observations, the program runs interactively since the school library provides a variety of interesting reading materials that students can read. Literacy activities, in addition to being included in learning activities, also get their own time-15 minutes before or after learning activities. Before the pandemic, literacy activities were not only included in the core learning activities but also done as an apperception and reflection. Moreover, there were also Competitions for Literacy like poetry, rhyme, and essay writing which attracted the students.

Learning activities at SDN Tileng I have changed since the Covid-19 pandemic hit. The Covid-19 outbreak has resulted in the revocation of face-to-face learning activities and the enforcement of distant learning or so-called Learning from Home (Nasional, 2020). Unicef stated that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, since March 2020, the government has imposed a policy of changing face-to-face learning to online learning. Then, in April 2021, referring to the current development, changed to mixed learning, i.e., limited face-to-face learning and distance learning (Unicef, 2021). The distant learning activities require teachers to utilize various media that are appropriate for elementary school students' character education (Irvan & Mustadi, 2021). Based on these provisions and considerations, SDN Tileng I carry out learning activities that combine activities during the pandemic can accommodate the student literacy activities, especially reading skills. Based on the evaluation results of Indonesian language learning activities, especially on the ability to answer questions based on reading, 100% of students got scores below the minimum completeness criteria. Next, when given a task to read a text, it was unveiled that most students experienced a decline in reading literacy, both from the aspects of fluency and comprehension. To overcome these problems, suitable methods and approaches are

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needed, especially during this pandemic era with limited teacher-student interactions. The limitations of these interactions, in addition to causing a decline in students' abilities, also resulted in the loss of learning interest. Learners are stuck with boredom with online learning as they just stare at the cellphone screen and get bored. Learning outside the classroom is one way to increase and encourage their learning motivation and at the same time stimulate body movements (Ariesandy, 2021). In other words, the flatness of classroom learning could be overcome by outdoor activities (Rohim & Asmana, 2018). For that reason, the researchers conducted action research with outdoor learning activities using the Read-Aloud method.

Similar research was conducted by Ernalis et al., who stated that this method has proven to improve the quality of reading as learning activities took place creatively, innovatively, and productively (Ernalis et al., 2016). In addition, Hardianto revealed a significant improvement in third-grade elementary school students' reading ability due to the application of the method (Hardianto, 2019). Moreover, Akta Sunci Mahartika and Dimas Arif Dewantoro also investigated how the Read-Aloud method improved reading skills in children with special needs (Mahartika & Dewantoro, 2017). Even more, a study conducted by Jennifer Kohart Marchessault and Karen H. Larwin revealed that the Read-Aloud method could improve children's vocabulary mastery (Marchessault & Larwin, 2013). In these preceding studies, the method was widely applied to the lower-class levels and early childhood education. Meanwhile, this study applied the Read Aloud to fifth-grade elementary school students as an effort to prove that it can be implemented in the upper classes and is expected to enhance reading fluency and comprehension.

Methods

This study is classroom action research whose design used was a cycle model according to Kemmis & Taggart (Kemmis et al., 2014). The following is the design of Kemmis and Taggart's classroom action research:



Figure 1. Classroom action research procedures by Kemmis & Taggart

Based on Figure 1, the design has several cycles, and each cycle consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection. In action planning, learning preparations are designed thoroughly and in detail. Then at the action stage, a teacher carries out learning activities according to the predetermined plan. Together with action activities, the teacher also observes, i.e., collecting data using the established instruments. The last stage is the reflection-an activity where the data processing results collected from observations are used as a consideration to determine the action research's level of success. If the action taken is declared unsuccessful, it will be continued in the second cycle (Kemmis et al., 2014).

The research was conducted in the 2020/2021 academic year at SD Negeri Tileng I Kapanewon Girisubo, Gunungkidul Regency. Reading literacy activities were done outdoor at the Education Park of SDN Tileng I. The subjects were 18 fifth-graders who were about to face a Minimum Competency Assessment in which reading literacy and numeracy literacy questions will be tested.

Data were gathered through observation, reading tests, and documentation. The observation was done to obtain information about the process of students' reading literacy activities while the test was intended to measure students' reading literacy skills. On the other hand, documentation was used to

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analyze the course of activities. The research instrument consisted of student observation sheets in reading literacy activities, reading performance test items, and documentation analysis.

The assessed reading skill aspects incorporated reading fluency and students' reading comprehension. This is in line with the main purpose of reading according to Rahman, which is to seek and obtain information, including its contents, and to understand the meaning of reading (Rahman & Haryanto, 2014). Indicators of competency achievement in reading fluency are pronunciation accuracy, intonation clarity, and the use of punctuation marks (Damaianti & Syaodih, 2021). On the other hand, the indicators of content understanding are the ability to perceive the main idea, answer questions based on the reading, and draw up conclusions from the reading content (Fauzi, 2020).

The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively. The data were in the form of a description of observation results and tests of students' reading literacy in each cycle. The following is a table of categories for reading literacy of SDN Tileng I students with 75 being the minimum completeness criteria.

	Table	1. Category of Reading Litera	acy
No	Category	Score	Information
1	Excellent	92-100	Passed
2	Good	83-91	Passed
3	Fair	75-82	Passed
4	Poor	<75	Failed

Results and Discussion

Results

In Cycle 1, the teacher planned the activities in the Education Park. The location was selected due to its fresh atmosphere which is expected to improve the quality of learning. This is in line with Salsa Ramadhan's opinion that an effective learning environment increases learning productivity so that the teaching and learning process runs as expected. Besides, the introduction of environmental education is pivotal for students to raise awareness and attitude towards the environment (Ramadhan et al., 2019).

The lesson plan involved materials, media, methods, and activities. The materials incorporated both fiction and non-fiction texts. The materials selection paid attention to several aspects such as attractiveness, age preference, and novelty. The learning activity steps included apperception by explaining the learning objectives, carrying out Read-Aloud activities as the core activity, and working on evaluation questions as the closing activities. Books were chosen as the students' daily life has been full of digital media, primarily during distant learning. This is also one of the teacher's efforts to recivilize reading, as stated by Muh. Aniar that currently, the existence of gadgets has begun to shift the role of books (Swasono et al., 2020). Moreover, it also complies with the teacher's ability and the school's availability. This agrees with Elvianti's research that media selection should take into account affordability and ease of use (Elvianti, 2013). The Read-Aloud method applied has several advantages. This method was chosen because it is proven to improve reading comprehension skills. In addition, it can develop the ability to understand information obtained from reading texts, stories, or other people's expressions. As stated by Lely, the more often you do read aloud, the higher your child's language acceptance skills are (Priyantini & Yusuf, 2020).

Based on the observation results of the first cycle, the activities were carried out on Wednesday, October 21, 2020, at 10:00 after the coordination of learning from home. During the pandemic, schools combine on and off-network learning. Once in a while, students and teachers were allowed to have a face-to-face meeting, primarily to coordinate assignments and submission of learning-from-home tasks. The following is a picture of the cycle I activities:

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Figure 2. Reading Literacy Activities Cycle I with Read-Aloud at the Educational Park

In cycle I, the teacher prepared the reading materials, observation sheets, and reading literacy assessment test sheets. The teacher did an apperception by asking questions, motivating, and explaining the learning objectives. In the core activity, the teacher introduced a text by informing the students, then reading the text to them. The teacher divided the text into several paragraphs and asked the students to read different sections. Once there were important points, the teacher invited the students for a discussion. These activities adopted the Read-Aloud activity steps according to Hisyam Zaini (Maryani, 2018). After that, the teacher gave an evaluation by throwing questions about the text that has been read.

In cycle, I, the test scores of reading fluency were obtained. The highest score was 90, and the lowest was 60. Meanwhile, in the aspect of reading comprehension, the highest score was 80 and, the lowest was 50. The following table shows the results of reading literacy in cycle I:

Table 2.	The Score	e of Reading	Literacy	Test Cycle 1

No	Aspect	Highest	Lowest	Average	Minimum Completeness
1	Fluency	90	60	75	75
2	Comprehension	80	50	69	75

The distribution of reading literacy indicators cycle I based on the number of students is shown in the following diagram:



Figure 3. Diagram of Reading Literacy Indicators Cycle 1

Based on Figure 3, 6 students met the indicators of pronunciation accuracy, 9 students read with a clear intonation, and 6 students use punctuation accordingly. For reading comprehension, 5 students could find the main idea, 10 students could answer questions based on the text, and 4 students could conclude.

After the cycle I activities were done, the teacher and students had a reflection, which was not that conducive as the students paid less attention to the teacher's explanations. Even some of them were seen casually talking to their mates. As they had unclear coordination, the students seemed not fully

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understand the Read-Aloud method. Further, the learning condition was not supportive for effective learning, for the activities were done too late in the afternoon. This is in line with the research results by Arianti, elucidating that a conducive class can prevent students from boredom and psychological fatigue. Likewise, it will foster interest in motivation and learning endurance (Arianti, 2019). Additionally, the discussion did not run optimally since there was no question proposed. Instead, the students only answered the teacher's questions. Moreover, the test on students' comprehension resulted in poor scores the teacher must re-explain the materials on how to find the main idea and also how to draw conclusions. Based on these results, the activities needed to be continued to cycle II.

The lesson planning in cycle II referred to the results of the cycle I reflection where the teacher ameliorated the shortcomings. The teacher also selected different materials, taking into account the age factor and the attractiveness of the text. Time allocation was more concerned as learning was performed outdoor. Lastly, the test items were prepared based on the reading text.

The cycle II activities were carried out on Wednesday, October 28, 2020, starting at 07.30. Coordination of activities was done on the WhatsApp Group. The following is a picture of cycle II activities:



Figure 4. Cycle II of Reading Literacy Activities with Read-Aloud at the Educational Park

The teacher conveyed the learning objectives and explained in detail the learning steps as well as the Read-Aloud method. The teacher also elucidated how to find the main idea and how to draw conclusions from a text. In the core activity, the teacher read a paragraph, then followed by the students. The teacher also asked the students to write down difficult unknown words as a discussion topic. In the next activity, the students were allowed to propose questions and discuss with each other the text, unfamiliar vocabulary, and things that have not been understood. At the end of the activity, the students were given evaluation questions to measure their reading comprehension.

In Cycle II, the same data were obtained, i.e., reading fluency and comprehension, with 100 being the highest score and 80 as the lowest score. The following table informs the results of reading literacy in Cycle II:

Table 3. The Score of Reading Literacy Test Cycle 1					
No	Aspect	Highest	Lowest	Average	Minimum Completeness
1	Fluency	100	80	93	75
2	Comprehension	100	80	90	75

The distribution of reading literacy indicators cycles II based on the number of students is presented in the following diagram:

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Figure 5. Diagram of Reading Literacy Indicators Cycle II

Based on Figure 5, 18 students met the indicators of pronunciation accuracy, 15 students read with a lucid intonation, and 16 students used punctuation accordingly. For comprehension, 10 students could find the main idea, 18 students could answer questions based on the text, and 12 students were able to conclude.

The results of reflection cycle II showed that the learning activities run smoothly and fruitfully following the lesson plan. The students seemed enthusiastic and supported each other by paying attention when one of them was reading the text. This is in line with Mustadi's opinion that teachers should build a healthy learning community where there is a good collaboration between students, teachers, and teachers-students as an effort to strengthen the character of caring (Mustadi, 2018). During the discussion, questions emerged from the students about the reading flow and unfamiliar terms.

The results of cycle I and cycle II indicated an increase in reading literacy from the initial diagnosis. The average reading test scores increased from 49 to 75 in cycle I and 93 in cycle II. Furthermore, the average reading comprehension test escalated from 57 at the initial diagnosis to 69 in cycle I and 90 in cycle II. These improvements can be observed in the following table:

Table 4. The Overall Average Score of Reading Literacy					
No	Aspect	Outset	Cycle I	Cycle II	Minimum Completeness
1	Fluency	49	75	93	75
2	Comprehension	57	69	90	75

The improvements are clearly illustrated in the distribution diagram of the students' overall reading literacy, as presented below.



Figure 6. The Overall Reading Literacy Improvement

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Figure 6 informs the growth in reading literacy skills. At the initial diagnosis, only 2 to 5 students were recorded mastering each indicator. In Cycle I, it advanced to 4 to 10 students per indicator, which then increased again in Cycle II with 12 to 18 students.

Discussion

Based on the data in Figure 6, the completeness of the pronunciation was only 16% at the initial diagnosis, which means that the remaining 84% could not pronounce words and sentences well or have some errors, at least. The number climbed to 55% in cycle I and finally reached 100% in cycle II. On the indicator of intonation clarity, the initial diagnosis data showed that only two students or 11% were able to achieve the completeness criteria, then attained 50% in cycle I and 78% in cycle II. For punctuation usage, 16% achieved the criteria for completeness at the initial diagnosis, 33% in cycle I, and 83% in cycle II. These data were supported by the average value of reading fluency in Table 4 which shows the students' low initial diagnosis. There was an increase in cycle I by 53% and was categorized in the 'fair' category, then again increased by 24% in cycle II and was included in the 'excellent' category.

The increase in reading literacy occurred in each cycle. In the second cycle, the students could read fluently with proper pronunciation, clear intonation, and use proper punctuation. Based on the data exposure from the action research, it can be said that those who initially experienced a low score on these indicators could escalate their skills after joining the two cycles. This is parallel with Candra's journal claiming that students generally experienced a decrease in reading skills. He also underlined that reading fluency is not only a matter of reading speed, but also of how to read by paying attention to punctuation, intonation, and expression in reading (Damaianti & Syaodih, 2021). The increase occurred due to the repetition of reading, which led to an improvement in achievement (Rasinski et al., 2011). The elevation also complies with a study by Hardianto that the application of Read-Aloud has been proven to improve elementary school students' reading skills (Hardianto, 2019).

Data on reading comprehension in Figure 6 shows that the students had difficulties in finding the main idea, answering questions, and drawing up conclusions. This can be seen in the initial diagnosis, which only achieved 11% yet rose to 28% in cycle I and reached 67% in cycle II. For the ability to answer questions based on readings, the initial diagnosis showed that 28% achieved completeness, rose to 56% in cycle I, and stepped up to 100% in cycle II. Lastly, the initial diagnosis for drawing up a conclusion showed that the acquisition of completeness data was 16%, escalated to 22% in cycle I, and reached 72% in cycle II. These data were reinforced by the low average value of reading comprehension at the initial diagnosis. There was an increase in cycle I by 21% yet remained to be in the 'low' category, and finally surged to 30% in the 'good' category. The improvement happened in each cycle, although not too significant. This is understandable as reading comprehension is not an easy task, even a very complex cognitive work that requires mental organization and construction (Ampuni, 2015).

The improvement of reading comprehension is closely related to mastery of vocabulary. The application of the Read-Aloud method gave the students new knowledge about vocabulary contained in the text. This agrees with the research conducted by Jennifer Kohart Marchessault and Karen H. Larwin explaining that the Read-Aloud method can improve children's vocabulary mastery (Marchessault & Larwin, 2013). This result is in line with research conducted by Panjaitan that the application of Read-Aloud in cycle II can minimize reading difficulties which lead to an increase in reading ability (Panjaitan et al., 2018). The enhancement from the 'low' to the 'good' category is evidence that the use of Read-Aloud is an effective learning method. This study's results comply with Ernalis' research claiming that this method is an innovative and productive method that improves the quality of learning to read (Ernalis et al., 2016). The same thing is also stated by Desipriani that the Read-Aloud method can reinforce student comprehension (Desipriani, 2013). Moreover, according to Syaiful, the Read-Aloud method can develop an understanding of book contents (Fuada & Marhamah, 2021). Teachers may do repeated Read Aloud activities as they can stimulate children to think, reflect, and provide personal feedback resulting in learning expansion (Ellis & Mourão, 2021). Based on the exposure of the data results, the class action research conducted is declared successful.

Conclusion

The implementation of reading literacy activities using the Read-Aloud method at the Educational

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Park has proven to improve students' reading literacy. For the aspect of reading fluency, the students could read fluently with a clear voice, pronounce each sentence correctly, and use punctuation marks appropriately. Meanwhile, for the reading comprehension aspect, the students could demonstrate the ability to answer questions based on the reading, find the main idea, and conclude the contents of the reading. The increase in reading literacy was also supported by the assessment results in cycles I and II which showed a profound rise although initially classified the 'low' yet surged to the 'good' category. Further, they also obtained scores above the specified minimum completeness criteria. These results are evidence that the Read-Aloud method can not only be applied to lower graders but also to upper graders. The enhancement did not only happen in the aspects and indicators that have been set but also in their vocabulary mastery. This is in line with research conducted by Jennifer Kohart Marchessault and Karen H. Larwin (Marchessault & Larwin, 2013). The use of the Read-Aloud method in this classroom action research has also increased the activities of the learning process. Above all, the method enabled the involvement of teacher-student engagement, which is very lacking these days due to the virus outbreak. The two-way discussion and question and answer have made the students enthusiastic and created a caring character. In other words, the researchers humbly said that this could be an alternative learning activity during the pandemic.

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