

The Effectiveness of the Read Aloud Method assisted by the Let's Read Digital Application on Reading Comprehension Skills

Lollita Fristayana¹, Honest Umami Kaltsum^{1*}

¹ Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia

* Corresponding author: huk172@ums.ac.id

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to describe the effectiveness of the Read Aloud method assisted by the Let's Read digital application on students' reading comprehension skills in elementary school.

Methodology: This study uses Pre-Experimental research with One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. The research instruments used were in the form of pretest and posttest questions for reading comprehension. The data analysis technique uses normality test, homogeneity test, hypothesis test, and N-Gain test with the help of SPSS Windows Release 25.0 data processing. The subject of this study is the fourth grade students of SDN Wonokerso 3 with a total of 24 students.

Results: The results of the study showed an N-Gain value of 0.6125 or 61.25%. This means that the effectiveness of the Read Aloud method assisted by the Let's Read digital application on students' reading comprehension skills is quite effective by being in the medium category.

Applications/Originality/Value: This study integrates the Read Aloud method and the Let's Read digital application in students' reading comprehension skills in elementary school which have not been explored in depth in previous research, thus making a new contribution to educational literature. This research can pave the way for further research that explores the potential for collaboration between learning methods and digital technology in the context of primary education.

Introduction

Indonesian language has a very important role, contribution, and function in the daily life of the Indonesian people. Not only as the main means of communication used in social interaction, but also in the world of education. Mastery of Indonesian language skills at the basic education level is the main foundation for the development of students' language skills at the higher education level (Subekti et al., 2024). Good language mastery from an early age makes it easier for students to understand the subject matter and communicate effectively. At the elementary school level, Indonesian language learning includes four main skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Zulkifli et al., 2022). Among these skills, reading is one of the crucial aspects that every student must master (Purba et al., 2023).

The reading process at school begins with decoding, which converts written symbols into language sounds. This skill is the basis for achieving the next stage, namely comprehension or understanding of the content of reading (Harianto, 2020). Reading without good comprehension would be a mechanical activity without meaning. If students only focus on decoding without developing comprehension, they will have a hard time connecting the content of the reading with their experience or knowledge. Reading without understanding the content of the reading will make the reader not get information or knowledge from the reading activity (Sueca, 2021). Reading comprehension is a cognitive ability to grasp the content of a text, allowing readers to understand the messages conveyed by the author, both explicitly and implicitly (Oktrifanty, 2021). Many people read to gain an understanding of information, so students' reading skills need to be improved to support the overall learning process (Ananda et al., 2022).

Reading comprehension skills are reading activities in which a person connects his knowledge and experience in order to understand well the intent and content of the text or reading (Elviriyanti, 2024). This reading comprehension skill is one of the important skills that need to be mastered by upper-class students at the elementary level (Putri et al., 2024). This skill is very important for upper-class students because it plays a role in determining their success in carrying out the learning process (Junitawati et al., 2023). If students have good text comprehension skills, it will be easier for them to absorb and apply the knowledge taught, which ultimately supports their overall academic achievement. In reality, there are students in grade fourth-grade of SDN Wonokerso 3 who tend to only read the text without understanding the content contained in it.

Judging from the results of the education report card in 2024 issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture, it shows that the Minimum Competency Assessment (MCA) for SDN Wonokerso 3 literacy is in the medium category with an achievement score of 70%, where the proportion of students who are able to find and retrieve explicit information from texts and perform simple interpretations is below standard with a score of only 23.33%. This percentage reflects that most students are not able to understand the content of the reading text well. MCA is an assessment of the basic abilities that must be possessed by every student in order to develop their potential and contribute positively to community life (Aisah et al., 2021). MCA measures two basic competencies, namely reading literacy and numeracy (Hasibuan, 2023). Where the components of reading literacy are finding information, interpretation and integration, as well as evaluation and reflection of various types of texts, one of which is fiction texts (Pusmendik, 2020).

Based on the results of interviews and observations conducted, it was found that students still face challenges in understanding reading. Most students have not been able to master vocabulary and their reading style is still stammering. Although some students were able to read fluently, they had difficulty when they were asked to understand the content of the text, answer questions related to reading, and draw conclusions from what they read. Students feel lazy and object if they have to read long reading texts, and are prone to losing concentration when reading. The limited collection of books in the school library is one of the factors. The collection of books available in the school library is very limited in both number and variety, so it is not able to adequately meet the reading needs of students. This limitation causes students to not have a wide selection of reading materials that suit their level of development and interests, which can ultimately hinder their reading skills (Belvar et al., 2024). Teachers are also still fixated on learning methods that tend to place students as passive recipients of information.

In order to improve reading skills and support the learning process, especially in elementary schools that match the character and are student-centered, a method is needed that is expected to solve problems in the learning process. One of the methods that is starting to receive attention in the world of education to improve reading comprehension skills is the method of Read Aloud. Read aloud or reading aloud is a learning method that can be applied by educators or parents by starting with reading a storybook (Endahwati, 2022). This method involves pronouncing vowels and consonants, using intonation or rhythm of speech, understanding punctuation, grouping words or phrases into units of ideas, as well as regulating reading speed and facial expressions (Bujangga, 2022). The activity was carried out with three repetition steps, namely introducing the book, reading the book, and holding a discussion after the reading session (Ifadah, 2023). In order for the Read Aloud More effectively, the help of learning media is very important to support the success of reading comprehension learning (Dewi et al., 2024).

The development of technology provides new opportunities in supporting the learning process, which has resulted in a new phenomenon with an increasing number of sites website, applications, and digital reading platforms that can be accessed by various groups (Hasanah et al., 2023). One of the digital reading platforms as a learning medium is Let's Read. Let's Read is one of the digital platforms that offers a fun reading experience, equipped with illustrations, and provides stories whose difficulty level is adjusted to students' abilities (Sari et al., 2022). Let's Read Accessible via smartphone or laptop (Maruti, 2022). The use of digital platforms such as Let's Read can be a breakthrough in overcoming the problem of limitations and accessibility of reading books (Afifatunnisa et al., 2023).

Research on the use of the Read Aloud Assisted Let's Read students' reading comprehension skills at school are still limited. Some of the research conducted only emphasizes on the method Read Aloud and utilization Let's Read just. As the research conducted Munawara et al. (2024), Nainggolan et al. (2024), Zulkifli et al. (2022) and Ceyhan & Yıldız (2021) discuss Read Aloud on students' reading comprehension. The study shows that the Read Aloud can help students understand the content of the reading. Other research conducted Saputri & Ritonga (2024) and Cahaya et al., (2022) Finding the use of digital library-based learning media such as Let's Read contribute to improving students' reading comprehension skills.

The difference between this study and the previous study is that this study integrates the Let's Read digital application as an explicit learning medium in support of the Read Aloud method, which has not been explored in depth in previous studies. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe the effectiveness of the Read Aloud method assisted by the Let's Read digital application on the reading comprehension skills of fourth-grade students of SDN Wonokerso 3.

Methodology

This research is a type of quantitative research. The form used is Pre-Experimental Design. The research design uses One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. This design involves a group of samples, where measurements are taken before and after the sample is treated (Sugiyono, 2019). The research design is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Design

| Pretest | Treatment | Posttest |
|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| O ₁ | X | O ₂ |

Description:

- O₁ : Pretest done before being given treatment
- X : Providing treatment using the Read Aloud method assisted by the Let's Read
- O₂ : Posttest done after being given treatment

This research was conducted at SDN Wonokerso 3 which is located at Sadakan, Wonokerso, Kedawung, Sragen, Central Java 57292. The research will be carried out in the 2024/2025 school year in two weeks. The population in this study is high class students. The sample used in this study is all fourth-grade students with a total of 24 students. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling, which is a method that does not give every element or member of the population an equal chance of being selected as a sample. From the population, the researcher used the saturated sample technique, where the entire population was sampled. This technique is typically used when the population is small, under 30 people, or when researchers aim to make generalizations with minimal error (Sugiyono, 2017).

The data collection technique in this study emphasizes the use of tests in measuring students' reading comprehension skills. The implementation is carried out by giving a pretest before treatment, then given a posttest after treatment. The data obtained were then processed through normality tests, homogeneity tests, hypothesis tests, and N-Gain tests with the help of SPSS Windows Release 25.0 data processing.

The normality test to check if the data follows a normal distribution. If the value of sig. > 0.05, the data is considered normal; If < 0.05, the data is considered abnormal. Homogeneity test to assess whether the pretest and posttest data are homogeneous. If the value of sig. > 0.05, the variance of the data is homogeneous; if < 0.05, the variance of the data is not homogeneous. The hypothesis test is carried out using the Paired Samples Test, where if the significance value > 0.05, H₀ is accepted; if < 0.05, H₀ is rejected.

To find out how much the increase in research results was made, an N-Gain test was carried out. The N-Gain test can provide an overview of the improvement of reading comprehension skills before and after the application of the Read Aloud method assisted by the Let's Read. The formula for the N-Gain test is as follows:

$$N - Gain = \frac{x_2 - x_1}{x_{maks} - x_1} \times 100$$

Source: Hake, in (Arisa et al., 2020)

The category of N-Gain can be determined based on the N-Gain score itself or in the form of a percentage (%). Categories for N-Gain can be seen in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2. Categories N-Gain

| N-Gain Value | Category |
|-----------------------|----------|
| $g > 0.7$ | High |
| $0.3 \leq g \leq 0.7$ | Medium |
| $g < 0.3$ | Low |

Source: Hake, in (Hidayah, 2023)

Table 3. Categories Interpretation of N-Gain Effectiveness

| Percentage | Interpretation |
|------------|-----------------|
| < 40 | Ineffective |
| 40 - 55 | Less effective |
| 56 - 75 | Quite effective |
| > 76 | Effective |

Source: Hake, in (Hidayah, 2023)

Result and Discussion

Result

Researchers utilized the pretest and posttest results from the class samples selected in this study. All students first took a pretest to find out their reading comprehension skills. Students were then given treatment using the Read Aloud

method with the Let's Read application as digital learning media. After the treatment, students took a posttest to measure the improvement of their reading comprehension skills using the Read Aloud method assisted by Let's Read. The results of the pretest and posttest data can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Reading Comprehension Skills Data

| Data | N | Min | Max | Mean |
|-------------|----------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Pretest | 24 | 35 | 80 | 55.42 |
| Posttest | 24 | 60 | 100 | 81.46 |

Based on table 4, there were 24 students (N = 24) who took the pretest and posttest of reading comprehension skills. The minimum score obtained by students in the pretest is 35 and the maximum score is 80, with an average score of 55.42. Meanwhile, the minimum score obtained in the posttest increased to 60 and the maximum score reached 100, with an average score of 81.46. The average posttest score was higher than the pretest showing an increase in reading comprehension skills after the treatment was given, where the average score increased from 55.42 to 81.46.

The next step is the normality test. Data normality was tested using Shapiro-Wilk, as seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Normality Test

| Data | Df | Sig. | Description |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Pretest | 24 | 0.356 | Normally distributed data |
| Posttest | 24 | 0.311 | Normally distributed data |

Based on Table 5, the pretest data shows the value of sig. $0.356 > 0.05$. Meanwhile, the posttest data has a sig. $0.311 > 0.05$. Both pretest and posttest sig. values exceed the critical limit of 0.05, indicating that the data are distributed normally, so the assumption of normality for both data has been met.

Another important requirement that needs to be met before conducting hypothesis testing is the homogeneity test. Data homogeneity was tested with the Levene Test to determine whether the pretest and posttest obtained had homogeneous variances or not, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Homogeneity Test

| | Sig. | Description |
|---------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Based on Mean | 0.325 | Homogeneous |

Based on table 6, the value of sig. based on Mean of 0.325, where the value of sig. > 0.05 . It can be concluded that the data have homogeneous or equal variants and the homogeneity assumption is met.

The next step is hypothesis testing, which in this study is carried out using the Paired Samples t Test. The results can be seen on Table 7.

Table 7. Hypothesis Test (Paired Sample T-test)

| Data | Sig. (2-tailed) | Description |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pretest - Posttest | 0.000 | H0 rejected, Ha accepted |

Based on table 7, the Sig. (2-tailed) value of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted, which indicates that there is a difference in students' reading comprehension skills before and after treatment.

To find out how much the students' reading comprehension skills improved before and after the treatment, the next step was to conduct an N-Gain test, with the results of which can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8. N-Gain Test

| N-Gain | Mean | Description |
|---------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Score | 0.6125 | Medium |
| Percent (%) | 61.25 | Quite Effective |

Based on table 8, the N-Gain of 0.6125 or 61.25% indicates that the Read Aloud method assisted by the Let's Read digital app for students' reading comprehension skills falls into the medium category and can be interpreted as quite effective.

Discussion

Researchers involved 24 students who took a series of tests pretest and posttest to see students' reading comprehension before and after being given the treatment of using Read Aloud. Usage of Read Aloud assisted by Let's Read proven to be quite effective on the reading comprehension skills of fourth-grade students of SDN Wonokerso 3. The results of the hypothesis test with Sig. (2-tailed) value of $0.000 < 0.05$, has shown significant differences before and after treatment. The average N-Gain score or percent of 0.6125 or 61.25% had a fairly effective interpretation with a moderate category that reflected that students were able to understand the reading better after receiving treatment. Method Read Aloud able to help students process and remember information better (Harahap et al., 2023).

These findings are in line with research Benediktus (2017), which indicates Read Aloud able to assist students in listening, understanding, and improving their reading skills. Research by Syafitri et al. (2019), indicating the method Read Aloud not only improves students' reading skills, but also listening and speaking skills in an engaging way. Method Read Aloud can increase children's interest in reading and reduce boredom, so that they can focus more and understand the content of the story well (Firdaus et al., 2022). Usage of methods Read Aloud can improve students' concentration and comprehension in reading texts, especially when combined with digital technology (Handini, 2023). According to Ananda (2022), application usage Let's Read enriching the learning experience of students because this application presents a variety of reading materials that are appropriate for age and interesting to students, which plays an important role in encouraging their interest in reading. Utilization Let's Read can support students' development and motivate them to be more active in reading, so as to improve their reading skills and comprehension (Saputri & Ritonga, 2024). Research conducted by Stevani et al. (2023), also backed up the statement by revealing that the Let's Read can help improve students' reading comprehension skills during the teaching and learning activity process.

Analysis of students' needs in understanding texts often shows challenges in mastering vocabulary and reading skills, including the ability to identify the main ideas and information in reading texts. This problem can hinder students' comprehension and their ability to get the information thoroughly from the reading (Yuniarti & Yulian, 2019). However, many students in high grades have mastered reading techniques, but have not been able to understand the content of the reading (Piliandini, 2022). According to Fitriana et al. (2021), there are still elementary school students, especially in the upper grades, who have low reading comprehension skills. One of the reasons is the reading teaching method that tends to be conventional. Purba et al. (2023), also added that many teachers have not taken advantage of innovations, both in media and methods, to support effective reading comprehension learning.

The role of teachers is very important in more than just providing reading materials. By using the app Let's Read, teachers become facilitators who are active in directing the exploration of digital texts. This approach allows students to not only receive the material but also engage directly with the text through the various interactive features provided by the app, which can include audio, visual, and emphasis on important vocabulary (Ni'mah & Sholihah, 2022). Method Read Aloud also has great benefits in developing students' cognitive skills. As explained by Gurdon (2019), this method can stimulate neural connections in the child's brain, which contributes to improved cognitive development and analytical thinking skills. In addition, this process of reading together can also strengthen empathy and accelerate language mastery, allowing students to feel the various emotions and perspectives that exist in the text, which plays an important role in building deep reading skills. Application usage Let's Read It allows the application of technology-based reading methods where students not only rely on teacher-provided reading, but also on digital content that helps them understand the context of language and meaning. Students are expected to become more autonomous readers, accustomed to searching for their own meaning, and more motivated to read outside the classroom. This will create more in-depth and sustainable reading skills (Cárdenas, 2020). Also in line with research Sari et al. (2022) that the activity Read Aloud Students in elementary schools use the app Lets Read have a positive influence on teachers and students. Teachers can take advantage of the app Lets Read as a reference source for reading materials in carrying out the School Literacy Movement.

Conclusion

The use of the Read Aloud method assisted by the Let's Read digital application proved to be quite effective on the reading comprehension skills of fourth-grade students of SDN Wonokerso 3. The results of hypothesis testing showed significant differences before and after treatment, as shown through the analysis of pretest and posttest data. The N-Gain test provides an average score of 0.6125 or 61.25%, indicating the effectiveness of using the Read Aloud method assisted by the Let's Read digital application on students' reading comprehension skills is in the medium category with a quite effective interpretation. Nevertheless, this study has limitations in the implementation of pretests and posttests which only use reading texts in the form of printed paper without any pictures, in contrast to the experience offered by the Let's Read digital application which is more visually rich. This may affect students' comprehension of the reading. As a solution, future research should consider using texts that are not only in printed form but also involve visual or multimedia elements, so that students can experience a more comprehensive reading experience that is comparable to the use of digital applications. The integration of visual elements in reading texts is expected to further improve student comprehension and

maximize the benefits of the Read Aloud method so that it can provide more significant results in improving students' reading comprehension skills

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