

The Implementation Of Storytelling Method To Improve Students' Reading Aloud In Elementary School

Nadia Hawalinda Harahap¹, Nur Habibah², Levandra Balti³

¹*Universitas Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo, Jambi, Indonesia*

Abstract – Reading aloud is an essential skill in English language learning that contributes to students' pronunciation, intonation, fluency, pausing, and confidence. However, many elementary school students in rural Indonesia struggle with reading aloud due to limited exposure, lack of motivation, and monotonous teaching methods. This study aimed to investigate the implementation of the storytelling method to improve students' reading aloud skills and to analyze its effectiveness in classroom practice. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in two cycles with 25 fifth-grade students of SDN 196/II Taman Agung. Data were collected through observation sheets of teacher and student activities as well as reading aloud tests assessed with a rubric. The results of the study showed an increase in reading aloud using the storytelling method. In Cycle I, the learning process average reached 73.00% with only 56% of students meeting the success criteria. After refining the method in Cycle II by adding visual aids, gestures, and retelling activities, the average learning process increased to 97.92%, and 92% of students achieved the success criteria. These results indicate that storytelling is an effective and practical method to enhance reading aloud performance and student engagement in English language

learning at the elementary level.

Keywords – Reading Aloud, Elementary Education, Classroom, Action Research

I. Introduction

English has increasingly become a central subject in the curriculum of many countries, including Indonesia, as it functions not only as a means of global communication but also as a gateway to academic resources, science, and technology. As one of the most widely spoken international languages, English is taught from the early stages of formal education with the expectation that students will acquire fundamental competencies in the four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, reading occupies a critical position because it provides students with access to knowledge and new information, broadens their worldview, and strengthens other language skills. Within the domain of reading, the ability to read aloud plays a particularly important role, especially at the elementary school level where students are still developing their foundational literacy. Reading aloud is not merely a mechanical act of vocalizing words from a text but also a pedagogical strategy that integrates pronunciation, intonation, pausing, fluency, and volume. This activity helps learners become familiar with the sound system of English, improves their oral communication skills, and fosters comprehension. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading aloud also provides meaningful exposure to authentic language use, which is often limited for learners in rural areas.

However, despite its importance, many Indonesian students continue to struggle with reading aloud. The situation becomes more pronounced in rural schools where students have little to no exposure to English outside the classroom. At SDN 196/II Taman Agung, where this research was conducted, preliminary

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63461/synterra.v1i1.293>

Corresponding author: Nadia Hawalinda Harahap
Universitas Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo
Email: nacahw@gmail.com

Received : 2025-11-04
Revised : 2025-11-24
Accepted : 2025-12-20
Published : 2025-12-23

The article is published with Open Access at
<https://journals.literaindo.com/synterra>

ISSN XXXX-XXXX

© 2025 Nadia Hawalinda Harahap, Nur Habibah, Levandra Balti; published by CV. Master Literasi Indonesia. This work is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

observations revealed that students encountered difficulties in several areas such as accurate pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. Most students applied Indonesian phonetic rules when pronouncing English words, resulting in mispronunciations that affected comprehension. Additionally, students tended to read slowly and hesitantly, displaying a lack of fluency and inability to process words in meaningful phrases. Low motivation and confidence further contributed to their reluctance to participate in classroom reading activities. One of the underlying causes of these challenges was the absence of engaging teaching methods. Teachers mostly employed conventional strategies, focusing on drills or having students read aloud repetitively without guidance on expression or comprehension. Such methods often led to boredom and disengagement, leaving students unmotivated to improve.

These challenges highlight the urgent need for innovative and interactive teaching strategies that can capture students' interest, support their linguistic development, and encourage active participation in class. One method that has gained attention in recent years is storytelling. Storytelling is a practice that has been part of human culture for centuries, serving not only as entertainment but also as a medium of education, moral transmission, and cultural preservation. In educational contexts, storytelling has been proven to engage learners' imagination, stimulate their interest, and provide a natural context for language use. When applied in English teaching, particularly for elementary school students, storytelling offers numerous benefits. It allows children to listen to stories in English, thereby acquiring vocabulary, expressions, and sentence structures in an authentic context. It also provides opportunities for them to practice reading aloud in a meaningful and enjoyable way, imitating the rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation modeled by the teacher.

The use of storytelling in the classroom transforms reading aloud from a mechanical exercise into an engaging activity filled with creativity and imagination. Students are not simply asked to read words from a text; rather, they become participants in a narrative, imagining characters, visualizing events, and internalizing moral lessons. This makes the learning experience more holistic, integrating cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. From a linguistic perspective, storytelling naturally incorporates the five components of reading aloud: pronunciation, intonation, pausing, fluency, and volume. Stories with dialogues, for instance, require changes in tone and expression, helping students practice intonation. Stories with moral lessons encourage comprehension, as students are motivated to understand

the meaning rather than just decode the text. Moreover, storytelling fosters interaction between teacher and students as well as among peers, creating a supportive environment where students feel less anxious about making mistakes.

Several scholars have emphasized the potential of storytelling in developing children's literacy. Mulyani et al. (2018) argue that storytelling stimulates imagination, enriches vocabulary, and fosters interest in reading and writing. Similarly, Widodo (2021) points out that storytelling encourages children to speak more confidently and develop their oral communication skills. Prastiwi and Musyarifah (2021) highlight that reading aloud stories can help focus children's attention, making them more engaged and motivated. These findings are supported by studies conducted in various educational contexts, which show that storytelling and reading aloud activities improve not only language skills but also socio-emotional aspects such as confidence, creativity, and moral development.

In the Indonesian context, where English is taught as a foreign language, storytelling provides an effective bridge between students' native culture and the target language. Many traditional stories, fables, and folktales can be adapted into English reading materials, making them relatable and familiar to students while simultaneously introducing them to English vocabulary and expressions. For example, animal fables commonly used in Indonesian culture, such as the story of the mouse deer or the turtle and the rabbit, can be retold in English, offering both linguistic practice and cultural continuity. By engaging with familiar storylines, students are more likely to be motivated and less intimidated by the challenges of learning a foreign language.

This study was inspired by both the challenges observed in the classroom and the potential of storytelling as a pedagogical strategy. The research was conducted through Classroom Action Research (CAR), which is particularly suited to addressing real classroom problems in a systematic and reflective manner. CAR involves iterative cycles of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, enabling researchers and teachers to collaborate in identifying problems, testing interventions, and refining strategies based on observed outcomes. In this study, two cycles of CAR were carried out, each consisting of two meetings. In Cycle I, the focus was on introducing storytelling using simple fables, observing how students responded, and assessing their reading aloud performance. Cycle II built upon the findings of the first cycle, introducing more interactive strategies such as

gestures, visual aids, and student retelling activities to enhance engagement.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it adds to the growing body of literature on storytelling and reading aloud in EFL contexts, particularly in rural Indonesian settings where resources and exposure are limited. While previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of storytelling in enhancing literacy and language skills, few have specifically focused on its role in improving reading aloud skills in elementary school students. Practically, the research offers a concrete strategy for teachers facing similar challenges in their classrooms. By documenting the process and results of implementing storytelling, this study provides insights that can guide other educators in adopting and adapting the method. For schools, the research highlights the value of integrating interactive and student-centered approaches to make English learning more effective and enjoyable.

Furthermore, the research aligns with broader educational goals in Indonesia, where the government has emphasized the importance of developing students' literacy and communication skills as part of the national curriculum. Reading aloud is explicitly mentioned as a component of literacy development in the early grades, making this study relevant to current policy directions. The use of storytelling also resonates with efforts to make learning more culturally grounded, as it allows teachers to draw upon local narratives and values while teaching a global language.

In conclusion, the challenges faced by students at SDN 196/II Taman Agung reflect a broader issue in EFL education in rural Indonesia: the difficulty of mastering reading aloud skills due to limited exposure, lack of engaging methods, and low motivation. Storytelling offers a promising solution by transforming reading aloud into a meaningful, enjoyable, and interactive activity. By engaging students' imagination, enhancing their vocabulary and pronunciation, and fostering their confidence, storytelling has the potential to significantly improve their reading aloud performance. This study seeks to describe the process of implementing the storytelling method and evaluate its effectiveness in improving students' reading aloud skills. The findings are expected to provide valuable contributions to the field of English language education, particularly in the context of elementary schools in rural areas, and to serve as a practical guide for teachers, schools, and policymakers in enhancing literacy outcomes.

II. Methodology Section

This research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design because it was considered the most appropriate approach to solve the real problems observed in the classroom. CAR enables researchers and teachers to work collaboratively to improve the quality of teaching and learning through systematic planning, action, observation, and reflection. The choice of this method was based on the fact that the fifth-grade students of SDN 196/II Taman Agung experienced low achievement in reading aloud, and immediate intervention was required to improve their skills. CAR also provided flexibility, allowing the researcher to implement strategies, monitor the process directly, evaluate the outcomes, and make improvements in subsequent cycles. This cyclical nature of CAR ensured that the intervention using storytelling could be continuously refined until the desired results were achieved.

The research was conducted at SDN 196/II Taman Agung, a rural elementary school located in Bungo Regency, Jambi Province. The participants were 25 fifth-grade students with heterogeneous abilities in English. Some students showed basic competence in recognizing English vocabulary, while others struggled with pronunciation and fluency. The limited exposure to English outside the classroom also contributed to their difficulties in reading aloud. The setting was considered representative of rural schools in Indonesia where resources are limited and teaching methods are often conventional, making it suitable for exploring the potential of storytelling as an alternative strategy.

The study was carried out in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two meetings. In the planning stage, the researcher collaborated with the English teacher to prepare lesson plans, select appropriate stories, design observation sheets, and develop assessment rubrics for reading aloud. The action stage involved the implementation of the storytelling method, where the teacher told stories in an engaging manner using intonation, expressions, and gestures, followed by student participation through reading aloud activities and discussions. In the observation stage, both the teacher and collaborator used observation sheets to record students' participation, enthusiasm, and performance. The reflection stage was then conducted to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the cycle, leading to improvements in the following cycle.

Data collection techniques included observation and tests. The observation was used to monitor the learning process, covering both teacher and student activities,

while the test was conducted to measure students' reading aloud skills. The test assessed pronunciation, intonation, pausing, fluency, and volume using a rubric adapted from Huda (2013). Data were analyzed qualitatively by describing students' engagement and participation during storytelling activities, and quantitatively by calculating the average scores and percentages of students meeting the success criteria. Success indicators were set at a minimum of 75% for both the quality of the learning process and the students' reading aloud performance. By combining qualitative and quantitative analysis, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of how storytelling influenced students' reading aloud skills and how the process could be improved through iterative cycles.

III. Results

The implementation of the storytelling method in teaching reading aloud at SDN 196/II Taman Agung was conducted through Classroom Action Research (CAR) consisting of two cycles. Each cycle included the steps of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The main objective was to improve students' reading aloud skills, which encompassed five indicators: pronunciation, intonation, pausing, fluency, and volume. In addition, the research also aimed to increase students' motivation, engagement, and participation in the learning process. The findings of this research are presented in two main parts: the process of implementing the storytelling method and the results of its implementation as reflected in students' performance.

At the outset, preliminary observation revealed several challenges that hindered students' ability to read aloud effectively. Most students mispronounced English words by applying Indonesian phonetic rules, leading to incorrect articulation. For instance, words like school, book, or teacher were pronounced based on Indonesian spelling rather than English phonetics. Furthermore, students lacked fluency and tended to read word by word, without attention to intonation or natural pausing. This resulted in monotonous and hesitant delivery, which indicated that they had not yet internalized the rhythm of the English language. Their volume was often too soft, showing low confidence, and many avoided participation altogether due to anxiety or fear of making mistakes. These initial findings underscored the need for a method that was not only instructional but also motivational, encouraging students to participate actively and confidently.

In the first cycle, the storytelling method was introduced using simple fables that were familiar to students. The teacher began by telling a story with expression, intonation, and gestures, which captured the students' attention. This was followed by discussions in which students were encouraged to recall parts of the story, answer simple comprehension questions, and then attempt to read aloud passages from the story themselves. The implementation showed several positive developments compared to the preliminary observation. Students were more engaged during the lesson, and many expressed enthusiasm in listening to the story. They began to imitate the teacher's intonation and gestures, which helped them understand the rhythm of reading aloud.

However, when students were asked to read aloud, several problems persisted. While some showed improvement in pronunciation, many still struggled to differentiate English sounds from Indonesian ones. Intonation was often flat, and fluency was disrupted by frequent pauses and hesitations. Only a minority of students managed to read with appropriate volume and confidence. The quantitative results confirmed this partial improvement. Based on the observation sheet, the average score for the learning process in Cycle I was

73.00%, which indicated that although the storytelling method engaged students, its effectiveness in achieving full participation had not yet reached the expected standard. Furthermore, the percentage of students achieving the success criteria in the reading aloud test was only 56% (14 of 25 students).

Table 1. Student Learning Process Cycle 1 Recapitulation

Number of students	Score	category
1	45	Poor
1	50	Poor
1	55	Satisfactory
2	59	Satisfactory
2	64	Satisfactory
4	68	Satisfactory
1	73	Satisfactory
2	77	Excellent
4	82	Excellent
7	86	Excellent
Mean	73%	

Based on the result of observation from using storytelling method in class V of SDN 196 Taman Agung it has shown the result. This cycle I research still has shortcomings in the implementation using the

storytelling method to improve reading aloud in students of SDN 196 Taman Agung from researchers and students. Researchers have discussed with English teachers to find out the shortcomings in the implementation as follows:

In the implementation of Cycle I, observer find that the learning process using the storytelling method had not been carried out optimally and comprehensively. One of the most noticeable shortcomings was the lack of effective ice breaking activities at the beginning of the lesson. This activity should have been utilized to create a warmer, more enjoyable atmosphere and to stimulate students' enthusiasm before entering the core material. The classroom teacher advised that ice breaking should be maximized as an effective opening strategy. In addition, the learning media used in this cycle lacked engaging visual elements such as pictures of animals, story illustrations, or other visuals that could support students' comprehension and stimulate their interest in reading. This is especially important considering the visual nature of elementary students, who tend to respond more positively when lessons include vivid and concrete imagery.

The reflection stage revealed that although students enjoyed the storytelling activity, they required additional support to fully develop their reading aloud skills. It was observed that some students were still hesitant, possibly because the activity relied heavily on teacher-led storytelling and less on student-centered participation. Moreover, the absence of visual aids or gestures from the students themselves limited their ability to engage with the text creatively. Therefore, in planning Cycle II, the researcher and teacher decided to integrate more interactive elements such as pictures, role-play, and opportunities for students to retell parts of the story using their own words. The purpose of these modifications was to build confidence, encourage active involvement, and provide a more meaningful context for practicing reading aloud.

The second cycle was designed to address the weaknesses identified in Cycle I. This time, the storytelling sessions included the use of visual aids such as story illustrations and flashcards to support comprehension. The teacher not only told the story but also encouraged students to participate actively by mimicking gestures, taking roles as characters, and retelling short parts of the story. By involving students more directly, the storytelling activities became more engaging and participatory.

The impact of these changes was evident in both qualitative and quantitative results. Students demonstrated noticeable improvement in pronunciation, as they could now imitate sounds more accurately after repeated practice within the context of the story. Their intonation improved as they began to use rising and falling tones to match the narrative. Pausing was more natural because students had a clearer understanding of punctuation and sentence structure. Fluency increased, as shown by fewer hesitations and smoother delivery. Most significantly, students' confidence and volume improved, with many speaking more audibly and enthusiastically compared to the first cycle.

The observation sheet for Cycle II indicated a significant increase in the quality of the learning process, with an average score of 97.92%, showing that nearly all aspects of the lesson plan were successfully implemented. The results of the reading aloud test also reflected remarkable progress, with 92% of students (23 of 25) achieving the success criteria. This represented a sharp improvement compared to Cycle I, suggesting that the modifications made in Cycle II were effective in addressing students' difficulties.

Table 2. Student Learning Process Cycle II Recapitulation

Excellent	
92%	3
96%	7
100%	15
Amount	25
Mean	97,92%

Based on the implementation of actions in Cycle II, which consisted of two meetings, the researcher observed a significant improvement in both the learning process and the students' reading aloud skills. The learning process using the storytelling method, supported by ice-breaking activities, visual media, and reward-giving, successfully created a more engaging, enjoyable, and interactive classroom atmosphere. This directly impacted the students' increased enthusiasm and confidence in performing reading aloud in front of the class.

IV. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that storytelling is a powerful method for improving reading aloud in elementary school students. The results align with those of previous studies. For example, Rahayu and Mustadi (2022) found that read-aloud strategies improved fluency and comprehension in young learners, while Putri and Gaffar (2023) reported increased motivation

and expression when students practiced reading aloud. Similarly, Mulyani et al. (2018) emphasized that storytelling creates a meaningful context for language learning, stimulating imagination and interest. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating how storytelling can be adapted to a rural Indonesian classroom, with clear evidence of improved student performance across multiple indicators.

From a theoretical perspective, the success of storytelling can be explained by its ability to integrate linguistic, cognitive, and affective aspects of learning. Linguistically, storytelling provides authentic input that models correct pronunciation and intonation. Cognitively, it encourages comprehension by requiring students to follow a narrative sequence and make sense of events. Affectively, it reduces anxiety and builds motivation by presenting language learning as an enjoyable and meaningful experience. The interactive elements introduced in Cycle II, such as role-play and visual aids, further strengthened these dimensions by engaging students more actively and providing multiple modes of learning. Practically, the study demonstrates that storytelling can be an effective pedagogical tool in rural schools with limited resources. Stories can be drawn from local culture and adapted into English, making them relatable and motivating for students. Teachers do not need expensive materials; simple illustrations or gestures are sufficient to make stories engaging. The method also encourages creativity, as students are given opportunities to retell stories in their own words, thereby practicing both comprehension and oral expression.

Another important implication is that storytelling fosters holistic development. Beyond linguistic skills, students develop confidence, imagination, and social interaction. By taking roles in stories, they practice empathy and cooperation, learning to express themselves in front of peers. This aligns with the broader goals of education, which aim not only to build academic skills but also to nurture character and creativity.

The improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II also highlights the importance of reflective practice in teaching. The researcher and teacher identified weaknesses in the first cycle and made adjustments, which led to significant gains in the second cycle. This demonstrates that teaching is a dynamic process that requires continuous reflection and adaptation. For teachers, this underscores the value of being responsive to students' needs and willing to modify strategies when initial attempts do not fully succeed.

In summary, the findings and discussion show that storytelling is an effective and practical method for improving reading aloud in elementary schools. The method addresses the core difficulties faced by students, including pronunciation, intonation, fluency, pausing, and volume, while also boosting motivation and confidence. The results suggest that storytelling should be integrated more systematically into English language teaching, particularly in rural schools where conventional methods often fail to engage students.

V. Conclusion

The findings of this research show that the storytelling method is an effective strategy to improve the reading aloud skills of elementary school students. At the beginning of the study, most students had difficulties in pronunciation, intonation, fluency, pausing, and reading volume, and they showed low confidence and participation. After the implementation of storytelling in Cycle I, some improvements were observed, but the results were not yet satisfactory, with only 56% of students reaching the success criteria and the average learning process score at 73.00%. Reflection on this cycle indicated the need for more interactive elements to support students' engagement.

In Cycle II, the storytelling method was refined by adding visual aids, gestures, and student retelling activities. These modifications produced significant progress, with 92% of students achieving the success criteria and the average process score increasing to 97.92%. Students became more confident, enthusiastic, and fluent in reading aloud. Overall, the storytelling method not only improved technical aspects of reading aloud but also enhanced students' motivation and confidence. Therefore, storytelling can be recommended as an effective and practical approach for English teachers, particularly in rural schools, to improve literacy and foster active participation in language learning.

VI. References

- Abdussamad, Z. (2021). *Metode Penelitian kualitatif*. CV Syakir Media Press.
- Arianti, F., Martati, B., & Putra, D. (2023). Analisis Metode Reading Aloud Dalam Pembelajaran Literasi Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Perseda*, 6(2), 142–151.
- Azhari, I., & Muassomah, M. (2024). Storytelling Sebagai Metode Pembelajaran Maharah Kalam. *Al Mi'yar: Jurnal Ilmiah*

Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban, 7(2), 826. <https://doi.org/10.35931/am.v.7i2.3908>

Bujangga, H. (2022). Metode Reading Aloud dalam membantu Siswa dengan Kesulitan Belajar Disleksia (Pembelajaran Inovatif Progresif). *Genderag Asa: Journal of Primary Education*, 3(1), 63–78.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Erya, W. I., & Pustika, R. (2021). Students' Perception Towards the Use of Webtoon to Improve Reading Comprehension Skill. In *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning (JELTL)*, 2(1). <http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/english-language-teaching/index>

Fitria, W. (2019). Reading Interest and Reading Comprehension: A Correlational Study. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 4(1), 95–107. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1410>

Ningsih, F. R., Ginting, D., & Yulianto, W. E. (2023). The Effects Of Storytelling Teaching Style On Elementary Students' Reading Comprehension. *Journal of English Educational Study (JEES)*, 6(2), 132–141. <https://doi.org/10.31932/jees.v6i2.2472>

Huda, A. A. (2013). Peningkatan Kemampuan Membaca Nyaring Melalui Media Komakas (Penelitian pada siswa kelas 2 SD Negri Windusari 1).

Nurdiana, & Amelia, R. (2017). *Interpretive Reading. Publishing and Consulting Company*.

Nurjanah, A. A., & Wakhudin, W. (2023, October 18). Storytelling to Enhance Emotional Intelligence: A Narrative Literature Review. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.22-7-20>

Rahayu, & Mustadi, A. (2022). The Read-Aloud Method to Develop Reading Literacy at the School's Educational Park. *Jurnal Prima Edukasia*, 10(2), 104–113.

Nurwida, M. (2016). Peningkatan Keterampilan Berbicara melalui Metode Story Telling untuk Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Ilmiah Guru Cope*, 2(2), 1–8.

Rahayu, & Auliya. (2021). The Implementation of Reading Aloud Through Virtual Meeting on EFL Primary Students in Thailand. *Journal of English Education Literature and Linguistics*, 4(1), 31–42.

Rambe, A. M., Sumadi, T., & Meilani, R. S. M. (2021). Peranan Storytelling dalam Pengembangan Kemampuan Berbicara pada Anak Usia 4- 5 Tahun. *Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5(2), 2134–2145. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obse.si.v5i2.1121>

Rivers, W. M. (2018). *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*. University of Chicago Press.

Rusiyono, R., & Apriani, A.-N. (2020). Pengaruh Metode Storytelling terhadap Penanaman Karakter Nasionalisme pada Siswa SD. *Jurnal Literasi*, 10(1), 101–119. <http://journal.uny.ac.id/index.php/23.2335609>

Sersanawawi, L., & Daulay, S. H. (2023). *Improving Your Reading Skill*. CV Cakrawala Satria Mandiri.

Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.