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## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE READ-ALoud METHOD ON READING FLUENCY AMONG FOURTH-GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the read-aloud method in improving the reading fluency of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 24 Ani Senabah, Sejangkung Subdistrict, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan. The study employed a quantitative approach using a one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. The research subjects consisted of all 26 fourth-grade students selected through total sampling. Data were collected through pretest and posttest read-aloud performance assessments measuring three aspects of reading fluency: accuracy, fluency, and prosody. The instrument used a 1–4 scale rubric validated by two Indonesian language education experts and demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.82). The treatment was conducted in four learning sessions involving teacher modeling, student read-aloud practice, and corrective feedback. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, paired sample t-test, and Cohen's d effect size analysis with the assistance of SPSS software. The results showed an increase in the mean score from 58.60 to 78.60 after the intervention, with a statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest scores ( $p < 0.05$ ). The findings indicate that the read-aloud method is effective in improving students' reading fluency and can serve as an alternative instructional strategy to strengthen elementary students' literacy skills, particularly in prosodic reading aspects that support overall reading comprehension.

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### Keywords

Accuracy, Elementary Students, Prosody, Read-Aloud Method, Reading Fluency.



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## INTRODUCTION

Reading ability is a fundamental literacy skill that plays a crucial role in supporting students' academic success in elementary school. Reading is not merely the ability to recognize letters and words; it also involves reading fluency, including accuracy, speed, expression, and comprehension. Students who read fluently are generally able to understand texts more effectively and participate more actively in classroom learning activities. Reading fluency also contributes to the development of critical thinking and communication skills needed for higher levels of education. However, various studies have shown that elementary school students' reading abilities, particularly fluency, remain relatively low. Many students still experience difficulties in pronunciation, intonation, and maintaining smooth reading flow, which can hinder their overall comprehension and academic performance. Therefore, effective instructional strategies are needed to improve students' reading fluency from an early stage (Gianistika, 2021; Nurmalasari, 2022; Prayogo & Citrawati, 2023; Sari, 2023; Sulfiati, 2022).

Students' low reading fluency is influenced by various factors, including limited structured reading practice and instructional methods that have not optimally trained prosodic aspects such as intonation, expression, and pronunciation. Reading instruction in elementary schools still tends to emphasize text comprehension and decoding skills, while fluency development often receives less attention. As a result, many students experience difficulties in reading smoothly, accurately, and expressively, which can negatively affect their comprehension and overall academic achievement (Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018; Sabatini et al., 2019; Torppa et al., 2020). One instructional strategy to improve reading fluency is the read-aloud method. This method provides students with opportunities to practice pronunciation, intonation, and expression in real time, while enabling teachers to provide immediate corrective feedback. Several previous studies have shown that the read-aloud method is effective in improving students' reading fluency, confidence, vocabulary mastery, and engagement in classroom learning activities, particularly at the elementary school level (Fadillah et al., 2024; Ilyas et al., 2022; Kombong et al., 2022; Lamis et al., 2022; Tukan et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, previous studies still have limitations, particularly in comprehensively measuring reading fluency and in the use of systematic research designs. Furthermore, research focusing on fourth-grade elementary school students remains relatively limited (Hasibuan et al., 2025; Kartini et al., 2025; Muflikah et al., 2025; Nursyahada et al., 2024; Safitri et al., 2024). Therefore, research is needed that specifically tests the effectiveness of the read-aloud method using

measurable indicators of reading fluency.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of the read-aloud method in improving the reading fluency of fourth-grade elementary school students. The study is expected to contribute to the development of more effective literacy instruction and provide practical guidance for teachers in enhancing students' reading abilities, particularly in fluency-related aspects. In addition, the findings may serve as a reference for future studies on elementary literacy learning. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated and inferential quantitative approach to measuring and analyzing reading fluency. Unlike previous studies that tended to examine reading fluency partially or focused only on certain aspects, this study evaluates reading fluency comprehensively through three major indicators: accuracy, fluency, and prosody, using a single structured assessment instrument (Da Silva et al., 2025; Shin, 2021; Wang et al., 2025). Furthermore, the study applies statistical hypothesis testing and effect size analysis to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the read-aloud method.

Furthermore, this study not only describes improvements in reading ability but also empirically tests the effectiveness of the read-aloud method using a quasi-experimental design, supplemented with inferential statistical tests and effect-size analysis (Cohen's *d*) to assess the strength of the treatment's influence. This approach provides stronger empirical evidence compared to previous studies, which were generally limited to descriptive analysis. Another novelty lies in the study's focus on fourth-grade elementary school students, a group that has been relatively underrepresented in previous studies, and in its emphasis on prosody as an integral aspect of reading fluency that is often overlooked in instruction. Thus, this study makes a theoretical contribution by strengthening the concept of reading fluency as a multidimensional construct, and a practical contribution through a measurement model and the application of a more structured, statistically validated read-aloud method in elementary school instruction.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. The design was selected to examine the effect of the read-aloud method on the reading fluency of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 24 Ani Senabah, Sejangkung Subdistrict, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan. The one-group pretest-posttest design enabled the researcher to systematically compare students' reading abilities before and after the intervention within a real

classroom context (Creswell, 2017). The study population consisted of all fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 24 Ani Senabah, totaling 26 students in one class. Since the population was relatively small and homogeneous, all students were selected as the research sample using a total sampling technique to obtain a comprehensive representation of students' reading abilities.

The primary data were obtained from students' pretest and posttest scores on read-aloud performance assessments. In contrast, the secondary data were derived from school documents and relevant literature related to reading fluency and the read-aloud method. Data were collected through a read-aloud performance test developed based on three indicators of reading fluency: accuracy, fluency, and prosody. The assessment employed a 1–4 scale rubric validated through expert judgment by two Indonesian language education specialists and demonstrated good reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.82. The treatment was conducted across four learning sessions, each lasting  $2 \times 35$  minutes, involving teacher modeling of read-aloud activities, students taking turns reading aloud, and teacher feedback on pronunciation, intonation, and expression.

Data analysis was conducted in SPSS in several stages. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the mean and standard deviation of students' pretest and posttest scores. A Shapiro-Wilk normality test was performed to ensure that the data met the assumption of normality before hypothesis testing. A paired-samples t-test was then employed to test the research hypotheses:  $H_1$ : the read-aloud method significantly improves students' reading fluency; and  $H_0$ : the read-aloud method does not significantly improve students' reading fluency, with  $p < 0.05$  as the criterion for statistical significance. In addition, Cohen's  $d$  effect size analysis was conducted to measure the practical magnitude of the treatment effect, interpreted as small (0.2), moderate (0.5), and large (0.8). These analyses were intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the read-aloud method in improving students' reading fluency.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Descriptive Statistics**

A descriptive analysis was conducted to examine students' reading fluency before and after the implementation of the read-aloud method.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Students' Reading Fluency

Group	Mean	SD	N
Pre-test	58.60	7.17	26
Posttest	78.60	7.19	26

The analysis shows that students' average reading fluency scores increased significantly. The average pretest score of 58.60 increased to 78.60 on the posttest. Meanwhile, the standard deviation scores on the pretest (7.17) and posttest (7.19) were relatively similar, indicating consistent data distribution across both measurements. This increase in the average score indicates an improvement in students' reading fluency following the intervention using the read-aloud method.

### Normality Test

Normality tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the assumptions of parametric analysis. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test showed that the pretest data had a p-value of 0.312 and the posttest data had a p-value of 0.421.

**Table 2.** Tests of Normality

Variable	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	0.957	25	0.312
Posttest	0.964	25	0.421

Both values are greater than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that the data are normally distributed. Thus, the analysis can proceed using a parametric test, namely the paired sample t-test.

### Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether students' reading fluency changed before and after the intervention. The results of the paired-samples t-test indicate a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores.

**Table 3.** Paired Samples Test

Paired Differences	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test-Post-test	-20.00	7.18	-14.23	25	$p < 0.05$

The mean difference between the pretest and posttest was -20.00 with a *t-value* of -14.23 and a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ . These results indicate a significant improvement in reading fluency following the implementation of the read-aloud method.

## **Effect Size**

In addition to the significance test, this study also assessed the strength of the treatment effect using effect-size analysis. The results revealed that Cohen's  $d$  was 2.79, indicating a large effect size. This finding demonstrates that the read-aloud method not only produces statistically significant improvements in students' reading fluency but also has a strong practical impact on their reading performance. The large effect size indicates that the intervention substantially contributed to students' ability to read more accurately, fluently, and expressively after the treatment sessions. Furthermore, the results suggest that continuous, structured read-aloud activities can effectively support the development of students' literacy skills at the elementary school level. Therefore, the read-aloud method may be considered a highly effective instructional strategy for improving reading fluency and strengthening foundational literacy competencies in classroom learning contexts.

## **Discussion**

The research results indicate that implementing the read-aloud method significantly improves elementary school students' reading fluency. This improvement is demonstrated by the increase in students' average score from 58.60 on the pretest to 78.60 on the posttest after the intervention. In addition, the paired-samples  $t$ -test revealed a statistically significant difference in students' reading abilities before and after the treatment ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings confirm that the read-aloud method effectively enhances students' reading performance, particularly in accuracy, fluency, and intonation. Through repeated oral reading practice and direct teacher feedback, students became more confident and expressive while reading texts aloud (Baker et al., 2020; Chien, 2020; Ri, 2018). The findings also suggest that structured read-aloud activities can create a more interactive literacy learning environment and help students develop stronger foundational reading skills needed to support overall comprehension and academic achievement.

Theoretically, this improvement can be explained by the characteristics of the read-aloud method, which involves simultaneous phonological and prosodic processes. During read-aloud activities, students not only decode the text but also practice pronunciation, intonation, and expression as they read aloud. These repeated practices help students develop automatic word recognition and smoother reading flow, which are essential components of reading fluency. In addition, teacher modeling and immediate corrective feedback during the activity enable students to identify and correct errors in real time. The interactive nature of the read-aloud method also

increases students' confidence, concentration, and engagement in reading activities, thereby creating a more meaningful and effective literacy learning experience in elementary classrooms (Badawi et al., 2021; Maryani & Seinsiani, 2025; Rodríguez-Fuentes & Calle-Díaz, 2023).

The involvement of prosodic aspects is crucial in developing reading fluency because prosody functions as a bridge between word recognition and text comprehension (Hudson et al., 2008; Samuels, 2006). Through appropriate intonation, rhythm, stress, and expression, students are better able to understand the meaning and emotional content of a text while maintaining smooth and meaningful reading. In read-aloud activities, students actively engage in these prosodic elements, enabling them to connect decoding skills with comprehension processes more effectively. Therefore, the read-aloud method offers a more comprehensive reading experience than instructional approaches that focus solely on text comprehension. By integrating pronunciation, fluency, and expression simultaneously, this method helps students improve not only their technical reading skills but also their overall understanding and confidence in reading activities.

This study aligns with previous research indicating that the read-aloud method is effective in improving elementary school students' reading skills (Fadillah et al., 2024; Kombong et al., 2022). However, this study provides more comprehensive empirical support by measuring reading fluency in a multidimensional manner, encompassing accuracy, fluency, and intonation within a single measurement framework (Heidari Vincheh et al., 2024; Yan et al., 2026). This approach allows for a more holistic understanding of students' reading skill development. Another key finding is the effect size, which is classified as very large (Cohen's  $d = 2.79$ ). This value indicates that the impact of the read-aloud method is not only statistically significant but also substantial in practice. The magnitude of this effect size can be explained by several factors, including consistent practice intensity, immediate teacher feedback, and students' active engagement in the learning process (Hurst & Griffity, 2015; Košak-Babuder et al., 2019; Moussa & Koester, 2022; Sezer et al., 2021). This aligns with findings that targeted feedback practices during reading aloud improve students' reading fluency (Grønli et al., 2026). This very large effect size should be interpreted with caution, as a study without a control group can overestimate the treatment effect.

In addition, the use of texts appropriate to students' developmental levels also supports the improvement of reading skills. Relevant and contextual materials help students better understand the text and boost their confidence in reading. This indicates that the effectiveness of the read-aloud method is determined not only by the method itself but also by the quality of its implementation

(Budianti & Rostini, 2023; Ciptaningrum, 2023). From a pedagogical perspective, the read-aloud method offers a more interactive, participatory learning experience. Students do not merely act as recipients of information but also as active participants in the learning process. This engagement leads to increased attention, motivation, and self-confidence in reading (Dyansatithi & Hasanah, 2024; Lamis et al., 2022). Thus, this method enhances not only cognitive aspects but also affective aspects in reading instruction.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations, particularly the lack of a control group, which may introduce bias into the results. Additionally, the limited sample size poses a challenge for generalizing the findings. Similar limitations were also found in previous studies in the context of elementary education (Nursyahada et al., 2024; Safitri et al., 2024). Therefore, future research is advised to use a stronger experimental design involving a control group and a larger sample size to obtain more generalizable results.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the study's results and data analysis, the read-aloud method is effective in improving the reading fluency of fourth-grade elementary school students. This finding is supported by the increase in the average score from 58.60 in the pretest to 78.60 in the posttest, as well as the paired-samples t-test results showing a statistically significant difference in students' reading abilities before and after the intervention ( $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, the large effect size indicates that the read-aloud method has a strong practical impact on improving students' reading fluency, particularly in accuracy, fluency, and prosody. Therefore, the read-aloud method can serve as an effective instructional strategy to strengthen elementary students' literacy skills and support the development of basic reading competencies in classroom learning.

This study has several strengths, including the use of an integrated assessment instrument that comprehensively measures reading fluency through accuracy, fluency, and prosody, as well as the application of inferential statistical analysis and effect size testing to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effectiveness. However, this study is limited by the relatively small sample size and the absence of a control group, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger, more diverse samples, employ experimental designs with control groups, and explore the long-term effects of the read-aloud method on students' literacy development and reading comprehension.

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