Implementation of Reading Aloud Methods to Improve Early Reading Skills: A Case Study Analysis in Elementary School

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to examine the implementation of the reading aloud method to improve early reading skills among first-grade students at public alementary school 1 Talesan. The focus includes the instructional process, student responses, skill development, and challenges faced during the intervention.

Methodology: This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected using observation sheets, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis. The study involved one Grade I teacher and 19 students. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, and data validation employed triangulation of sources and techniques.

Main Findings: The reading aloud method significantly improved students' prosodic reading skills, particularly intonation and vocal clarity. Students demonstrated increased participation and reading confidence. Challenges included varied reading proficiency levels and limited instructional time, which were mitigated through adaptive strategies such as visual aids and individual mentoring.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study presents a contextualized model for implementing the reading aloud method in early-grade classrooms using socio-emotional scaffolding. The findings contribute new insights into integrating expressive reading with adaptive teaching to enhance early literacy in post-pandemic learning environments.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Basic education has a strategic role as the main foundation in shaping students' early literacy skills. This foundation is decisive in the development of reading skills, which are important basic skills to support the success of students learning at the next level. Reading ability also affects the absorption of teaching materials, as well as supporting the development of children's critical thinking skills and creativity [1], [2].

The low reading ability of early grade students is still a major problem in various basic education units. According to [3], [4] reported that 65% of the 35 students in grade I had not achieved their average reading ability, which shows that literacy challenges are still happening in the field. This problem has an impact on delays in mastering other competencies that require a thorough understanding of the text. Reading difficulties for early grade students include letter recognition, pronunciation of letter sounds, and the arrangement of syllables into meaningful words. [5]-[7] emphasized that this condition is often exacerbated by the lack of support for the literacy environment at home and the limitation of reading materials that are appropriate to the needs of age. [8], [9] adding that the inability to read can reduce learning achievement in various subjects.

Initial observations of grade I students at Public Elementary school 1 Talesan show that initial reading ability is still in the low category. Observations during learning show that most students still have difficulty recognizing letters, spelling syllables, and reading simple words. When reading together, some students only imitate the reading of their teacher or friends without understanding the content of the text being read. The condition of reading learning in the classroom also faces obstacles in terms of learning motivation and the limitations of teaching media. The low interest of students in reading activities can be seen from the lack of active participation and limited response when given the opportunity to read. Teachers have not taken advantage of a variety of learning media that can foster students' enthusiasm, so that learning activities tend to be monotonous and do not stimulate optimal early literacy interaction.

The reading aloud method emerges as a potential solution to overcome the problem Reading aloud has a strategic position as a pedagogical approach in building reading skills at the basic level [10], [11]. According to [12], [13]Explaining that reading aloud is a reading activity that requires technical skills while creating active interaction between teachers and students. This activity not only involves the pronunciation of the text, but also builds emotional connections and understanding of meaning during the reading process.
According to [14],
"Read-alouds offer a space for teachers to model fluency, tone, and comprehension strategies while also emotionally connecting with students through voice", highlighting the affective and performative dimensions of this method." As [15] assert, "Inadequate reading abilities can reduce learning achievement in various subjects", indicating the far-reaching academic consequences of low early literacy levels"

The effectiveness of the reading aloud method has been proven in various empirical studies that show an improvement in initial reading ability. [16] It was found that this method had a positive impact on the fluency of reading and comprehension of texts, especially in first-grade students. Similar results were also reported by [17], [18] which shows a significant improvement in the ability to comprehend the content of the reading after consistent use of this method. The increased cognitive benefits of the reading aloud method compared to conventional approaches have been proven in various cross-contextual research. [19] It shows that daily reading aloud activities are able to increase the cognitive capacity of students as a whole. [20] It also identifies that this approach strengthens and improves basic reading skills, listening skills, and oral reading fluency simultaneously.

The urgency of this research is getting stronger as the literacy gap has widened in the post-pandemic period. [21] emphasized that the inequality of reading ability between students has increased significantly after online learning lasts for a long time. [22] noted that 68% of grade I students experienced a decline in reading skills, while conventional approaches have proven to be unable to provide optimal solutions to the problem. This condition requires innovation in the application of reading learning methods that are more contextual and responsive to the characteristics of the digital generation. [23] underlining the importance of developing learning strategies that are in line with the needs of 21st century students, emphasizing the flexibility of approaches, the meaning of learning experiences, and the use of methods that are able to bridge the cognitive and affective aspects of students simultaneously.

In terms of research novelty, this study presents a contextualized implementation model of the reading aloud method that integrates socio-emotional scaffolding, teacher expressiveness, and media-supported interaction. While previous studies largely focus on cognitive outcomes, this research provides process-oriented insights that explore how planning, classroom delivery, and management strategies influence student engagement and reading behavior. This study is among the few that thoroughly documents the actual classroom practice of reading aloud in a low-resource setting, offering a nuanced view into the emotional and interactive dimensions of early literacy instruction.

This study aims to examine the implementation of the reading aloud method as an alternative approach in improving the reading skills of grade I elementary school students. The focus of the analysis is directed to three main aspects, namely the process of implementing the method, the factors that affect the effectiveness of implementation, and its impact on students' initial reading skills. This framework of objectives is based on the literacy approach developed by [24] which emphasises the importance of a thorough analysis of practice Reading learning as the basis for developing relevant and sustainable learning models.

This research has important significance in the development of theory, learning practices, and early literacy education policies. Theoretical contributions can be seen from the development of the implementation model of the reading aloud method which is based on a socio-emotional approach as the foundation of learning interaction [25]. This model provides a new perspective on the relationship between emotions, motivations, and cognitive processes of students when reading. The practical contribution of this research is reflected in the preparation of guidelines for the implementation of reading aloud that are tailored to the context of the early elementary school classroom. Teachers can leverage this guide to design engaging, adaptive, and effective reading learning. In terms of education policy, the findings of this research have the potential to be a reference in the development of a literacy curriculum that is more responsive to the actual needs of students.

2.   RESEARCH METHOD

This study applies a qualitative approach with a case study design [26] to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation practice of the Reading Aloud method. The main focus is directed at teachers' efforts to improve students' reading skills through reading aloud activities that are carried out in a structured and contextual manner. The location of the research was determined at Elementary school 1 Talesan, Wonogiri Regency, Indonesia, with the selection of class I as the main subject due to the characteristics of early learners who require intensive stimulation in literacy development.

The selection of locations and subjects is based on considerations of the school's uniqueness in implementing reading learning strategies at the elementary level. The school showed that there was an initiative of teachers in adopting a reading aloud approach even though learning facilities and media were still limited. These characteristics make grade I of Elementary school 1 Talesan a relevant context for the exploration of qualitative learning practices.

The data collection process was carried out using a participatory approach involving observation, interviews, and assessment observations. The main data was obtained from field interactions which were then strengthened by secondary data such as learning plan documents, video recordings of reading aloud activities, and documentation of students' activities during the implementation of the reading aloud method. Grade I teachers play the role of key informants because they directly implement learning methods, while students and parents act as subjects who experience and observe the learning process of reading from a practical and emotional perspective.

This study employed a purposive sampling technique, which is commonly used in qualitative research to select information-rich cases relevant to the research objectives. The participants, consisting of one Grade I teacher and 19 students aged 6–7 years at Elementary school 1 Talesan, were deliberately chosen based on specific criteria. The selection was grounded in the school's distinctive characteristics, particularly its proactive yet resource-limited efforts to apply the reading aloud method in literacy instruction. The teacher was selected as a key informant due to their direct role in implementing the method, while students were chosen to reflect diverse reading experiences within the early learning context. This purposive approach ensured that the data collected would provide deep insights into the actual classroom dynamics, challenges, and effectiveness of the reading aloud method.

The research instrument was prepared to explore in depth the implementation of the reading aloud method in early reading learning in grade I of elementary school. The main instrument consists of observation sheets, interview guidelines, and documentation guides. Observation sheets are used to record various aspects of learning implementation, ranging from planning, implementation, evaluation, attitudes and interactions of students, to obstacles and handling efforts carried out by teachers. The interview guidelines are designed to obtain detailed information from grade I teachers as key informants related to the process of preparing teaching modules, material selection, implementation strategies, classroom management, learning evaluation, and students' responses to the methods applied. Documentation guides are used to collect secondary data in the form of lesson plans, teaching materials, learning media, photos and videos of activities, as well as student development records. The entire instrument is validated by experts to ensure language clarity, substance feasibility, and suitability of the implementation context in the field.

The validity of the data is ensured through the application of source triangulation and triangulation techniques to avoid bias and strengthen the validity of the findings. Source triangulation involves verifying data from teachers, students, and parents, while triangulation techniques rely on comparisons between observations, interviews, and documentation as described by [27].

Interactive analysis techniques are used to process and infer data thoroughly based on four main components. An analysis model adapted from [28] covering the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions that are carried out repeatedly and intertwined until they achieve a complete understanding of the practice of reading aloud in the context of grade I of Elementary school 1 Talesan.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Implementation of Reading Aloud Learning in Class I

Grade I teachers at Elementary school 1 Talesan carry out reading aloud learning based on systematic planning and the use of varied media. Teachers prepare teaching modules by paying attention to specific learning objectives, indicators of achievement of basic competencies, and student needs. The planning includes the development of teaching materials based on illustrated stories, the preparation of learning media in the form of audio-visuals, and the integration of expressive and interactive reading strategies that suit the characteristics of grade I students.

Observation data shows that the implementation of reading aloud learning runs optimally at all stages of activities. The teacher opens the learning with greetings, perceptions, and light warm-ups. The core activities are carried out through expressive loud readings by teachers and reading exercises by students. The closing was carried out by strengthening the content of reading, joint reflection, and appreciation for students' courage to read.

Learning activities showed good scores in terms of student involvement, interaction with the material, and activeness in following the teacher's direction.

The results of the interview strengthened the observation findings about the implementation process of the reading aloud method in class I. The teacher explained that the preparation of the reading aloud teaching module was carried out through seven steps, starting from the identification of learning objectives, curriculum analysis, development of teaching materials and media, to the implementation and evaluation stages. The teacher states

"The first step is to determine the learning objectives, then we analyze the basic competencies. We develop appropriate teaching materials and compile supporting media such as illustrative images and reading videos." (Interview, Pn, March 18, 2025).

The teacher also revealed an implementation strategy that involves reading stories accompanied by expressions and visual cues so that students are more focused. The teacher added,

"We show picture slides while reading, so that students can imagine the content of the story while listening. We also use transition songs and applause to keep the classroom atmosphere conducive." (Interview, Pn, March 18, 2025). This strategy aimed to increase student focus and imagination.

Tabel 1. Implementation Strategy of the Reading Aloud Method in Class I

Step	Description	Media Used	Intended Outcome
Planning	Identify objectives and analyze basic competencies	Syllabus, curriculum documents	Ensure relevance to learning goals
Material Preparation	Develop illustrated teaching materials and audiovisual aids	Picture slides, reading videos	Enhance visualization and engagement
Expressive Reading	Teacher reads aloud using intonation and facial expressions	Teacher performance	Model fluent reading and hold attention
Student Involvement	Students listen, respond, and are invited to read parts aloud	Oral prompts, group reading	Build fluency, confidence, and participation
Motivation Techniques	Use of transition songs and applause for classroom management	Songs, clapping	Sustain motivation and manage classroom dynamics

The classroom management techniques adopted during reading sessions proved effective in maintaining a lively and supportive environment. Students showed increased attention throughout the sessions, and their active involvement reflected a stronger engagement with the reading material. This structured strategy enabled the teacher to deliver reading aloud instruction that was both interactive and emotionally engaging.

The implementation of the reading aloud method was subsequently evaluated based on five aspects of students' reading skills, namely: accuracy of voice articulation, pronunciation quality, intonation appropriateness, reading fluency, and voice clarity. The assessment results involving 22 students indicated that the majority were categorized as good or very good. Among the five aspects, voice clarity and intonation emerged as the most prominent indicators, while reading fluency and pronunciation accuracy were the areas where several students still needed further support.

The students' response to the reading aloud method can be seen from their enthusiasm and activeness when reading in class. The teacher stated that students showed high interest when asked to read aloud and dared to raise their hands voluntarily. One of the students even said that he was happy when he got his turn to read because he felt like he was the star of the story. The teacher said,

"Students become more confident and quickly memorize new vocabulary because they often read aloud in front of their peers." (Interview, Pn, March 18, 2025).

The implementation of reading aloud learning in grade I shows its effectiveness in developing students' initial reading skills. Students showed development in the aspects of reading fluency, proper pronunciation of words, and courage to speak in front of the class. The teacher said that several obstacles still arise, such as differences in the level of reading ability and limited learning time. These obstacles are overcome through the use of attractive visual media, regular reinforcement, and gradual individual assistance. Reading aloud learning has been proven to be able to create a learning environment that supports active participation and the growth of reading interest from an early age.

3.2   Student Participation and Response

The students' response to the implementation of reading aloud learning showed high involvement and positive enthusiasm throughout the activity. The involvement of students can be seen from their activeness in participating in the reading aloud and voluntary participation when given the opportunity to read in front of the class. The results of the observation showed that the participation of students was in the very good category, which was reflected in the high scores in the indicators of interest, interaction, and understanding of reading materials.

The first grade teacher, Mrs. P., said that students really liked the reading aloud method because this activity gave them the opportunity to be directly involved in learning. Students seemed enthusiastic when asked to read in turns and excited when asked to respond to the content of the readings read by the teacher. Mrs. P. said, "Children become more active and dare to appear in front of the class. They often even scramble to read first. I have seen that this reading aloud activity helps them to be more confident in speaking."

Observations show that students' interactions are not only verbally awake, but also emotionally, as they are able to convey expressions of characters or events in the text. The activeness of students in responding to questions inserted during the reading activity is also an indicator that this method supports meaningful cognitive engagement.

Increased student response and participation during reading aloud activities shows that learning to read aloud can create a fun learning atmosphere while training confidence. This activity is an important foundation in building reading interest and speaking skills from an early age in elementary school students

3.3   Development of Reading Aloud Skills

Development of Reading Aloud Skills The reading skills of students experienced significant development during the implementation of the reading aloud method. The assessment was carried out on 22 grade I students through five main aspects, namely the accuracy of voice writing, the fairness of pronunciation, the fairness of intonation, the fluency of reading, and the clarity of voice. Each aspect is scored using a five-level scale (1–5) and is classified into the categories of very lacking, lacking, adequate, good, and excellent. It can be seen in the average reading aloud skill score per Aspect in Figure 1.
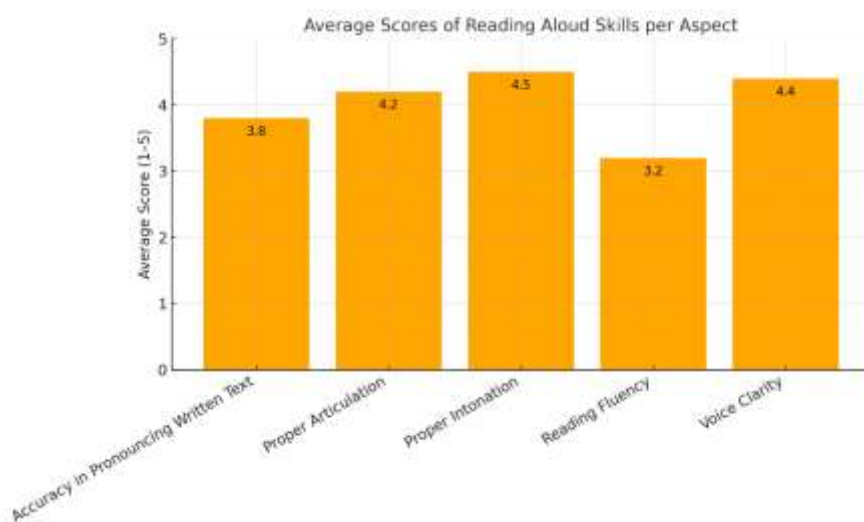

Figure 1.average reading aloud skill score per Aspect

The development of students' reading aloud skills shows a pattern of variation between the aspects assessed. An average graph of each aspect score shows that prosodic skills such as intonation and voice clarity occupy the highest positions, with an average score of 4.5 and 4.4, respectively. This achievement reflects the consistent mastery of students' vocal expressions when reading aloud.

The articulation ability of students showed positive performance in the aspect of pronunciation fairness. A total of 16 students achieved a minimum score of 4, with an overall average of 4.2. This score shows the success of the reading aloud method in forming the right pronunciation according to the word structure, as well as showing that students are able to articulate sounds accurately. The accuracy of voicing the writing still shows that there is a variation in the performance of students. The average score in this aspect was recorded at 3.8, which indicates that some students still have difficulty pronouncing complex words or vocabulary that are rarely encountered. Teachers need to provide additional phonological guidance to reinforce pronunciation accuracy individually.

Reading fluency is the most challenging aspect of reading aloud skills. This aspect obtained the lowest average score of 3.2, which indicates that most learners have not been able to maintain a stable reading flow. Obstacles such as unnatural pauses, repetition of words, or intermittent rhythms are indications of weak mechanical aspects of reading.

The effectiveness of the reading aloud method is reflected in the improvement of the expressive and performative aspects of reading. The majority of students, as many as 18 out of 22 people, showed good and excellent performance in the aspects of intonation and voice clarity. This success shows that the method succeeds in progressively forming boldness, pronunciation, and vocal expression. Triangulatively, the results of the reading

aloud assessment sheet reinforce the findings of observations and interviews that show that students' reading skills have developed in terms of confidence and voice expression. The class teacher, Mrs. P., stated

"After participating in regular reading aloud activities, students showed progress in intonation and pronunciation, although some of them still needed practice to maintain reading fluency"

Based on the overall recapitulation, the average percentage per aspect shows that 82% of students are in the good or very good category for intonation and voice clarity, while the fluency aspect only reaches 55%. This reflects that learning to read aloud is faster to form the prosodic and performative aspects than the mechanical aspects of reading. These findings show that the reading aloud method has effectiveness in developing reading aloud skills progressively, especially in fostering the courage, pronunciation, and articulation of early grade students. The need for adaptive and differentiating mentoring strategies. This approach is needed so that students can achieve a balance of performance in all indicators of reading aloud skills, including aspects of phonological accuracy and technical fluency.

3.4 Obstacles and Solutions in Implementation

The implementation of the reading aloud method faces several technical and pedagogical obstacles in grade I of public alementary school 1 Talesan. The classroom teacher, PWN, explained that the variation in students' reading ability was the main challenge in the implementation of the activity. Students showed significant differences in terms of speed, pronunciation accuracy, and reading fluency. This condition requires teachers to adapt learning strategies flexibly and responsively to individual needs.

Teachers experience difficulties when some students feel awkward and lack confidence when asked to read aloud in front of their friends. This discomfort has the potential to hinder students' courage and involvement in the learning process. The teacher stated that this condition was successfully overcome gradually through intensive practice, regular habituation, and a supportive approach. Evaluation of learning outcomes is also a challenge in itself. The teacher said that the diversity of reading skills requires assessment to be carried out individually and observationally. The evaluation is formative and focuses on five aspects of reading skills, but time constraints are an obstacle in providing comprehensive feedback to all students.

Teachers apply various solutions to answer these obstacles. The classroom conditioning strategy is carried out through the use of cues, transition songs, and expressive reading of stories involving visual aids. Learning media such as picture books, reading aloud videos, and interactive PowerPoint are used to support students' interest and understanding. Additional assistance is provided individually, especially for students who still show difficulties in pronunciation and reading fluency.

The application of the reading aloud method shows success in shaping students' expressive and vocal skills, but still leaves challenges in the technical aspects of reading. The teacher concluded that differential guidance needs to be strengthened in advanced implementation so that each student can achieve optimal performance in all indicators of reading aloud skills.

The reading aloud method has great potential in improving the initial reading skills of elementary school students. This method involves reading the text aloud by the teacher combined with intonation, expression, and interactive invitations to students. This activity not only trains the technical aspects of reading, but also forms a direct understanding of meaning through listening and students' observation of a good reading model.

Research by [29] shows that the Reading aloud It has a significant impact on five aspects of initial reading skills, namely the accuracy of voice writing, the accuracy of pronunciation, the accuracy of intonation, the fluency of reading, and the clarity of voice. Students who participated in the activity consistently showed striking improvements in the aspects of intonation and voice clarity, with an average score of 4.5 and 4.4, respectively. Students' reading performance in the pronunciation aspect is also relatively high, while the aspect of fluency and phonological accuracy still needs strengthening. The teacher stated that some students still face obstacles in maintaining the rhythm of reading and pronouncing unusual vocabulary accurately.

Effectiveness of the method Reading aloud lies in the integration of cognitive, affective, and social aspects in one learning process [30]. Teachers form emotional engagement through expression and build learners' attention through direct verbal interaction. This process stimulates students' confidence to read aloud and imitate the teacher's reading style gradually. Students showed high enthusiasm, scrambled to take turns reading, and began to respond to the content of the story read. The teacher said that students not only imitate pronunciation, but also develop the ability to understand the content of the text contextually and convey ideas spontaneously.

Method Reading aloud has an advantage over traditional methods such as spelling or syllables with a performance advantage of 22% for recognition and an advantage of 8% for remembering[31]. Traditional methods emphasize only the phonetic aspects and the order of pronunciation, whereas Reading aloud Practice prosodic skills, build an understanding of meaning, and foster students' confidence when speaking in front of the class. [32] Affirming that this method is effective in developing inference, that is, the ability to infer information implied in the text. Inferential activities are an important part of the creative thinking process, because they require students to connect information, draw conclusions, and construct meaning independently.

The findings of this study confirm that the reading aloud method is not only feasible but effective as a core instructional strategy for developing early reading skills among elementary students. The method successfully improved students' prosodic competencies—particularly in intonation and voice clarity—while also increasing their confidence and participation during reading activities. These outcomes reinforce the argument that reading aloud is more than a passive activity; it serves as an active instructional medium that integrates cognitive, emotional, and linguistic dimensions.

Compared to prior studies, such as [33], [34], which emphasize the effectiveness of reading aloud in enhancing fluency and comprehension, the present findings offer further nuance by highlighting the method's influence on student motivation and vocal expression in a real classroom context. Similar to [35], this study reveals that daily reading aloud can support students' inferencing ability and reading engagement, especially when implemented with expressive techniques and student-centered prompts.

Generalizing from these results, it is evident that reading aloud can serve as a foundational component in early literacy instruction—particularly when adapted to the emotional and cognitive characteristics of young learners. This method also holds promise for fostering a culture of reading enjoyment in schools, which is essential for sustaining students' long-term literacy development. In terms of research novelty, this study contributes a practical and contextualized model of reading aloud implementation that emphasizes teacher expression, student interaction, and visual media integration. While most studies focus solely on outcomes, this research provides insight into the actual planning, execution, and classroom management strategies used by teachers, filling a critical gap in applied pedagogical literature. The combination of emotional engagement and structured modeling offers a new perspective on how reading aloud can build both skill and confidence in early readers.

However, this study also has limitations. The sample was confined to a single school, limiting the diversity of learning environments and participant backgrounds. It also did not explore individual differences in student responses based on factors such as home literacy environment, learning styles, or socio-emotional profiles. Moreover, the study did not assess the long-term retention or transfer effects of the reading aloud method across subject areas or higher-level cognitive skills. For future research, it is recommended to integrate scaffolding strategies within reading aloud sessions to provide targeted cognitive support for students who struggle with decoding or fluency. Additionally, longitudinal studies are needed to examine how reading aloud impacts critical and creative thinking in early literacy over time.

As for practical implications, this study suggests that teachers should be trained not only in reading aloud techniques but also in how to adapt them for diverse learners. Schools must provide contextual, culturally relevant reading materials, and ensure that students have space to perform, discuss, and reflect on what they read. Policymakers should consider embedding reading aloud into literacy curricula as a structured, interactive, and emotionally engaging strategy that addresses multiple facets of student development.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the reading aloud method significantly contributes to the enhancement of early reading skills among Grade I elementary school students. The implementation process—although challenged by individual differences in reading ability, time constraints, and uneven reading fluency—led to noticeable improvements, particularly in students' prosodic skills such as intonation, pronunciation, and vocal clarity. The success of this method is supported by the teacher's ability to apply adaptive learning strategies, including systematic instructional planning, the use of engaging visual media, and the consistent habituation of expressive reading practices. These efforts effectively nurtured students' reading confidence, public speaking courage, and interest in literacy activities. Formative evaluations indicated that the majority of students reached the "good" or "very good" category in reading expression, though technical aspects such as phonological accuracy and reading fluency still required differentiated support.

Beyond its immediate impact, this study contributes a contextualized model for implementing the reading aloud method in early literacy classrooms, integrating socio-emotional engagement with cognitive scaffolding. The structured integration of this method demonstrates potential not only in fostering foundational reading skills but also in laying the groundwork for expressive language development.In light of these findings, it is recommended that schools strengthen the implementation of reading aloud by providing teachers with targeted training, contextualized learning materials, and diagnostic assessment tools. Future research is encouraged to explore the longitudinal effects of this method on higher-order thinking skills, such as inference-making, critical reflection, and creative expression, in the broader scope of early literacy development.

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