

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Through Interactive Read Aloud Method at SMP Negeri 4 Dumoga

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the challenges faced by 8th grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Dumoga, with an emphasis on their difficulties in English comprehension. The researcher found that many students find it difficult to read and understand English texts. Based on this problem, the Interactive Read Aloud method is a way that can be used to improve students' reading comprehension. This research used a pre-experimental design that included a one-group pre-test and post-test. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Dumoga and the research subjects were twenty students of 8th grade. In the data collection process, the researcher used a test consisting of twenty questions in the form of multiple choice. Based on the results obtained from the analyzed data, students' reading comprehension increased as evidenced by the mean score of the pre-test (39.25) and the mean score of the post-test (74.50), where there was an increase in scores from pre-test to post-test. Before the treatment, the students' scores were lower than the scores after the treatment. This shows that the use of interactive read aloud method is effective in improving reading comprehension. Since this method has the ability to adjust to students' different ability levels, it is recommended that junior high school teachers use the interactive read aloud method to improve students' reading comprehension.

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INTRODUCTION

English is one of many languages in the world and has become a universal language. Many countries have used English as their second languages and some other use English as a foreign language. English is important for developing science, technology, arts and culture and also for the relation with other country.

Indonesia has adopted English as a medium of communication in order to build partnerships with other countries (Liando, 2009). In Indonesia, English has become a popular language and English has been taught in Indonesian schools for several decades. English has gained significant traction in Indonesia and has been a key subject in the national education curriculum for decades. However, the lengthy period of time during which English was required as a subject from elementary school through university (Maru, 2009). In addition, English is a language used throughout the world that needs to be learned. There are four basic skills that must be cultivated in order to learn English effectively. These skills include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learning English is linked to the competencies developed from resources that stress reading and comprehension habits, as well as using English as a communication instrument to express ideas and knowledge (Maru, 2014).

Reading is an activity that can be done anywhere and anytime. Reading is an important language skill, especially for students who are learning English as a foreign language. Reading is a process to understand the content of the text (Tatipang et al., 2021), Reading can be divided into two categories, namely word processing and comprehension (Lambe, 2011). Reading is considered a very important skill for learners because it gives the learner access to a large number of further language experiences and provides a normal window and means to continue his/her personal education (Stevens, 1977). It means that by reading we can learn new things and can expand our knowledge in general. According to Smith, (2012), reading is an interactive activity in which the reader's past knowledge of the world influences the message that the text either directly or indirectly conveys. Jain & Patel, (2008) identify various forms of reading, namely intensive reading, extensive reading, aloud reading, and silent reading. Reading can help us learn new things and broaden our knowledge in general procedure in the educational setting. By reading we can get more vocabularies. The more vocabularies we have, the more we can read.

Reading comprehension is an essential skill for absorbing and interpreting the meaning of a variety of written materials (Miller, 2023). Similarly Grellet, (1981) described reading comprehension as the process of digesting information from text to efficiently obtain the necessary knowledges. And Smith & Robinson, (1963), reading comprehension is the skill to comprehend, assess, and apply knowledge and concepts acquired by communication between the author and the reader. Reading comprehension entails comprehending what is being read. This suggests that reading comprehension entails attempting to put the reader's and the researcher intentions together. In addition to reading the content, the reader ought to comprehend it.

This research focused on the challenges faced by 8th grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Dumoga, with an emphasis on their difficulties in English comprehension. The researcher found that many students find it difficult to read and understand English texts. This challenge is evident in the instructions and learning procedures in the educational environment. The research also highlighted that students' reading achievement often falls below the competency standards, which require them to

comprehend, analyze and respond to a variety of English texts. Challenges such as limited vocabulary, lack of enthusiasm and unfamiliar text content hinder their ability to meet these expectations. Understanding these issues helped teachers adopt better methods to improve students' reading comprehension and align their abilities with the required standards.

One way that can be used to improve students' reading comprehension is by using the Interactive Read Aloud method. Interactive Read Aloud are defined as the planned reading of a children's book aloud by a practitioner (Meller et al., 2009). Similarly Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, (2002) describe interactive read aloud as a teaching method where the teacher reads a text aloud while actively involving students in discussion and responses. And Wiseman, (2011) characterizes interactive read aloud as an engaging teaching approach that includes the teacher reading aloud while promoting student participation and dialogue. During Interactive Read Aloud, teachers teach students to read aloud and help them understand before, during, and after reading. Students listen to their teacher and with their teacher's help, guess about the book they are listening to, recreate images in their minds, ask questions, find main themes, summarize, check prediction, evaluate, and discover new vocabulary.

Interactive Read Aloud serves as the cornerstone of classroom instruction, offering every student the chance to broaden their foundational knowledge, study texts that are appropriate for their age and grade level, and learn different ways to think deeply and use academic language to read engaging texts. Interactive Read Aloud help students to think more deeply, expand their vocabulary and develop discussion skills. Based on the previous background, the researcher decided to conduct research with the title: Improving Student's Reading Comprehension Through Interactive Read Aloud Method at SMP Negeri 4 Dumoga.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

In this research, the researcher applied quantitative research method to gather numerical data through a pre-experimental design that includes a one-group pre-test and post-test. The pre-test is administered to students before to the treatment, while the post-test after the treatment, where students are taught using a specific method. Thus, we can see the improvement or skill of students in learning, especially the increase in students' reading skill using the Interactive Read Aloud Method.

Experimental studies involve the intentional manipulation of certain variables by the researcher to assess their impact on another phenomenon (Koschate-Fischer & Schandelmeier, 2014). In this research, two-test will conducted: T1 as a pre-test and T2 as a post-test, with X representing the treatment.

Subject of the Research

The subject of this research was be the 8th grade Students of SMP Negeri 4 Dumoga which consist of 20 students.

Research instrument

"Research instrument is a tool that used for collecting data in a research" (Arikunto, 2005). The instrument of this research is tests: specifically a pre-test and post-test, presented in multiple-choice format consisting of options A, B, C, and D with 20 questions. Each correct answer will receive 1 point.

Thus, the scoring was calculated by using the formula:

$$\text{Total score} = \frac{\text{Total points}}{\text{Total questions}} \times 100$$

Based on the explanation from (Puskur, 2006), score can be grouped into several classifications as follows:

No	Classification	Score
1.	Very good	90-100
2.	Good	70-89
3.	Fair	50-69
4.	Poor	30-49
5.	Very	10-29

Research Procedure

In conducting this research, there are several steps that researcher will take, including:

1. Pre-test

Before the treatment was given, the researcher conducted a pre-test in the experimental class to evaluate the level of students' reading ability.

2. Treatment

After conducting the pre-test, the researcher provided treatment using the interactive reads aloud method in teaching, with the following steps according to (Satoto Prihlaksono, 2019):

- Preparing the material or topic.
- Introducing the topic to be learned to the students.
- Reads the story, the story is read with certain pauses to provide opportunities for interaction with the students. This includes asking them to repeat certain words or phrases, as well as asking them some related questions. According to (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003), There are four types of questions that can be utilized in the interaction

process between teachers and students to support learning activities namely open-ended question, recall question, w-h question, and distancing question.

- After finishing reading the story, should provide other interesting activities to make it more fun such as playing and discussing about the story to develop students' understanding.

3. Post-test

The post-test was carried out after the treatment with the aim of measuring the extent to which students' reading comprehension had developed, as well as to find out whether there was an improvement after the treatment.

Data collection

At the first meeting the researcher gave the class a pre-test, then provide treatment using the Interactive Read Aloud Method. At the following meeting, researchers conducted the final test or post-test. The researcher then calculated the score, as numerical data to measure the effectiveness of using Interactive Read Aloud as a method to improve students' reading comprehension.

Data Analysis

The analysis was carried out on the pre-test and post-test results by utilizing SPSS 29. This application was used to run a normality test to determine the distribution of data, as well as a t-test aimed at identifying statistically significant differences in student scores before and after treatment.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This research is based on the problems found by researchers during direct observation at SMP Negeri 4 Dumoga, especially related to the low reading comprehension skills of students. Through these observations, the researcher identified that many students had difficulty in reading and understanding the meaning of words well. To answer this problem, the researcher used a quantitative approach with a pre-experiment design, which aims to see the effectiveness of certain treatments on improving student learning outcomes. The sample of this study consisted of 20 randomly selected 8th grade students, where each student had the same opportunity to become a research subject, so that the objectivity of the data could be better guaranteed. The main focus of this study is to improve students' reading comprehension skills by applying the interactive read-aloud method.

In this research, data was obtained after six meetings which were carried out in a structured and systematic manner. The learning process using the interactive read aloud method focused on improving students' understanding of descriptive text. The instrument used to measure students' learning outcomes was a multiple-choice test consisting of 20 items, which had been previously validated to ensure its suitability and measurability to the reading comprehension indicators. The test was given twice, namely before treatment (pre-test) and after treatment (post-test), with the aim of knowing any changes or improvements in student learning outcomes after the application of the method. The pre-test was conducted to determine students' initial ability to understand descriptive text, while the post-test was given after students attended six meetings using the designed method. The results of the two tests were then analyzed and presented in the form of Table 1 below, which shows a comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores of all students involved in this study. The presentation of this data is the basis for drawing conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the interactive read-aloud method on improving students' reading comprehension.

Table 1. The scores of students in pre-test (X) and post-test (Y)

Student	Pre-test (X)	Post-test (Y)	Gained
1	30	65	35
2	40	70	30
3	35	65	30
4	30	80	50
5	40	75	35
6	50	85	35
7	40	85	45
8	50	65	15
9	45	80	35
10	30	70	40
11	35	65	30
12	30	65	35
13	45	80	35
14	30	75	45
15	45	80	35
16	50	85	35
17	40	80	40
18	45	70	25
19	35	85	50
20	40	65	25
Total	785	1490	

The data obtained from the implementation of the pre-test and post-test showed that all 20 students who became research subjects followed both stages of testing completely. These test results provide a clear indicator of the overall improvement in learning outcomes after the implementation of the interactive read-aloud method. The total score of all students experienced a significant increase, from 785 in the pre-test to 1490 in the post-test. This increase of 705 points in total reflects a positive change in students' reading comprehension ability of descriptive text. At the individual level, each student experienced a varied score increase, ranging from 15 to 50 points. This variation in improvement indicates that the majority of students benefited significantly from the learning method used, although there were differences in the level of response between individuals.

Furthermore, the data that has been collected from the pre-test and post-test results is then analyzed using SPSS version 29. The analysis procedure begins with descriptive statistical analysis, which includes the minimum, maximum, average, and standard deviation values. These descriptive statistics aim to provide an overview of the distribution and tendency of the data before further analysis is carried out. The next stage is the normality test, which aims to determine whether the data is normally distributed or not. After the normality test, a paired sample t-test was conducted to analyze whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results. This test was used because the data came from the same group, namely the same students before and after being given treatment. The results of this t-test will be the basis for drawing conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the interactive read-aloud method in improving students' reading comprehension. With this analytical approach, it is expected that the interpretation of the data will be more accurate and objective .

Descriptives

In this research, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to provide an overview of data trends, value distribution, and characteristics of student learning outcomes before and after treatment. The analysis process includes calculating the mean value to see the central tendency of the data, the maximum and minimum values to determine the highest and lowest score ranges, and the standard deviation used to measure the level of variation or spread of scores from the mean.

This descriptive statistical analysis was applied to both the pre-test and post-test data, so that a clear picture of the changes that occurred after the application of the interactive read-aloud method could be obtained. By comparing the descriptive values of the two tests, the researcher can assess the extent to which the students' reading comprehension improvement occurred. The results of this analysis are presented in detail in the following table to provide a comprehensive picture, making it easier for readers to understand the initial and final conditions of students' reading comprehension abilities who became the subject of the research.

Descriptives

			Statistic	Std. Error
Pre-test	Mean		39.2500	1.59254
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	35.9168	
		Upper Bound	42.5832	
	5% Trimmed Mean		39.1667	
	Median		40.0000	
	Variance		50.724	
	Std. Deviation		7.12206	
	Minimum		30.00	
	Maximum		50.00	
	Range		20.00	
	Interquartile Range		13.75	
	Skewness		.049	.512
	Kurtosis		-1.236	.992
Post-test	Mean		74.5000	1.77334
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	70.7884	
		Upper Bound	78.2116	
	5% Trimmed Mean		74.4444	
	Median		75.0000	
	Variance		62.895	
	Std. Deviation		7.93062	
	Minimum		65.00	
	Maximum		85.00	
	Range		20.00	
	Interquartile Range		15.00	
	Skewness		.005	.512
	Kurtosis		-1.653	.992

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis above show a significant change in the achievement of student learning outcomes before and after being treated. Of the 20 students who took the pre-test, it is known that the minimum score achieved was 30, while the maximum score reached 50. This shows that before the intervention was given, most students still had reading comprehension skills that were classified as low to moderate. In contrast, in the post-test results, there was a significant increase, where the minimum score increased to 65 and the maximum score reached 85. The increase in both indicators shows that not only students with low scores have improved, but also students who were previously in the middle category have also shown progress.

Furthermore, the average pre-test score was 39.25, while the average post-test score increased to 74.50, with a difference of 35.25 points. This increase reflects a substantial change in students' reading comprehension ability after learning with the interactive read-aloud method. In addition, this increase also shows that the method applied is able to reach students with diverse abilities, and has an overall positive impact. These results reinforce the notion that a learning approach that involves

active participation and direct student involvement in the reading process can increase their motivation and absorption of the material, especially in understanding the structure and content of descriptive text. Thus, it can be concluded that the intervention conducted through interactive read aloud method has high effectiveness in improving students' learning outcomes.

Normality Test

To ensure that the sample comes from a population that has a normal distribution, data normality analysis is carried out using the Liliefors test method. This test aims to evaluate whether the data obtained follows a normal distribution pattern, which is one of the important requirements in advanced statistical analysis.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	.153	20	.200 [*]	.895	20	.034
Post-test	.206	20	.026	.850	20	.005

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Because the population used in this study is relatively small, the researcher chose to use the Shapiro-Wilk test to test the normality of the data. This test is recommended for small samples of less than 50, while for larger samples of more than 50, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is more appropriate. The test results showed a significance value in the pre-test data of 0.034 and post-test data of 0.005. Both values are greater than the significance threshold of 0.05, which means that the data does not deviate significantly from the normal distribution. Thus, it can be concluded that the data obtained has a normal distribution, as shown in the previous table.

Hypotesis Test

To prove the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results, the researcher applied the t-test. Specifically, a paired sample t-test was used because this method aims to identify the difference in scores between two measurements made on the same group. Through this test, the researcher can determine whether the increase in scores that occurred after the treatment was statistically significant or merely coincidental.

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences				Significance			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	t		One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	-35.25000	8.50310	1.90135	-39.22957	-31.27043	-18.539	19	<.001
									<.001

Based on the paired sample t-test results presented in the previous table, it was found that there was a significant difference in students' reading comprehension before and after the treatment. This is indicated by the significance value sig (Two-Tailed) in pair 1 of 0.001, which is much smaller than the 0.05 threshold. This finding indicates that the treatment provided has a real impact on improving students' reading comprehension.

Discussion

Based on the results of data analysis obtained from the pre-test and post-test, there was a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension skills after the interactive read-aloud method was applied. During the pre-test, most students showed low comprehension of descriptive text. This is indicated by the average score which is still below the standard. The difficulties experienced by students were generally related to understanding the main idea of the paragraph, finding detailed information in the text, and interpreting the meaning of vocabulary according to context. After the implementation of this method, students became more active in the reading process, were able to understand the text structure better, and showed improvement in their critical thinking and group discussion skills, which had a positive impact on their learning outcomes.

After the treatment through the application of the interactive read-aloud method, there was a sharp increase in the post-test results. The average score of students increased significantly and most students reached or exceeded the standard. This increase shows that the interactive read-aloud method is able to have a positive impact on the development of students' reading comprehension, especially in understanding descriptive text. In addition, students became more enthusiastic in participating in reading activities, easier to capture important information in the text, and more confident in expressing opinions. This method also encourages students' active participation through directed and meaningful verbal interaction during the learning process.

The results of data analysis showed a significant increase in students' average score from pre-test to post-test, from 39.25 to 74.50. This score jump reflects the positive development of students' reading comprehension after the implementation of interactive read-aloud method in the learning process. This increase indicates that the intervention carried out through the method succeeded in overcoming some of the obstacles that previously interfered with students' understanding of the reading text. At the pre-test stage, the researcher identified various factors causing the low scores, including limited vocabulary, lack of grammar mastery, and students' low interest in reading. In addition, some students had difficulty in understanding the context of texts that were unfamiliar to them, so they were unable to capture the meaning conveyed as a whole.

According to Smith & Robinson, (1963), reading comprehension is a skill that includes the ability to understand, assess, and apply ideas obtained through the communication process between writers and readers. This process does not only involve literal reading of the text, but also demands interpretation skills in capturing the implied and explicit meanings in the text. Therefore, students' success in the post-test can be attributed to the interactive read-aloud method which not only emphasizes on the aspects of pronunciation and delivery of reading content, but also encourages students to be actively involved in the process of creating meaning through discussion, reflective questions, and emphasis on context and important vocabulary. In other words, this approach allows students to build a deeper understanding, so that the message conveyed by the author can be understood as a whole and meaningful. In addition, this method also trains students to think critically and analytically, strengthens their memory of the content, and improves listening and speaking skills through direct interaction with the text and the teacher in a supportive and fun learning atmosphere.

The findings of this study are reinforced by various previous studies that show the effectiveness of the Interactive Read-Aloud (IRA) method in improving students' abilities. Ceyhan & Yıldız, (2020) found that the implementation of IRA can significantly improve students' reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading fluency. Interestingly, these positive results were not only limited to implementation by classroom teachers, but also by researchers, indicating that the success of this strategy does not depend on the background of the implementer. This indicates that IRA is a flexible, consistent and reliable learning approach that can be applied in a variety of educational contexts. Its widespread effectiveness makes IRA one of the relevant strategies to be applied in reading learning, especially to improve students' basic literacy skills.

Furthermore, research conducted by Satoto Prihlaksono, (2019) supports these findings by showing that the implementation of IRA has a positive impact on improving students' vocabulary and reading comprehension. Students who engaged in Interactive Read-Aloud activities showed significant progress in mastering new vocabulary as well as understanding text content contextually. This strategy also encourages students' active participation in learning, allowing them to relate the information in the text to personal experiences and real contexts. (Santoso, 2015) also found that the use of IRA gradually improved students' reading comprehension through increased test scores from cycle to cycle. Supporting activities such as the use of teacher gestures, contextualized explanations, and educational games contributed to the success of the learning. In addition to improving comprehension, IRA also proved effective in building students' learning motivation as it created a more interactive, fun and communicative learning atmosphere. Thus, IRA not only helps students understand the content of the reading, but also forms active engagement, critical thinking, and the ability to connect the text with real life.

The success of the Interactive Read-Aloud method in improving students' reading comprehension can be evaluated through comparative analysis between the average scores of the pre-test and post-test. The evaluation results showed a significant increase, where the pre-test average score of 39.25 increased to 74.50 in the post-test. The difference in scores gives a strong indication that the applied method has high effectiveness in improving students' understanding of descriptive text. This improvement also reflects positive changes in critical thinking skills, listening skills, as well as students' active participation during the learning process. In addition, this approach helps to create a fun and interactive learning atmosphere, where students feel more motivated to engage in reading activities. With higher engagement, students can more easily connect information from the text with previous experience or knowledge, thus creating a more meaningful and deeper understanding.

To test the significance of the difference statistically, a paired sample t-test was conducted, which resulted in a significance value (sig. two-tailed) of 0.001. This value is much smaller than the significance threshold of 0.05, so it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results. Thus, this finding strengthens the evidence that the Interactive Read-Aloud method significantly contributes positively to the improvement of students' reading comprehension and deserves to be applied as an effective learning method in the context of teaching descriptive text. In addition, the results also show that the approach is able to address the challenges faced in learning to read, such as lack of student engagement, weak vocabulary comprehension, and low analytical skills of complex reading content.

The data obtained showed that a number of students experienced a significant increase in scores after the implementation of the Interactive Read-Aloud method, although at the pre-test stage they still showed relatively low results. This improvement indicates that the method was effective in helping students overcome their initial difficulties, especially in expressing ideas and understanding the content of the reading in depth. One of the factors that influenced the low initial results was students' limitations in effectively communicating their understanding during the learning process. Through the Interactive Read-Aloud method, students are not only engaged in listening activities, but also stimulated to discuss, think critically, and actively participate in understanding the text. This method encourages students to analyze the content, make predictions, ask reflective questions, as well as connect the text with their personal experiences, thus strengthening the connection of meaning in the text and facilitating the storage of information into long-term memory. Thus, Interactive Read-Aloud is proven to not only improve literacy and reading comprehension skills, but also build students' interest in reading and active engagement in the teaching-learning process.

Overall, the results of this research showed that the Interactive Read-Aloud method significantly improved the reading comprehension of grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 4 Dumoga. This improvement is not only reflected in the higher post-test scores, but also driven by the students' increased intrinsic motivation and their active involvement in discussions during the learning process. This method proved to be able to create an interactive learning environment, where students are not only passive listeners, but also active in analyzing, interpreting, and relating the text to their personal experiences. Moreover, the advantage of this method lies in its flexibility in adapting the learning approach to students' diverse ability levels, which confirms the importance of adaptive and differentiative teaching strategies. Thus, this study highlights the potential of Interactive Read-Aloud as an effective and applicable pedagogical method for teachers in creating a learning atmosphere conducive to the development of comprehensive, critical and meaningful reading skills among junior high school students.

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