Enhancing student achievement through the reading aloud learning strategy

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Abstract

Active learning strategies offer valuable contributions to instructional approaches by creating dynamic and engaging classroom environments. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the reading aloud strategy in enhancing students' academic achievement. Employing a classroom action research design within a quantitative framework, the research focused on identifying and addressing instructional challenges through systematic intervention. The study followed the established cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection, conducted over two consecutive stages in a secondary school setting. Findings revealed that the reading aloud strategy significantly improved students' academic outcomes by fostering increased engagement, fluency, and enthusiasm. Students demonstrated greater activeness and responsiveness during lessons, contributing to a more vibrant and productive learning atmosphere. These results suggest that reading aloud not only supports cognitive development but also enhances classroom dynamics, making it a valuable component of active learning implementation. The study offers practical implications for educators seeking to apply active learning techniques to improve learner outcomes.

Keywords: Academic achievement; active learning; classroom engagement; reading aloud; teaching strategy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The capacity to absorb knowledge and information represents a fundamental concern within the learning process, wherein simultaneous interaction between educator and learner is commonly observed (Taylor, 2018). This process involves the comprehensive management of the classroom environment in a manner that fosters an active and conducive learning atmosphere, thereby facilitating learner engagement. To realize this objective, prioritization of learning strategy development is essential. Given its critical role in enhancing educational outcomes, the implementation of active learning holds substantial value within learning strategies, offering opportunities for innovative pedagogical directions (Freeman et al., 2021; Kwon et al., 2023).

Accordingly, careful consideration of appropriate methodologies tailored to learner characteristics and subject matter contributes to the creation of an actively engaged classroom environment (Cain, 2011; Ueckert and Gess-Newsome, 2008; Zhou and Zhang, 2022; Awofala et al., 2024). As a pivotal pedagogical approach, active learning facilitates learner participation in meaningful academic activities and promotes reflective thinking regarding instructional engagement (Baumfield et al., 2008; Gredler, 2005; Baepler et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2024). In this context, the present study seeks to examine the implementation of the reading aloud learning strategy (LS) within secondary school settings to enhance classroom interaction and academic achievement.

1.1. Literature review

1.1.1. Learning achievement

Learning achievement (LA) has to do with the learning process in the way which involves the principles and characteristics into the component of learning. The extent of attainment of LA concerning active learning is based on the cognitive side involving knowledge remembering, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Forehand, 2010). However, obtaining the learning outcome through the indicator, the score achieved in the process, is entirely conducted in the particular period from gaining knowledge, attitude, and skill. This comes from the instrument designed before the process itself, where the instructor or teacher is the facilitator to guide the process in the right way. In terms of the measurement used in the process, this is based on the theory of classroom research design (Bartlett & Burton, 2006; Mettetal, 2002). In particular, reflecting the result or outcome has the consequence to give feedback in terms of changing behaviour and attitude. This covers the cognitive, affective, and psychological side (Vermunt & Vermetten, 2004).

In alignment with the objective of deepening subject-specific knowledge acquisition, enhancement of proficiency during the implementation phase is facilitated through the application of structured instructional strategies (Gredler, 2005; Hopkins, 2014). This approach emphasizes the exploration of learning processes aimed at achieving academic success, supported by cognitive well-being and a comprehensive understanding of instructional standards. The integration of educational technology, including the use of smartphones as learning tools, further supports this objective (Anshari et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2024).

Additionally, the optimization of innovative pedagogical practices through big data methodologies (Huda et al., 2016a), in conjunction with reinforcement of individual learning preferences, contributes to instructional effectiveness (Othman et al., 2016). Consequently, the enhancement of instructional quality is necessitated by these advancements. A balanced approach to learning must incorporate intellectual capability, intrinsic motivation, and sustained commitment to the educational process (Huda et al., 2016b). Furthermore, the significance of learning assessment (LA) lies in its function as an indicator of knowledge and information acquisition during instructional delivery. This involves the verification of subject mastery through the application of targeted pedagogical methods within the classroom environment (McLaughlin and Talbert, 2006). As such, the identification of learning outcomes can be effectively conducted through LA, specifically utilizing the reading aloud strategy, which serves to measure student attainment and mastery of subject matter.

1.1.2. Learning strategy

Learning strategy (LS) refers to the way of using the featured means, starting with a plan of steps which may be conducted in the learning process (Dansereau, 1985). It can be defined as the use of setting an instructional design to enable the students to absorb the knowledge and information easily in the way within the procedural stage. The extent of this approach in organising the instruction stage has a simultaneous accomplishment specifically to the particular set of skills (Sagor, 2000; Torrance & Pryor, 2001). This skill may be gained during the instruction using particular LS, such as reading aloud, mind mapping, telling a story, and snowball (Silberman, 1996). In this regard, LS can be viewed as the procedural stage with tactics used to make sure that students can manage the time given in the learning process. Along with influencing to perform the students' learning methods, giving feedback on the achievement among the students should be engaged with, making the situation an active and conducive interaction.

In the context of the learning process, it is essential to recognize that classroom engagement should not be solely dominated by the instructor; rather, learners must demonstrate interactive behavior supported by effective learning abilities (Bonwell and Eison, 1991; MacIntyre, 2012; Mertler, 2009). To promote learning effectiveness through active engagement, this initiative must be supported by a comprehensive understanding of learning strategies (LS) on the part of the instructor. Consequently, instructional roles include guiding learners in organizing and utilizing their cognitive capacities to engage with subject matter content presented in the learning modules. Beyond cognitive development, an additional emphasis is placed on virtual learning activities that foster character strength, which constitutes a critical component of holistic educational outcomes (Juszczyk, 2014). The integration of both cognitive and psychomotor domains contributes to a comprehensive instructional approach aimed at facilitating knowledge acquisition. This approach is intended to improve task completion in a more effective and efficient manner, aligned with structured academic scheduling within the school environment.

1.1.3. Reading aloud

Reading aloud (RA) has been widely used for helping students to focus on their learning inquiry, especially in the subject of reading. It has a pivotal side not only providing loud voice but also the instructions rule with teacher's guided way (Elley, & Mangubhai, 1983; Silberman, 1996). This aims to access the way of students' learning more active since it can prevent a boring situation. Alternatively, this strategy from the beginning to the last of learning process emphasising on loud voice is to help students' concentration by addressing the question and discussion (Gibson, 2008; Sprenger-Charolles et al, 2003; Tangan, 2004). In this regard, the way of the teacher's additional explanation refers to the active learning methods performed to revive the students' feelings. As a result, this strategy may also be enhanced to deaden the sleepy feel and thus will increase the spirit to think and read (Amer, 1997; Hoffman et al., 1993; Rachim, 2005). Through stepping into the implementation stage, the significance of this strategy is that the instruction can be designed with a focus on a loud voice by the students in a way that follows the instructions. These refer to such core points in the figure below (Asmani, 2012; Ismail, 2008).

Reading aloud (RA) contributes significantly to the enhancement of learner development by offering an effective approach for evaluating academic progress and fostering skill acquisition within reading-focused subject modules (Norris, 1994; Ueckert and Gess-Newsome, 2008). Additionally, RA provides a practical foundation for improving perusal performance, enabling learners to strengthen their capacity to comprehend the author's intent in textual material (Lane and Wright, 2007; Rastle and Coltheart, 1999). Despite these advantages, several challenges have been identified during the planning and implementation phases, such as classroom disruptions caused by competition during oral reading activities (Dhaif, 1990; Zorzi et al., 1998). Therefore, effective classroom management and instructional control are essential to establishing an environment conducive to focused learning. The instructional approach to oral reading must be carefully structured by educators to ensure that learners comprehend the meaning and purpose of the material being read.

Figure 1
Core components and benefits of the reading aloud (RA) strategy in active learning

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1. Teacher's Role
    - Gives guided instructions
    - Provides additional explanation
    - Maintains student engagement

2. Student Engagement
    - Reads aloud with focus
    - Follows instruction actively
    - Participates in Q&A and discussions

3. Learning Environment
    - Prevents boredom
    - Awakens sleepy students
    - Enhances classroom energy

4. Cognitive and Affective Benefits
    - Boosts concentration
    - Stimulates curiosity
    - Encourages deeper reading comprehension
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1.1. Purpose of study

The objective of the present study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the reading aloud strategy in enhancing academic achievement among secondary school students.

2. METHOD AND MATERIALS

The method of this research is based on the quantitative approach, referring to the classroom action research (CAR) setting as a model of investigating the fundamental issue in class to enable teachers in solving it using an appropriate strategy (Arikunto, 2010). The data were gathered in terms of the students' achievement involving activeness, fluency and atmosphere. In detail, the approach here refers to two stages using RA learning strategy including planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Prior to this, pre-stage with no strategy was implemented to see what the difference is.

2.1. Participants

The sample gathered in this research comes from 30 students in the private school in Semarang region, Indonesia.

2.2. Data Collection tool

The data collection instrument employed in this study followed the core procedures of Classroom Action Research (CAR), consisting of two stages, each comprising four systematic steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The initial phase involved general observation to assess the classroom context, formulation of a solution-oriented plan based on identified issues, and the design of appropriate instructional interventions. The measured indicators included dimensions of learning activeness—such as attentiveness during text analysis, frequency of questioning, responsiveness to instructor prompts, and the ability to formulate conclusions. Additional indicators encompassed the learning atmosphere, including enthusiasm for

participation, initiative in classroom engagement, and the maintenance of a conducive learning environment. Fluency in learning was assessed through indicators reflecting an interactive and dynamic learning process.

In terms of research flow, baseline data on general academic conditions and achievement indicators were gathered before the implementation of instructional interventions. This process aimed to optimize the application of the learning strategy during the first cycle and to assess the outcomes of the initial implementation. The subsequent cycle was designed to further enhance academic achievement by reinforcing and refining the applied strategy. The reading aloud strategy served as the focal method throughout the research, with both stages structured to verify the effectiveness of this approach in producing measurable learning improvements.

2.3. Data analysis

The data obtained from the instruments were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the reading aloud instructional strategy in enhancing student academic achievement. For the purpose of data analysis, this study employed a structured analytical technique, with the specific formula and procedures outlined as follows:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \% \text{ (Sudjana, 2001)}$$

Details: P   = Score

F   = Frequency

N   = Number

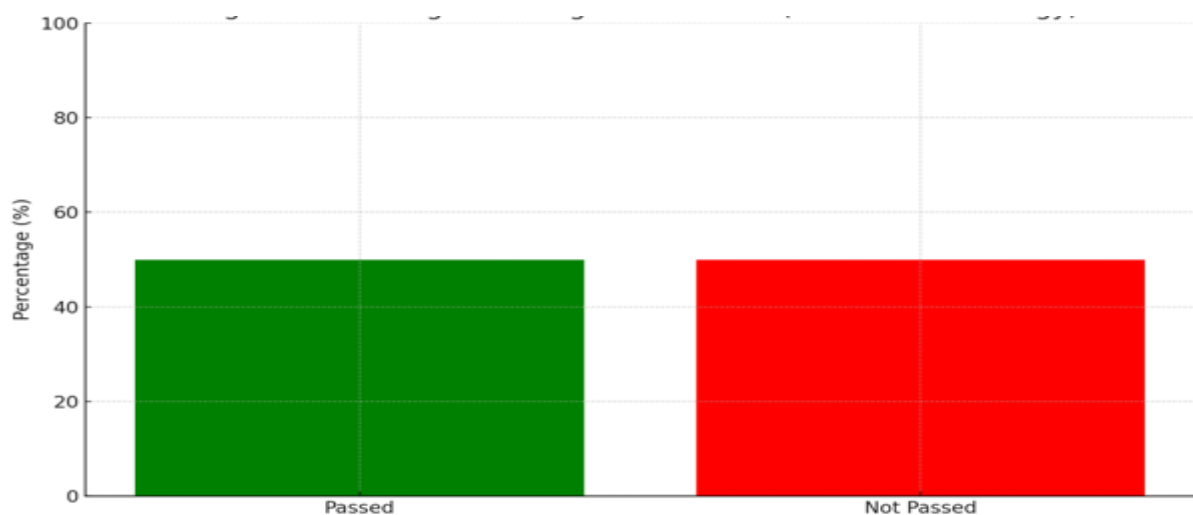100%   = Number of cases

3.   RESULTS
3.1. Pre-Stage

The pre-stage phase was implemented without the application of the reading aloud (RA) strategy in order to establish a baseline for student learning achievement. The results of this stage are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Pre-stage learning achievement without RA strategy

As shown in Figure 2, only 50 percent of the students achieved the passing grade. This outcome, obtained without the implementation of the RA strategy, remains significantly below the standard success indicator of 85 percent. The data confirms a substantial gap in meeting expected learning outcomes before the intervention.

3.2. Implementation stage

3.2.1. First stage

The first implementation stage applied the RA strategy to enhance students' academic performance, particularly focusing on improving comprehension of key reading points. This stage was conducted over three sessions, each lasting 45 minutes. The results are detailed in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Pre-stage learning achievement without RA strategy
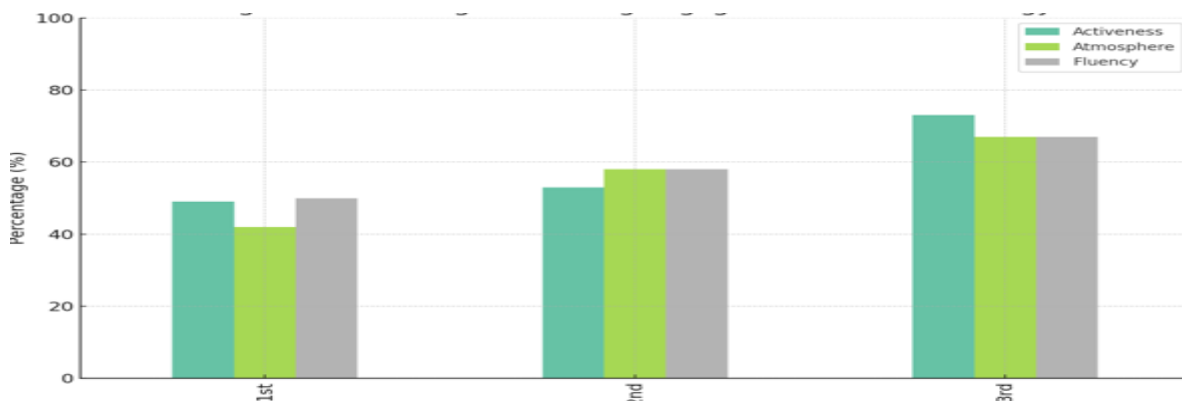
During this phase, student activeness in the learning process showed progressive improvement: 49 percent in the first session, 53 percent in the second, and 73 percent in the third. However, the learning atmosphere remained at a lower level, with reported scores of 42 percent in the first session, increasing to 58 percent in the second, and 67 percent in the third.

These results indicate a need for pedagogical refinement, particularly in stimulating student motivation and reinforcing positive behaviors through appreciation and encouragement. Remedial efforts were identified as necessary to align performance with the targeted achievement standards.

In terms of learning fluency, the recorded scores were 50 percent, 58 percent, and 67 percent across the three sessions, respectively. Although gradual improvement was observed, the outcomes remained below the expected threshold. To address this, classroom management and instructional organization must be enhanced to foster a more engaging and well-regulated environment. The first stage of RA strategy implementation revealed insufficient attainment levels, necessitating a second cycle to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

3.2.2. Second stage

The second implementation stage served as a continuation and refinement of the RA strategy, informed by the observations and results from the first cycle. This stage aimed to enhance student activity, improve the learning atmosphere, and promote fluency in reading comprehension.

Figure 3
Pre-stage learning achievement without RA strategy
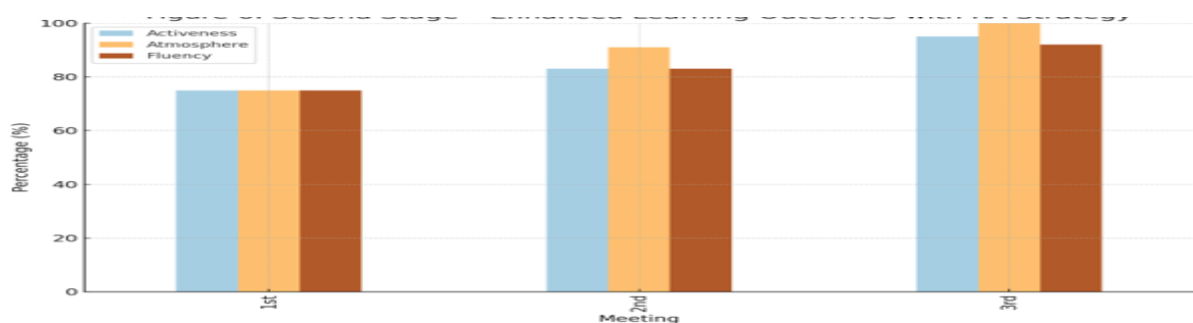
The results in figure 4 indicate a marked improvement across all measured indicators. In terms of student activity, performance rose to 75 percent in the first session, 83 percent in the second, and 95 percent in the third, demonstrating a substantial increase.

The learning atmosphere also improved significantly, with 75 percent recorded in the first session, 91 percent in the second, and 100 percent in the third. This enhancement is attributed to increased student enthusiasm and effective instructional leadership that facilitated a more conducive learning environment.

Regarding learning fluency, scores reached 75 percent in the first session, 83 percent in the second, and 92 percent in the third. These findings indicate a strong positive trajectory when the RA strategy was implemented with structured classroom management and optimized engagement techniques.

3.3. Comparison between first and second stages

A comparative analysis of the two implementation stages reveals a significant improvement in student engagement through the RA strategy. The progressive enhancement of activeness, atmosphere, and fluency underscores the effectiveness of this instructional method.

The observed improvements were closely associated with the instructor's role in maintaining a conducive classroom environment and encouraging interactive learning. As a result, students responded with increased participation, frequent questioning, and active engagement in discussions, thereby promoting a more dynamic and comprehension-oriented reading process..

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the effectiveness of the reading aloud learning strategy in enhancing student academic achievement within a classroom context. The research was conducted through a classroom action research design focused on a single subject module in a private secondary school located in the Semarang region, Indonesia. Across two sequential implementation stages, findings demonstrated significant improvement in key indicators of learning achievement, specifically in terms of student engagement, classroom atmosphere, and fluency of learning. The evidence strongly suggests that the reading aloud strategy contributes meaningfully to the overall learning process and its associated outcomes.

However, several limitations must be acknowledged. The application of the reading aloud strategy was restricted to a reading-oriented subject, limiting generalizability across other disciplines. Future research should therefore explore the adaptability and efficacy of this strategy across a broader range of subjects, including mathematics, biology, and physics, particularly within both secondary and senior high school settings. Additionally, the current study was confined to a single classroom and subject, which constrains the scope of its conclusions. Subsequent research should consider implementation across multiple subjects and diverse classroom environments to enhance generalizability.

Furthermore, future instructional design should ensure that teachers provide clear and structured guidance, enabling students to engage effectively with learning strategies by pedagogical objectives.

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