International Journal of Education, Vocational and Social Science
https://e-journal.citakonsulindo.or.id/index.php/IJEVSS
E-ISSN : 2963 4954
IJEVSS

Improving Reading Fluency Through an Assignment-Based Repeated Reading Method for At-Risk Slow Learner Students in Grade V at SD Negeri 009 Malinau Kota

Otnelyus. L
Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Ishartiwi
Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: otnelyusl.2025@student.uny.ac.id

Abstract

This study was motivated by the low reading fluency of at-risk students with slow learner characteristics in Grade V of SDN 009 Malinau Kota. The students experienced difficulties in reading fluently, made pronunciation errors, read with inappropriate intonation, and required more time to understand texts. This study aimed to describe the implementation of the Repeated Reading strategy and determine its effectiveness in improving students' reading fluency. This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The participants were at-risk students with slow learner characteristics in Grade V of SDN 009 Malinau Kota. Data were collected through observations, reading fluency tests, and documentation. The data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative and qualitative techniques. The findings indicated that the implementation of the Repeated Reading strategy improved students' reading fluency. The improvement was reflected in better reading accuracy, speed, and expression, as well as increased confidence and participation in reading activities. Therefore, the Repeated Reading strategy is effective in improving the reading fluency of at-risk students with slow learner characteristics in elementary schools.

Keywords: Reading Fluency, Slow Learner, Repeated Reading, Classroom Action Research

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

INTRODUCTION

Reading fluency is one of the most important basic skills in supporting the success of students' learning at the elementary school level. Tarigan (2015) states that reading is a process carried out by the reader to obtain the message conveyed by the writer through written language. Thus, reading is not only related to the ability to recognize letters and words, but also involves the process of understanding the meaning of the reading. At the elementary school level, especially in upper grades, students are expected to have reading fluency skills that are not only fluent but also able to understand the contents of the reading well. Reading fluency is an important indicator of reading fluency ability. Rasinski (2012) states that reading fluency includes three main aspects, namely accuracy in reading words, reading speed, and the use of appropriate intonation and expression. The importance of reading fluency is also affirmed by the National Reading Panel (2000) which states that reading fluency is one of the main components in reading learning that affects reading comprehension.

Based on the results of the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the reading literacy ability of Indonesian students is still below the average of OECD member countries. In 2022, Indonesia's reading literacy score was recorded at 359 points, while the OECD average reached 476 points. These results indicate that the reading ability of Indonesian students is still lagging behind international standards so that strengthening literacy becomes an important concern in the Indonesian education world (OECD, 2023). Besides being below the OECD average, Indonesia's reading literacy achievement also experienced a decline compared to the previous period. In PISA 2018, Indonesia obtained a reading score of 371 points, while in 2022 it decreased to 359 points. This decline indicates a serious challenge in improving the quality of education, specifically the ability to understand reading and critical thinking of students (Tohir, 2020).

In elementary school learning practices, not all students are able to achieve the expected reading ability. One group of students who often experience obstacles in the process of learning to read is students with slow learning abilities (slow learners). Abdurrahman (2012) states that slow learners are students who have intellectual abilities slightly below average so they require a longer learning time compared to students in general. Slow learner students generally have characteristics such as being slow in understanding information, having difficulty in remembering material, and requiring repetition in the learning process. In learning to read, this condition causes students to experience difficulty in recognizing words automatically. Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) explain that the inability to achieve automaticity in reading will have an impact on low

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

reading fluency and reading comprehension.

Goodman (1967, as cited in Fountas & Pinnell, 2021:3) defines reading as "a psycholinguistic guessing game" where the reader actively constructs meaning from the text by utilizing their linguistic knowledge and background knowledge. Snow (2002:11) in the National Reading Panel report defines reading as the process of extracting and constructing meaning simultaneously through interaction with written text. In a more comprehensive literacy context, Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2021:22) assert that reading is a metacognitive activity that demands the reader's ability to monitor, organize, and evaluate their own comprehension process.

One of the learning strategies that can be used to improve reading ability, especially in students with slow learner characteristics, is the Repeated Reading learning strategy. This strategy was introduced by Jay Samuels which emphasizes the activity of reading the same text repeatedly until the student reaches a certain level of reading fluency. Various studies indicate that the Repeated Reading strategy is effective in improving reading fluency. Therrien (2004) states that the repeated reading strategy provides a positive influence on the increase of reading speed and reading comprehension. In addition, the research of Rasinski et al. (2011) also affirms that reading fluency is an important factor in supporting reading comprehension.

The automaticity theory developed by LaBerge and Samuels becomes the main theoretical foundation in the Repeated Reading strategy. This theory explains that human attentional capacity is limited so the decoding process must occur automatically so students can understand the reading content well. Samuels (2021:6) defines Repeated Reading as a procedure where students reread a specially selected short text several times until reaching a fluency level determined as a criterion, before proceeding to the next text. Rasinski (2022:76) defines Repeated Reading more broadly as "any instructional practice that requires a student to read the same text on more than one occasion". Kuhn and Stahl (in Reutzel & Cooter, 2022:205) distinguish between assisted repeated reading and unassisted repeated reading.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design based on the model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which was implemented in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The research was conducted during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at SD Negeri 009 Malinau Kota, North Kalimantan. The subjects of this study were 16 Grade V students, with the primary focus directed

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

towards 6 at-risk students identified as having slow learner characteristics based on preliminary observations, academic grades, and classroom teacher recommendations.

Data collection techniques employed in this study included observation, reading fluency tests, and documentation. Observations were carried out by an observer using observation sheets during the learning process to assess teacher activities, student engagement, and student responses to the Repeated Reading strategy. Reading fluency tests were administered directly to the students across three stages—pretest, Cycle I posttest, and Cycle II posttest—to measure three main aspects: accuracy (precision in reading words), speed (reading fluency), and prosody (use of intonation and expression). The instrument's validity was ensured using content validity through consultations with supervisors and teachers, while reliability was maintained through inter-rater agreement and standardized assessment rubrics.

Table 1. Reading Fluency Assessment Rubric

Score	Criteria
4	Reads very fluently, no errors, appropriate intonation.
3	Reads fluently, a few errors present.
2	Reads less fluently, still many errors.
1	Does not read fluently, many errors and pauses.

The collected data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative descriptive techniques. The observational data were analyzed based on the percentage of learning activity implementation, whereas the test results were calculated to determine the classical learning completeness. The research action was deemed successful if the average reading fluency score increased in each cycle, at least 75% of the students achieved a score above the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) set by the school, and a minimum of 75% of the students demonstrated good or very good learning activities during the implementation of the Repeated Reading strategy.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Results

Before implementing the Repeated Reading strategy, initial observations and a reading fluency pretest were conducted in mid-April 2026 to determine the baseline reading capabilities of the fifth-grade students. The results indicated that reading fluency was still in the low category, with many students failing to reach the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM). Out of 16 students, only

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

10 students (62.5%) achieved KKM, while 6 students (37.5%) scored below the KKM. These six students exhibited a very low average reading speed of 45-55 words per minute (WPM). Their reading characteristics included halting pronunciation, frequent syllable repetition, ignoring punctuation marks, reading without intonation (monotonous), and displaying low self-confidence when asked to read in front of the class.

During the first cycle, the teacher applied the Repeated Reading strategy by providing reading models and asking students to repeat the text two to three times individually. The teacher also provided scaffolding for students who experienced difficulties. The observation results showed that the average student learning activity score reached 65%, which falls into the 'Good' category. Independent participation and the courage to read aloud in front of the class still needed encouragement. Regarding reading fluency, the target students' reading speed experienced a slight increase, reaching an average of 55-65 WPM. The posttest revealed that 11 out of 16 students (68.75%) successfully achieved the KKM. This achievement had not yet met the classical completeness indicator of 75%, indicating the need for further improvements. The reflection stage identified that the 2-3 repetitions were insufficient for slow learners to achieve automaticity, the reading format felt monotonous, and the interactive assistance lacked variety.

Based on the Cycle I reflection, the researcher revised the action plan in Cycle II by increasing the reading repetitions to 4-5 times, implementing a peer reading format (reading in pairs), and utilizing a reading timer. During implementation, students took turns reading and correcting each other's pronunciation within their pairs, accompanied by intensive scaffolding from the teacher specifically targeted at pairs containing slow learners. The observation data indicated a significant surge in student engagement, with the activity score reaching 85% ('Very Good' category). The students appeared more focused due to the timer challenge and felt comfortable learning with their peers. The reading fluency of the six target students improved rapidly, reaching 70-85 WPM. Pronunciation errors decreased, and the application of punctuation pauses improved. The Cycle II posttest demonstrated that 13 out of 16 students (81.25%) successfully surpassed the KKM, thereby exceeding the predefined success indicators.

DISCUSSIONS

The research findings prove that the implementation of the Repeated Reading strategy significantly improved the reading fluency parameters, encompassing accuracy, speed, and prosody, of the fifth-grade students at SDN 009 Malinau Kota, specifically for the at-risk slow learner students. The progression of the students' classical completeness from the pre-action

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

stage to Cycle II is clearly illustrated in the data collected throughout the study.

Table 2. Development of Students' Classical Reading Completeness

Research Stage	Number of Students Passing KKM	Classical Completeness Percentage	Average Speed of Target Students (Slow Learners)
Initial Condition (Pretest)	10 Students	62.50%	45-55 WPM
Posttest Cycle I	11 Students	68.75%	55-65 WPM
Posttest Cycle II	13 Students	81.25%	70-85 WPM

Theoretically, this fluency enhancement aligns with the automaticity theory proposed by LaBerge and Samuels. Through the structured repetition of reading texts, the cognitive load of slow learner students in decoding letter by letter can be drastically reduced. When word recognition becomes automatic, the child's working memory capacity, which was previously fully occupied by spelling letters, can be redirected to comprehend meaning units, intonation, expression (prosody), and the overall content of the reading text.

The implementation of Repeated Reading delivered positive impacts not only on the mechanical cognitive domain of reading but also on the students' affective aspects and learning behaviors. During the initial conditions, slow learner students frequently withdrew, remained passive, and feared making mistakes when asked to read aloud in front of the class due to their history of repeated failures. The action modifications introduced in Cycle II, specifically the use of the peer reading format combined with intensive teacher scaffolding, successfully established a safe, low-anxiety learning environment. This approach is consistent with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept, wherein interactions with a more competent teacher or peer act as a supporting bridge (scaffolding) for children to master skills beyond their initial independent capabilities.

The success experienced in reading the same text from one repetition to the next provided tangible enactive mastery experiences for the students. This gradual experience of success psychologically fostered the students' self-efficacy and self-confidence. The elevation in self-confidence was visibly demonstrated by the high enthusiasm of the students while performing repeated reading exercises utilizing the timer instrument at the conclusion of Cycle II. Empirical and theoretical evidence confirms that the collaboration of a structured and adaptive assignment-

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

based Repeated Reading strategy serves as an effective solution for the literacy problems faced by at-risk slow learner students at SD Negeri 009 Malinau Kota.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Repeated Reading strategy has been proven to significantly improve the reading fluency of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 009 Malinau Kota, specifically for the six students with slow learner characteristics. This improvement is evident in word pronunciation accuracy, adherence to punctuation pauses, intonation (prosody), and the target students' reading speed, which increased from an initial average of 45-55 WPM to 70-85 WPM by the end of Cycle II. The most effective action implementation process was achieved in Cycle II through the modification of the Repeated Reading strategy integrated with the peer reading method and the utilization of a visual time measuring tool (timer reading). This structured step successfully and consistently raised the percentage of classical completeness from the initial pre-cycle condition of 62.50% (10 students), to 68.75% (11 students) in Cycle I, and reached its peak at 81.25% (13 students) at the end of Cycle II, thus exceeding the established classical success indicator.

The application of this method also provided positive psychological and learning behavior impacts within the classroom. Through a safe and low-anxiety group learning environment, the self-confidence and self-efficacy of slow learner students grew gradually. This is evidenced by a drastic surge in the percentage of student activity and involvement in the literacy learning process, which increased from the 'Fair' category to the 'Very Good' category (85%) at the end of Cycle II. The structured and gradual reading activities allowed students to learn according to their learning speed and needs, creating a more active and conducive learning atmosphere where their reading fluency could develop optimally.

REFERENCES

References

Abdurrahman, M. (2012). Pendidikan Bagi Anak Berkesulitan Belajar. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.

Afflerbach, P., Pearson, P. D., & Paris, S. G. (2021). Skills and strategies: Their development and role in reading comprehension. Reading Research Quarterly, 43(4), 364-373.

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2021). Guided Reading: Responsive Teaching Across the Grades (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2019). The Action Research Planner: Doing Social Systemic

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

Research. Singapore: Springer.

National Reading Panel (US). (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2023). PISA 2022 Results (Volume I): The State of Learning and Equity in Education. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Rasinski, T. V. (2012). The Fluent Reader: Oral & Silent Reading Strategies for Building Word Recognition, Fluency, and Comprehension (2nd ed.). New York: Scholastic.

Rasinski, T. V. (2022). The Fluent Reader: Oral & Silent Reading Strategies for Building Word Recognition, Fluency, and Comprehension (3rd ed.). New York: Scholastic.

Rasinski, T. V., et al. (2011). The reading fluency-comprehension relation: A closer look. The Reading Teacher, 65(1), 75-84.

Reutzel, D. R., & Cooter, R. B. (2022). Strategies for Reading Assessment and Instruction: Helping Every Child Succeed (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Samuels, S. J. (2021). Toward a theory of automatic information processing in reading, revisited. Journal of Literacy Research, 53(1), 5-15.

Snow, C. E. (2002). Reading for Understanding: Toward an R&D Program in Reading Comprehension. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (1998). Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Tarigan, H. G. (2015). Membaca sebagai Suatu Keterampilan Berbahasa. Bandung: Angkasa.

Therrien, W. J. (2004). Fluency and comprehension gains as a result of repeated reading: A meta-analysis. Remedial and Special Education, 25(4), 252-261.

Tohir, M. (2020). Hasil PISA Indonesia Tahun 2018 Turun Dibanding Tahun 2015. Diakses dari ResearchGate.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License