

Improving Students' Reading Skills Through the Use of the Storytelling Method in Elementary School Students

Gusni Efin¹, Paldy², Haspidawati Nur³

^{1 2 3} Cokroamonito Palopo University, Indonesia; gusniefin@gmail.com

* WhatsApp; 085341411786

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Abstract

This study aims to improve students' reading skills through the use of the storytelling method in grade III students at SDN 42 Limpomajang, Palopo City. This type of research is class action research (PTK). The subjects in this study are grade III students totaling 10 students. The research instruments used were reading tests, observation of learning implementation, and observation of student activities. The data analysis technique used is quantitative descriptive. The results of the study show that the average test score on students' reading skills increased through the use of *the storytelling method* in grade III of SDN 42 Limpomajang, Palopo City, where the increase that occurred from cycle I to cycle II was 20%. This is evidenced by the results of the research where the first cycle obtained student learning outcomes by 60% and the second cycle obtained learning outcomes by 80%.

Keywords

PTK; Reading Skills; Storytelling Method.



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INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in forming quality human resources. One of the basic competencies that must be developed in elementary school is language skills which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these four skills, reading is the basis for mastering science because it not only involves the ability to pronounce words, but also understand the content of reading, expand insights, and develop critical thinking skills.

The low reading skills of students are still influenced by the use of learning methods that do not actively involve students. Learning that is still teacher-centered causes students to get bored easily so that learning outcomes are not optimal. Therefore, innovative learning methods are needed so that students have a meaningful learning experience. According to Mala et al. (2022), reading is part of language skills that involves the process of thinking to understand the information in the text so that the reader is able to grasp the meaning contained in it.

Learning outcomes are changes in abilities obtained by students after participating in the Based on the results of observations in grade III of SDN 42 Limpomajang, Palopo City, students' reading skills are still low. Of the 10 students, only 4 students (40%) have achieved KKTP, while 6 students (60%) have not achieved completeness. One of the alternatives that can be applied to

overcome this problem is the storytelling method, which is learning through the delivery of interesting stories that help students understand the content of reading, increase imagination, and strengthen memory.

According to Amelia (2021), the *storytelling* method helps students understand the content of the story according to their intellectual development. This opinion is strengthened by Rahmawati and Zulkarnain (2020) who stated that *storytelling* is able to increase students' imagination and understanding, Rahayu and Pangestika (2022) who emphasized the importance of using intonation and word choice in telling stories, and Rusiyono and Apriani (2020) who explained that *storytelling* is an activity of conveying messages or information orally, both with and without media.

Based on these problems, this study aims to improve students' reading skills and describe the implementation of learning through the use of the storytelling method in Indonesian subjects in grade III of SDN 42 Limpomajang, Palopo City.

METHODS

This study uses Classroom Action Research (PTK). According to Arikunto (2021), PTK is a research that describes the cause-and-effect relationship of actions taken to improve the learning process through the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The research was carried out in grade III of SDN 42 Limpomajang, Palopo City in the even semester of the 2025/2026 school year with 10 students, consisting of 3 males and 7 females.

The research refers to the model of Kemmis and McTaggart Hamida et al., (2021) which consists of four stages, namely planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. The research is carried out in several cycles until success indicators are achieved. At the planning stage, teaching modules, research instruments, and learning tools are prepared. The implementation stage applies the storytelling method through introductory, core, and closing activities according to the teaching module.

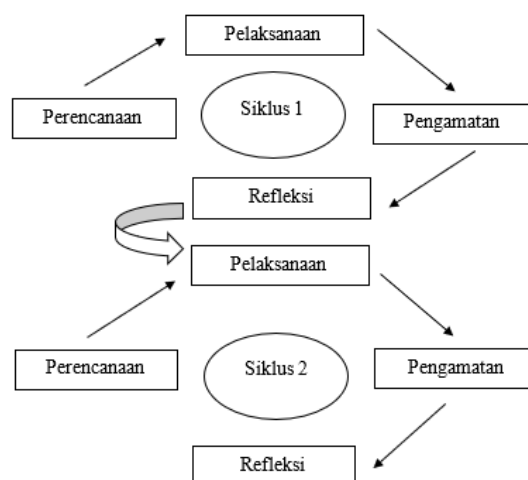


Figure 1. Classroom Action Research Cycle

Source: Kemmis McTaggart

The observation stage is carried out by observers using observation sheets to record the implementation of learning and student activities. Furthermore, the reflection stage is used to analyze the results of actions as a basis for improvement in the next cycle. When the success indicators have been achieved, the study is stopped. Data collection techniques include observation and tests. Observation is used to observe the implementation of learning, student activities, and obstacles during the learning process, while tests are used to measure students' reading skills based on aspects of pronunciation, intonation, fluency, accuracy, and loudness.

The research instrument consisted of observation sheets on learning implementation, observation sheets on student activities, and reading tests. Observation sheets are used to assess the implementation of student learning and activities during the application of the storytelling method, while reading tests are used to measure the improvement of students' reading skills at the end of each cycle. Data was analyzed using quantitative descriptive analysis to describe the implementation of learning, student activities, and improvement of reading skills based on observation and test results.

1. Observation data on learning implementation

Learning implementation observation sheets are used so that learning implementation can be measured and known. The purpose of the observation sheet is to assess whether all aspects of learning implementation have been carried out properly or not. The learning process is carried out by applying *the storytelling* method as an effort so that students' reading skills can improve.

Table 1. Learning Implementation Categories

Nope.	Success Rate	Predicate
1	80-100	Very good
2	73-79	Good
3	65-72	Enough
4	55-64	Less
5	<54	Very Kurag

Source: Arikunto (Sulfiana, 2023).

2. Analysis of Student Learning Activity Data

In determining criteria regarding research results, a grouping consisting of 5 criteria can be carried out, including very active, active, moderately active, less active, and inactive. The data that can be obtained is data on student activities in the classroom as long as the educator carries out the learning process through the use of *the storytelling* method in reading activities.

Table 2. Categories of Student Learning Activities

Shoes	Category
80-100	Highly Active
73-79	Active
65-72	Quite active
55-64	Less active
<54	Very Inactive

Source: Arikunto (Sulfiana, 2023).

3. Reading Skills Test

Students' reading skills can be obtained through the results of tests conducted during the research. The test is made by meeting the criteria of good reading. Reading test data was collected through direct reading activities by students, then the researcher provided an assessment. After all students complete the reading activity, the score obtained is calculated with the following formula.

$$\text{Value} = \frac{\text{jumlah skor perolehan}}{\text{jumlah skor maksimal}} \times 100$$

Table 3. Categories Learning Outcomes

No	Shoes	Category
1	<54	Very low
2	55-64	Low
3	65-72	Medium
4	73-79	Height
5	80-100	Very high

Source: Arikunto (Sulfiana, 2023)

4. Success Indicators

The success indicators in this study were used to measure whether the application of *the storytelling* method can be effective in improving students' reading skills. This class action research is considered successful if it can meet the criteria that have been set beforehand. The indicator of success in this case is to improve students' reading skills, which is declared successful if 80% of all students or 8 students out of 10 students who have achieved the learning goal achievement criteria (KKTP) score of 73 are in the good category.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Observations were made by researchers and peers during the learning process. At this stage, the researcher observed the learning process from the first activity to the last activity using the observation sheets that had been prepared. The results of the observations obtained were then collected and analyzed at the observation stage. Reflection is carried out by reviewing the observation data to find out whether the learning process applied is able to improve students' reading skills. Then, the results of the analysis can be used as a basis for planning actions in the next cycle. If the research has not shown optimal results, then the action will be continued in cycle II. Based on the results of observations during the learning process during reading in cycle I, the following data were obtained.

1. Observation Results of the Implementation of Cycle I Learning

The results of observations on the implementation of student learning activities in the first cycle, both in the first, second, and third meetings, can be seen in table 4 below.

Table 4. Observation Results of the Implementation of Cycle I Learning

Meetings	Aspac Teramati	Percentage (%)	Category
1	13	92	Excellent
2	13	92	Excellent
3	13	92	Excellent

Average	13	92	Excellent
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Source: Primary data after processing (2026)

Based on table 5, it shows that the results of observation of the implementation of learning in cycle I during the process of learning activities take place. In the first meeting, the number of aspects observed was 13 aspects with a percentage of 92% (very good), then at the second meeting the number of aspects that were implemented was the same as the first meeting, namely 13 aspects with a percentage of 92% (very good), while at the third meeting the number of aspects that were implemented was 13 with a percentage of 92% (very good). The average number of observation results of learning implementation in the observed aspect is 13 aspects with a percentage of 92% in the very good category.

2. Results of Observation of Student Activities in Cycle I I

Table 5. Results of observation of student activities in cycle II

Meetings	Aspac Teramati	Percentage (%)	Category
1	12	85	Very active
2	11	78	Active
3	12	85	Very active
Average	11	82	Very active

Source: Primary data after processing (2026).

The results of observations on student activities in cycle I are shown in table 5. The number of aspects observed was 12 with a percentage of 85% (very active). Then at the second meeting, the number of aspects observed was 11 aspects with a percentage of 78% (active). Furthermore, at the third meeting, the number of aspects observed was 12 aspects with a percentage of 85% (very active). The average number of student activity observation results in the observed aspect is 11 aspects with a percentage of 82% in the very active category.

3. Student Learning Outcomes Cycle I

Reading skills tests are conducted individually to measure each student's reading ability. The test results in cycle I showed that the highest score of students was 22 and the lowest score was 9. The average score on each indicator includes voice loudness of 3.2, pronunciation 3.6, intonation 3.1, sentence accuracy 3.9, and fluency of 4.1.

Table 6. Success Score of Reading Skills Cycle I

Score obtained	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
80-100	Excellent	3	30
73-79	Good	3	30
65-72	Enough	2	20
55-64	Less	2	20
≤ 54	Very less	0	0
Quantity		10	100

Source: Primary Data After Processing 2026

Based on table 6, it shows that as many as 3 students are in the very good category, 3 students in the good category, 2 students in the fair category, and 2 students in the poor

category. These results show that the application of the storytelling method is able to improve students' reading skills. Students in the very good category have mastered almost all assessment indicators, namely sentence accuracy, loudness of voice, pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Students in the good category have met most of the indicators, but still need guidance. Meanwhile, students in the sufficient and insufficient categories still experience obstacles in several aspects, especially pronunciation, intonation, loudness of voice, and fluency, so they require further practice and assistance.

Table 7. The final completion value of reading skills in cycle I

No	Value acquisition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Score $\geq$ 73	6	60
2	Score $\leq$ 73	4	40
Quantity		10	100

Source: Primary data after processing (2026)

Based on table 7, it shows that students who get scores above 73 or complete as many as 6 students or 60%, while students who get scores less than 73 or incomplete are 4 students or 40%. This shows that in the first cycle it has not met the success indicators that have been set, which is 80%, so it still needs to be continued to the next cycle.

4. Observation Results of the Implementation of Cycle II Learning

Table 8. Results of observation of the implementation of learning cycle II

Meetings	Aspac Teramati	Percentage (%)	Category
1	13	92	Excellent
2	14	100	Excellent
3	14	100	Excellent
Average	13	97	Excellent

Source: Primary data after processing (2026)

Based on the results of the observation of table 8, the implementation of learning in cycle II during the course of learning activities can be shown through table 9. The number of indicators implemented at the first meeting amounted to 13 indicators with a percentage of 92% (very good), then the number of indicators at the second meeting was 14 indicators with a percentage of 100% (very good), then there were 14 indicators observed at the third meeting with a percentage of 100% (very good). The average number achieved in the observation of learning implementation in the observed aspects was 13 with a percentage of 97% with the category of very good.

5. Results of Observation of Student Activities in Cycle II

Table 9. Results of observation of student activities in cycle II

Meetings	Aspac Teramati	Percentage (%)	Category
1	12	85	Very active
2	12	85	Very active
3	12	85	Very active
Average	12	85	Very active

Source: Primary data after processing (2026)

Based on table 9, it shows the results of the observation of student activities in cycle II during the learning process, at the first meeting the number of aspects that were implemented was 12 aspects with a percentage of 85% (very good), then at the second meeting the number of aspects observed was the same as the first meeting, namely 12 aspects with a percentage of 85% (very good), then at the third meeting the number of aspects observed was 12 aspects with a percentage of 85% (very good). The average number of observation results on student activities in the observed aspect is 12 aspects with a percentage of 85% in the very good category.

6. Student Learning Outcomes Cycle II

Based on the data on the assessment of students' reading skills on the sound loudness indicator, the average score can be obtained at 3.3%, then on the pronunciation indicator, the average score is obtained at 3.9%, then on the intonation indicator, the average score is obtained at 3.4%, while on the sentence accuracy indicator, the average score is obtained at 4.2%, and on the fluency indicator, the average score can be obtained at 4.1%.

Table 10. Reading Skills Success Score II

Score obtained	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
80-100	Excellent	6	60
73-79	Good	2	20
65-72	Enough	0	0
55-64	Less	2	20
≤ 54	Very less	0	0
Quantity		10	100

Source: Primary data after processing (2026)

Based on table 10 shows that 6 students are in the very good category, 2 students in the good category, and 2 students in the low category. These results show that the application of the storytelling method is able to improve students' reading skills. Students in the excellent category have mastered almost all indicators of reading skills, namely sentence accuracy, loudness, pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Students in the good category have met most of the indicators, but still need guidance. Meanwhile, students in the less category still experience difficulties in terms of pronunciation, intonation, loudness of voice, and reading accuracy, so they need more intensive training and mentoring.

Table 11. The final completion value of reading skills cycle II

No	Value acquisition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Score ≥ 73	8	80
2	Score ≤ 73	2	20
	Quantity	10	100

Source: Primary data after processing (2026)

Based on table 11, it shows that students who got a score above 73 or completed amounted to 8 students with a percentage of 80%, while as many as 2 students who got a score of less than 73 or did not complete with a percentage of 20%. This shows that there is indeed an increase in cycle II, this also shows that it has met the success indicators that have been set, namely 80% of students who get complete scores. Thus, it can be concluded by the researcher that this class action research has been successful or has reached the target so that it is considered that the next cycle no longer needs to be continued.

The results of the reading skills test of students at SDN 42 Limpomajang, Palopo City in the second cycle can show a good improvement. This can be seen from the success rate of classical completeness of students' reading skills which has reached 80%, so that the success indicators that have been set have been achieved. Thus, the application of *the storytelling* method is able to improve students' reading skills well and does not need to be continued to the next cycle.

Table 12. Comparison of reading skills results of students in cycle I and cycle II

Siklus	Conclusion	Incomplete	Percentage (%)	Criteria
I	6	4	60	Less
II	8	2	80	Excellent

Source: Primary data after processing (2026)

Based on the data in table 12 and the data in appendix 5 on pages 71 and 72 of the research results in cycles I and II, it can be seen that there has been an improvement in students' reading skills through the use of *the storytelling method*. Where, in the first cycle there were 6 students or 60% who got a score that was in the low category and students who achieved a KKTP score of 60%, while in the second cycle there was an increase to 8 students or 80% who got a score that was in the very good criteria and reached a KKTP score of 80%.

Based on the results of the research, the application of *the storytelling method* was proven to be able to improve the reading skills of third grade students of SDN 42 Limpomajang, Palopo City. This increase can be seen from the increase in the implementation of learning, student activities, and the completeness of reading skills in each cycle. These findings show that learning through *storytelling* provides opportunities for students to practice reading actively so that reading skills develop gradually.

The results of this study are in line with the opinion of Rafika and Lestari (2020) who stated that reading is a complex process that involves not only the pronunciation of words, but also thinking activities, psycholinguistics, and metacognition in understanding the meaning of reading. This opinion is strengthened by Hidayah (2023) who explains that reading is a process of constructing meaning through combining previous knowledge with information in the text so that students are able to understand the main ideas, important information, and the content of the reading as a whole. Thus, the improvement of reading skills is not only indicated by the fluency of reading, but also the ability to understand the content of the reading.

The improvement of reading skills is also influenced by the use of *storytelling* methods. Amelia (2021) states that *the storytelling method* helps students understand the content of the story through the presentation of material that is in accordance with their intellectual development. In line with that, Rahmawati and Zulkarnain (2020) explained that *storytelling* is able to increase imagination and help students understand concepts more deeply than the lecture method.

In the first cycle, the implementation of learning was not fully optimal because students were still adapting to the *storytelling method*. Some students still lack confidence when reading in front of the class, pronunciation and intonation are not right, and the classroom conditions are not fully conducive. As a result, the implementation of learning reached 92% (very good category), student activity 82% (very active category), and the completeness of reading skills only reached 60% or 6 out of 10 students, so that it did not meet the success indicator of 80%.

Improvements made in the second cycle through simpler material delivery, motivation, and more intensive guidance have succeeded in improving the quality of learning. Students become more confident, pronunciation, intonation, loudness, and reading fluency are getting better. This condition has an impact on increasing the implementation of learning to 97% (very good category), student activity to 85% (very active category), and reading skill completeness increasing to 80% or 8 out of 10 students. These results have met the success indicators of the research so that it shows that *the storytelling method* is effective in improving students' reading skills.

The findings of this study are supported by the research of Koten and Purnomo, (2025) which shows that the application of *the storytelling method* is able to improve reading fluency, learning interest, understanding of reading content, and the use of student intonation. The results of this study are also in line with research (Dewi et al., 2021) which reported that *the storytelling method* improves reading fluency, vocabulary mastery, understanding of story content, and student involvement in learning. In the study, learning outcomes increased from cycle I to cycle II to reach a more optimal level of completeness.

Overall, the results of this study reinforce the findings of previous research that *the storytelling method* is an effective method to improve the reading skills of elementary school students. The application of this method is able to create more active, interesting, and meaningful learning so that students' reading skills improve and indicators of research success can be achieved.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the application of *the storytelling method* of third grade students of SDN 42 Limpomajang has had a positive impact on improving students' reading skills. Thus, it can be said that the *storytelling method* can improve the reading skills of third grade students of SDN 42 Limpomajang, Palopo City. This is evidenced by the increase in students' reading skills in the first cycle, there were 6 students or 60% who achieved KKTP, while the other 4 students

have not achieved KKTP, with an average class number of 73.6% in the good category. In the second cycle, the reading skills of grade III students of SDN 42 Limpomajang experienced an increase in reading skills, namely 8 students or 80% achieved KKTP and 2 students did not achieve KKTP, with an average number of classes of 77.6% with the good category.

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