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## THE ANIMATED STORYTELLING IN AN EFL CLASSROOM: THE EFFECT ON STUDENTS' READING ALOUD ABILITY

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the effectiveness of the animated storytelling in improving reading aloud ability of junior high school students in Aceh. The study concerns with 3 aspects of reading aloud, accuracy, rate, and fluency. A total of 34 male and female junior high school students were chosen randomly in SMPN 11 Banda Aceh. 17 students were selected randomly for the experimental group, and the other 17 were in the control group. The control group was taught by the regular teacher while the experimental group was supervised by the researchers. In obtaining the data, the researchers used oral reading test, a short text consisting of 100 words, administered to students in 2 (two) classes as the pretest and posttest. The data revealed that the experimental group showed better performance than the control group on measure. The gain score achieved by the experimental group is considerably higher, 11.37, than the control group, 3.92. Also, the results also show an improvement in rate aspect that substantially rose from 10 to 28. It then indicates that the animated storytelling has a significant positive effect on the development of students' reading aloud ability, particularly in rate aspect.*

**Keywords:** Animated storytelling, reading aloud, accuracy, rate, fluency.

### INTRODUCTION

For the past thirty years or more, reading aloud seems to have been discouraged in communicative teaching methodology, which tended to react against perceived traditional methods, including reading aloud (Gibson, 2008, p. 29). Meanwhile, reading aloud provides opportunities to students in learning ESL (English as Second Language) and EFL (English as Foreign Language). For instance, when they read story, such as fairy tales or modern fantasy, students learn how to use their imagination, to view situations from various perspectives, and to know that events can be seen from different viewpoints.

According to the theories about reading aloud in the language classroom, ELL students can develop their reading proficiency by recognizing phonemes, learning vocabulary, and then they process meaningful reading comprehension as one of the next high level of reading by using the skills that they have developed initially (Paris & Hamilton, 2009). It is important for ELL students who have no or little reading experience to learn every word for correct pronunciation in basic reading practice.

Gersten, *et al.* (2007) said that reading aloud as a practice to develop oral fluency is recommended to help English Foreign Language (EFL) students in developing phonological awareness, which is identified as one of the major obstacles for ELL students in English reading

development. Practicing reading aloud is assumed to be necessary for beginning readers to sound-symbol relationship that will lay the foundation for cognitive processing in the next high level of reading because the students do not develop English phonological awareness naturally (Griffin, 1992). In other words, reading aloud can make complex ideas more accessible and exposes students' language aspects and patterns that are not part of their everyday speech.

Neuman, Copple and Bredekamp (2000) added that reading aloud is the single most important activity for reading success. It can help students to understand the structure of the texts when they read it independently. Similarly, Razinski and Padak (2000) asserted that reading aloud is recommended to be used as a teaching routine in every class especially in classes which include students with reading difficulties. It can be understood that reading aloud is a basic way for the students to improve their basic reading skill.

Moreover, Ariail and Albright (2006, p. 69) stated that reading aloud has been shown to increase accessibility to text for students who are unable to read the text for themselves. It establishes a mutual relationship between the teacher and the students through encountering the same stories, characters and experiencing common reactions toward the events (Ouenini, Bahous & Nabhani, 2008, p. 141). It suggests that the teacher should know that the training of reading aloud should be taught interactively and is started at primary level. In conclusion, reading aloud plays an important role in teaching English that have a lot of interest among EFL and ESL classrooms around the world.

In Indonesia, reading aloud is one of the competencies included in the English curriculum. As stated in ref. KI/KD. 3, 4/3.10, 4.12 that students are expected (1) to comprehend social function, text structures, and language features by declaring about people, animal and things in short and simply essay accordance to the context (2) can read short and simple texts to their friends by using elements of language appropriately to the grammar accuracy level, vocabulary, pronunciation, word-stress and intonation those are part of an assessment rubric that will be given by the teacher. It notes that junior high school students are urged to master reading aloud skill.

With the rapid growth and availability of technology, video can make the teaching-learning process more easy and dynamic. The teacher can download different appropriate videos for students from internet, such as animated storytelling. Al-Mamun (2014, p. 10) defines the animated storytelling as a video that can facilitate EFL (English as Foreign Language) classroom in diverse way. It is a kind of moving pictures fitted out with natural and appropriate sounds which portray interesting picture and has attractive power that can attract students' attention to learn English.

Green and Brock (2013, p. 1) also stated that animated storytelling can help students to connect with the elements of a story. Through animated storytelling students can experience world beyond their own, especially if it is sharply different from their local environment. In brief, the use of animated storytelling in teaching reading aloud can be one of the effective ways to assist students in learning English.

Sumi and Nagata (2006, p. 1) noted that animated storytelling works by combination of animation and dialogue to help students understand the story. It also can support, facilitate and improve students' pronunciation through listen what the native language say directly. Green and Brock (2013, p.1) also stated that animated storytelling can help students to connect with the elements of a story. Through animated storytelling students can experience world beyond their own, especially if it is sharply different from their local environment. In brief, the use of animated storytelling in teaching reading aloud can be one of the effective ways to assist students in learning English.

In the current study, the researchers were to examine whether the animated storytelling can help the EFL students in improving their reading aloud ability in terms of accuracy, rate, and fluency aspects.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Reading Aloud**

Reading aloud is the single most important activity for building knowledge required for eventual success. It is seen to be critical for developing students' basic reading skill because of its potential in developing their phonological awareness (Liu, 2013, p. 34). It can be understood that reading aloud can offer benefits in increasing accuracy, rate and fluency as part of sounds of spoken words.

Chiappe, Siegel and Gottardo (2002) stated that constant reading aloud was a strong predictor for the development of phonological awareness for all groups of students regardless of their different first language literacy backgrounds. Lafrance and Gottardo (2005) longitudinally examined how 40 English as second language children from kindergarten to first grade classes developed phonological awareness through reading aloud. According to the analysis of the collected data, it was found that reading aloud was a strong predictor of the phonological awareness development. It can be noted that if reading aloud is to be used successfully, it needs to be used appropriately and with clear learning objectives and should be regarded as one of the many tools in teacher's material.

According to Lippman (1997, p. 8) reading aloud is seen as the single most influential factor in students' success in learning to read fluently. It means that reading aloud builds vocabulary, and has a positive impact on students' attitude toward reading. Moreover, Gabrielatos (2002) supported that reading aloud has its own role in teaching-learning. It can be understood that reading aloud can develop students' reading concept about print, story structure, and other elements of a text.

Furthermore, Kailani (1998, p. 287) defines that reading aloud can be justified as a useful skill for use in the classroom which helps the overall language learning process in order to help students read normally without stumbling or making errors of tone, emphasis or expression. According to the statement, reading aloud also can train students to develop smooth oral reading. Also, Gold and Gibson (2001) cited from Kowsary and Rouhani (2013, p. 226) emphasize that reading aloud demonstrates the relationship between the printed word and meaning. In the other word, reading aloud can provide students with a demonstration of phrased and fluent reading.

There are three aspects of reading aloud as defined by Daane and Campbell (2005) as follows:

- a. Fluency; it is defined as the ability to read with speed and proper expression. In order to understand what and when students read aloud, in this activity, they also must be able to read in phrases and add intonation appropriately. It is part of a developmental process of building decoding skills that will form a bridge to read aloud (Cox, 2007, p. 7). It means that fluency is one of aspect that will have a feedback, causal relationship with reading aloud.
- b. Rate; it is the speed with which readers are speaking; It is measured as both the number of words in time for entire performance and the number of words in the initial minutes reading aloud (Daane & Campbell, 2005, p. 4)
- c. Accuracy; it means reading the words in a selection correctly; In this aspect, readers who have difficulty recognizing and pronouncing individual words often have serious problems deriving meaning from the text they encounter will learn how to pronounce each word correctly (Daane & Campbell, 2005, p. 9).

### **The Animated Storytelling**

Animated storytelling video is a well – known audio visual media which offer a great help in stimulating and facilitating the learning ESL (English as Second Language). It is kind of audio visual media that can be seen and listened.

In second language education, video materials have proved especially useful for a number of reasons. Primarily, video materials provide students with the opportunity to experience the target language in a more natural context (Williams & Lutes, 2010, p. 2). In short, the use of animated storytelling video as audio-visual media has a positive contribution to EFL classroom, and also clearly contributes to the understanding of skill that learned by students in EFL context.

According to Canning-Wilson (2000, p. 2) the use of animated storytelling video in language teaching is one of the effective media as a visual aid presenting the target language naturally, whether in the spoken or the written mode. It proves that most of students who have taken English courses formally remain insufficient in the ability to use the language and to understand its use, in normal communication.

The main purpose of the use of animated storytelling video is to enable the teacher to make the lessons effective and interesting. As mentioned by Arthur (1999) as cited from Farhi (2013) animated storytelling video can give students realistic model to imitate for role-play; can increase awareness of other cultures by teaching appropriateness and suitability. In brief, the use of animated storytelling video as audio-visual media make the teaching-learning process more enjoyable, where also make students' meaning clearer by illustrating relationship in a way that is not possible with words.

The use of animated storytelling video in adding ESL teaching and learning is supported by numerous advantages which further understood through the following statements:

1. The ability to present authentic language

The use animated storytelling video in language teaching and learning is highly known for its ability to provide authentic language learning environment for the students (Burt, 2007). Besides that, it could offer ESL students with richer understanding of the native language because it is essential for them not to be competent in the target language only.

2. Increase students' comprehension

With video's ability to feature moving visual element, along with sound, the combination of these elements would help to increase students' comprehension because they do not only hear the language but also see it (Harmer, 2001, cited in Morat & Abidin, 2011, p. 96). In other words, they are presented with total context which includes the linguistic elements.

3. Enhance various language skills

Animated storytelling video is also especially useful as it can utilized to enhance students' various language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar (Morat & Abidin, 2011, p. 96). Thus, video can be utilized for the purpose of integrating all the language skills.

4. Motivating

Video is indeed essential as motivation is considered the backbone of any ESL classroom. The combination of moving visual and sound elements, coupled with interesting activities, could help to stimulate students' interest as they have a chance to not only hear the language but also see it (Harmer, 2001). Thus, it could help to liven up the language learning process and make it more meaningful by bringing in the real world into the classroom. In addition, Cruse (p. 6) claimed that the use of video (e.g.: television, YouTube and animated storytelling) can have strong positive effect on both motivation and affective learning. It can be concluded that by involving the animated storytelling as audio visual media in teaching, can build interest to the students in EFL classroom because it can bring a new color and atmosphere to English language classrooms.

According to Alessi and Trollip (2001) there are 4 steps of transferring and acquiring the knowledge from learning through animated storytelling video, as follows:

1. Perception

Struyven, Dochy and Janssens (2005) defined that students' perceptions are the beliefs or opinions that students have as a result of realizing or noticing something. Students' perceptions are the result of direct experiences in the educational context. In other words, perception can be assumed as the awareness of things that students have by means of their senses of sight. Moreover, Alessi and Trollip (2001) claimed that perception is the condition where students use their sense to accumulate information from what they hear and see from the video. In this case, the teachers should maintain a certain level of attention of the students in order to facilitate students' comprehension in watching the video.

2. Attention

Aparajita, *et al.* (2009) state that learning or acquiring any skill is possible only when an individual is attentive while it is being taught. It means that attention provides strength and ability that can build one's interest in the given subject. It can be inferred that students' attention should be created when the teaching-learning process by animated storytelling video. Because, when they start to focus on the video, their acquisition of skill will proceed naturally.

3. Memorize

It this term, students propose to recall the information that they have acquired and stored (Williams & Lutes, 2010, p. 3). It hopes that the students can read the text of reading like spoken by the native speaker in the animated storytelling video.

4. Comprehension

It is the final steps of the teaching learning reading by using video. In this step, the teachers strive to develop language skills so that students are able to add the learned information to the video which they watch in advance (Williams & Lutes, 2010, p. 4). From the statement, it proves that animated storytelling video is one of the new tools that have become available to teachers and students to impact the learning process.

## **METHODS**

### **Participants**

In this research, the researchers used the experimental study with true experimental design. This design involved two groups, experimental and control classes. In this design, the treatments were given only to the experimental group. Meanwhile, in the control group, the researchers only tested the students' reading aloud ability without any treatments given.

The sample in this study was 34 male and female students chosen by using random sampling. 17 students were in the experimental group and the other 17 were in the control group. In deciding the experimental and control group, the researchers used random sampling in selecting the sample. In the process of taking the sample, the researchers checked the students' scores in English examination that conducted by the teacher. As shown on their cognitive and psychomotor in their academic evaluation which was collected by the researchers, they found that their achievement were in the same level.

### **Instrumentation**

In obtaining the data in this study, the researcher administered an oral reading test, consisting of 100 words. Each student was given 5 (five) minutes to complete the test.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher used independent t-test to analyze the data of pre-test and post-test. It was used to obtain the relevant data which involved experimental and control group. The researchers analyzed the data by scoring the test which done by scoring rubric, then calculated them by using Statistical Package and Service Solution (SPSS). This software was used as a tool to help the researchers in analyzing the data for the result of research, in order to see the significant improvement that happened after conducting the research. It includes, the higher and the lowest score, the gain score and the aspect that mostly increase after using animated storytelling as a media in teaching reading aloud from experimental and control group

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In the treatment process, the third author or researcher conducted six meetings for each Experimental Group (EG) and Control Group (CG). The animated story telling was only applied for the EG. Following are the treatment process in the EG classroom.

### **1. First Meeting**

In the first meeting, the researcher began the class activity by introducing reading aloud and the animated storytelling video. In this meeting, the students were tested their skills in reading aloud a text. She gave a short reading text to students and told them about what they have to do. In this first meeting, she did not find any difficulties in conducting the test. The students were very cooperative.

### **2. Second Meeting**

In the second meeting, the treatment was started. The researcher introduced the animated storytelling video to the students. First of all, she started the learning with greeting the students and gave apperception before they watched the animated storytelling video. Then, she asked some question to students about what is the animated storytelling and how does it work for their improvement in reading aloud. She also explained the activities that they were going to have on that day. On that second day of treatment process, the students only watched the animated storytelling video until the time was over. The students looked pretty enjoy watching the video. The students still looked enthusiastic toward each components that they saw during watched animated storytelling even the video had been replay for many times. Sometimes, they burst of their laugh when the interesting part appeared in the video. Until the second day was finished, students still looked very cooperative.

### **3. Third Meeting**

In the third meeting, the treatment was still held as class activity. The researcher explained what they will have to do in that day. As like before, the students watched the different animated storytelling video. In that second treatment process, students still looked enthusiastic toward the animated storytelling video even it was repeated constantly.

4. Fourth Meeting

In fourth meeting, the researcher still taught the students by using animated storytelling. All of them were given the other animated storytelling video, and were evaluated by the researcher in the last minutes before the class end. When the class activity was started on that day, she worried if they would get bored of the same animated storytelling video but fortunately the students looked so fine without any matter until the class was over on the that time.

5. Fifth Meeting

In fifth meeting, the students still watched the video as the recent meeting. That was the fourth animated storytelling that the researcher gave to them with different story. She was really grateful for the endless enthusiasm of students. In the end of the class, she told them about a post-test on the next day. Then, on the forth treatment process she asked the students to practice more in the last minutes before the class end. In that day, she convinced that they have any improvement for their reading aloud after watched animated storytelling for many times.

6. Sixth Meeting

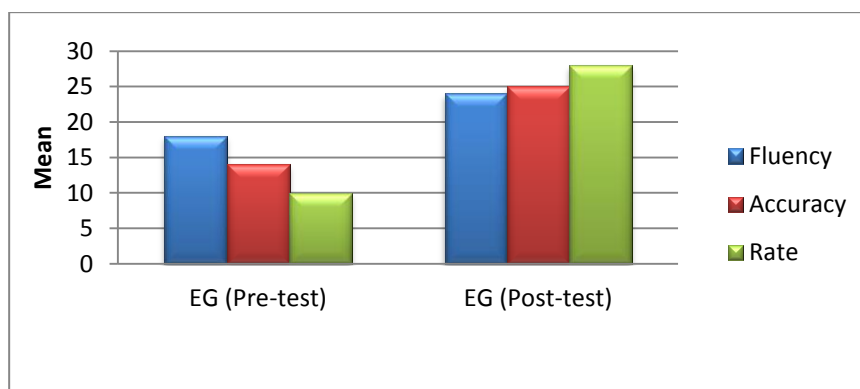
In the last meeting, post-test was delivered to the students. She choose one of the short texts from 4 (four) animated storytelling video, randomly. The post-test consist the short reading script of the animated storytelling video entitled "The Little Red Riding Hood". By having the same scoring method and rubric as in the pre-test, the post-test score of students were compared to find out the difference after conducting a pre-test. In the end of treatment process, all ran well as planned as before.

The result obtained from the experimental and the control group with regard to the use of the animated storytelling showed that the experimental class performance in reading aloud was better than the control class.

**Table 1.** The Gain Score of EG and CG

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
EG	17	11.37	2.65
CG	17	3.92	2.42

An independent t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group. As displayed in the table 3.1, the mean score for the experimental group is 11.37, with a standard deviation of 2.65. The mean score and the standard deviation for the control group are 3.92 and 2.42, respectively. The results show differences between the experimental and control groups' mean score in the tests.



**Figure 1.** Average score of reading aloud aspects for the Experimental Group.

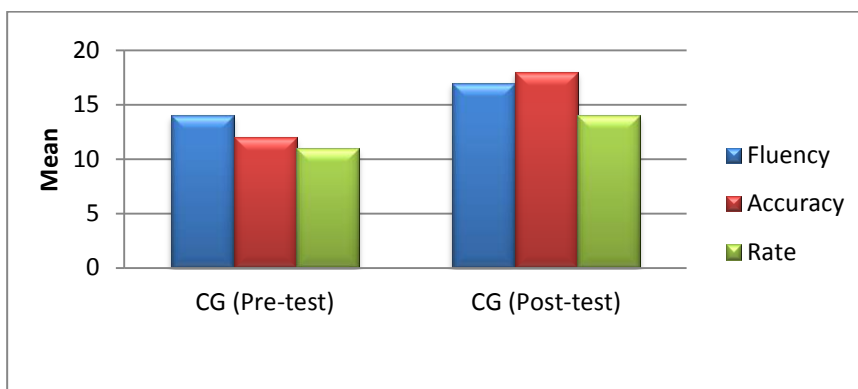


Figure 2. Average score of reading aloud aspects for the Control Group.

Furthermore, the results of reading aloud aspects show that all aspects both in experimental group and control group were increased. In both group, the rate aspect outperformed the other aspects. In the experimental group, the rate aspect remarkably rose from 10 to 28, while in the control group the rate aspect slightly increased from 11 to 14. Analyzing the result obtained from the experimental and the control group with regard to the use of the animated storytelling, it can be deduced that the animated storytelling can help students in improving their reading aloud ability, particularly in rate aspect.

The animated storytelling is indicated as an innovative media in teaching reading aloud for some reasons. The first reason is students have their other center of learning beside the teacher. Based on the previous research findings of Walkins and Witkins (2011, p. 114) the use of video in teaching learning process in EFL or ESL classroom is provided a detailed rationale and conceptual framework for students. Harmer (2001) also argued that a video can be a friendly facilitator during the teaching learning process because it shows how the native speaker pronounces each word clearly. The statements truly happened when this research conducted.

The second reason is they started to imitating the native speaker sounds confidently after they taught by using animated storytelling. It supported by Arthur (1999) as cited from Farhi (2013) stated that animated storytelling video can give students realistic model to imitate for role-play. In brief, it is one of a good impact because trying to imitate the native language is one of ways to accelerate the target language to be more fluently.

The third reason is students' rate in reading aloud aspects notes a significant improvement after taught reading aloud by using animated storytelling. As defined by Daane and Campbell (2005, p. 4) rate is the speed with which readers are speaking. The students have to read aloud at an appropriate rate so the listeners understand the message. The animated storytelling greatly can stimulate and facilitate the students to speak as the native speakers do.

Lastly, the use of animated storytelling has helped students to become active participants in classroom activities. The students are voluntary active to be engaged in the teaching learning process. In short, as one of audio-visual media, animated storytelling also can be a useful media in order to enhance the interaction among students in class and provide students with more opportunities to learn English especially in reading aloud activity.

## CONCLUSION

The present study was aimed to answer the question related to the use of the animated storytelling in improving students' reading aloud ability. According to the result of this study, the applying animated storytelling in the reading comprehension class can enhance the students reading aloud ability, particularly in rate aspect. The animated storytelling greatly helps in stimulating the students' encouragement in imitating the native speaker. It is, thus, seen as a motivational tool in supporting the students' learn how to read in foreign language. As the reading aloud ability is in touch with listening and speaking skills, the researchers suggest the future studies to comprehensively consider the applying of the animated storytelling on other skills of students.

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