

Improving Reading Comprehension For Student

Elsa Aisyah Putri Nainggolan¹, Yani Lubis², Ridwan Abbas³, Syifa Ulya Rahma⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia

Email: elsaaisyahputri@gmail.com¹, yanilubis@uinsu.ac.id²,
ridwanabbas091506@gmail.com³, ulyasyifa191@gmail.com⁴

ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve students' reading comprehension skills through the implementation of effective and interactive learning strategies. Reading activities require students not only to recognize words but also to understand the content, meaning, and context of the text. In this research, various approaches such as intensive reading methods, group discussions, and the use of digital media were employed to enhance student engagement and comprehension. The results show a significant improvement in students' ability to understand texts, particularly in identifying main ideas, summarizing content, and answering text-based questions. These findings indicate that appropriate strategies can substantially enhance students' overall literacy skills.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Learning Strategies, Literacy Skills, Intensive Reading Method, Digital Media

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is one of the fundamental skills essential in the learning process, particularly in the subject of Indonesian language. Reading is not merely the act of recognizing words; it is a complex process that requires students to understand meanings, identify main ideas, and extract information from a text. Unfortunately, in real classroom settings, many students struggle with comprehension due to low reading interest, lack of effective strategies, and monotonous teaching methods that fail to contextualize content. These challenges directly affect students' academic achievement, especially in basic literacy. One approach that has proven effective in addressing these issues is Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). CTL enables students to connect the reading material with their daily lives, encouraging active engagement and increasing their motivation to learn. In a study conducted by Fitria Rosmi and Fadhila Adilla at SD Lab School FIP UMJ, the application of CTL significantly improved students' ability to decode words, understand sentence structures, and demonstrated increased enthusiasm toward reading. These results suggest that contextual learning can create meaningful and enjoyable reading experiences for students (Rosmi & Adilla, 2024).

Superior human resources are defined as individuals who not only have extensive knowledge but also have the creativity and skills necessary to utilize it

effectively (Syafruddin et al., 2022). (The development of quality human resources cannot be separated from the important role of education (Mardhiyah et al., 2021).

Education is considered a process that not only provides opportunities for students to access knowledge but also a systematic effort to develop their learning abilities, including aspects such as intelligence, behavior, personality, and other skills, in accordance with the provisions regulated in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. The true essence of education is to provide a framework that allows students to increase their potential holistically (Kusumawati et al., 2023). The Indonesian government has taken various steps to improve the quality of student education, including training to increase teacher competency, improving educational facilities, and improving the curriculum (Fadil et al., 2023).

Improvement in the curriculum have resulted in a paradigm shift in the learning process, from a teacher-centered approach to one that focuses more on students (Sari, 2023). Within the framework of the independent curriculum, the role of educators is key in creating a dynamic, creative, innovative, effective, and attractive learning environment for students (Alfath et al., 2022).

This curriculum emphasizes the importance of developing competencies, which include students' attitudes, knowledge, and skills. The aim of this curriculum reform is so that students can optimize their potential (Ningtyas & Juliantari, 2022). This curriculum update encourages students to be more proactive in the teaching and learning process (PBM) and improve their skills (Ramadhia et al., 2023). The development of students' skills does not only depend on the teacher's ability to present learning material but also on the teacher's ability to choose and apply approaches, learning models, and strategies that suit students' needs and characteristics (Sulistyosari et al., 2022). Apart from that, teachers are also expected to bring innovation to the implementation of learning in the classroom (Mustafa et al., 2021).

They need to have skills in selecting and using various learning resources, as well as adapting learning models, strategies, methods, and media appropriately according to the material to be delivered. However, in reality, there are still many teachers who have not been able to implement various innovative models, strategies, methods, and learning media. Many of them still rely on conventional learning methods such as lectures, written assignments, and practice questions (Yusliani, 2022) . As a result, students' interest in learning decreases, which leads to a decrease in their learning achievement and a mismatch in scores with the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) (Wahyudi, 2022)

Students in lower grades of elementary school still experience challenges in maintaining focus and concentration during the teaching and learning process (PBM), especially children aged 8 years who are in grade 2 where their concentration tends to only last for 5–15 minutes. To overcome this challenge, educators need high creative efforts in designing and presenting interesting and effective learning processes. Therefore, it is necessary to use appropriate learning models (Purwanto, 2023)

Another method that has also shown great effectiveness in improving reading comprehension is the SQ3R method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review). This method promotes students' active interaction with texts through five systematic steps that help them better understand and retain information. In a study by Mardiah Hasanah Nasution at MTs Al-Jumhuriyah, the implementation of the SQ3R method significantly enhanced the reading skills of seventh-grade students. They were able to answer comprehension questions, retell texts in their own words, and engage more actively in discussions and reflections compared to when conventional teaching methods were used. The research also highlighted common obstacles in reading instruction, such as limited student engagement, lack of effective strategies, and the use of unappealing teaching media. However, with consistent implementation of the SQ3R method and appropriate guidance at each stage, students became more adept at identifying main ideas, thinking critically, and maintaining long-term understanding. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to integrate innovative strategies like SQ3R into reading instruction to holistically improve students' literacy skills (Al-jumhuriyah, 2025)

METHOD

This study uses a literature review method, aiming to explore and analyze various relevant scholarly sources related to strategies and methods for improving students' reading comprehension. This method was selected to allow the researcher to synthesize theoretical and empirical findings from previous studies as a foundation for drawing conceptual conclusions about enhancing reading comprehension skills (Retnawati, 2016)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Definition Of Reading

Reading is one of the fundamental skills in language learning that plays a crucial role in developing students' knowledge and thinking abilities. Reading is not merely about recognizing words and sentences, but more importantly, it is an active process of understanding and interpreting text content. According to Smith (as cited in Zuhdi, 2007), reading is a communication process through which information is received from the writer by the reader. This emphasizes that reading is a cognitive activity that requires comprehension of written symbols. Reading comprehension, a critical aspect of reading, refers to the reader's ability to grasp the main idea, understand the overall content, and connect information from the text to their prior knowledge. Fanany (2012) states that reading comprehension focuses on mastering the content rather than simply reading fluently. It demands critical thinking, the ability to summarize the material, and respond meaningfully to what has been read (Khasanah & Cahyani, 2016).

Tarigan (2008) describes reading as a basic skill that every individual must possess because it allows people to expand their horizons, gain information, and

improve their quality of life. Reading is not only applicable in the context of language subjects but is also essential across all disciplines. Hence, reading is the foundation of a student's overall academic success . Abidin (2012) argues that reading instruction should not merely enable students to decode text but should also engage their mental and critical thinking processes in understanding and evaluating the content. A good reading activity combines information from the text with the reader's background knowledge, creating an active construction of meaning . Thus, reading is a complex, dynamic, and strategic process that demands intellectual and emotional engagement. It is inseparable from academic life and must be continuously developed through appropriate approaches and methods to help students become active, critical, and reflective readers (Rosmi & Adilla, 2024).

B. Factors Affecting Reading

Students' reading ability is influenced by various internal and external factors. One of the most dominant internal factors is reading interest. Students who are highly interested in reading tend to be more engaged and emotionally connected to the activity. Conversely, those with low interest often read carelessly, making it difficult for them to absorb the information from the text . In addition to interest, learning motivation plays a vital role. Students with intrinsic motivation are more likely to read independently and critically. This motivation can be shaped by their environment, including family support, encouragement from teachers, and access to learning resources. A literacy-friendly environment such as a well-stocked library can greatly enhance students' motivation to read . Teaching strategies used by educators also significantly affect students' reading comprehension (Khasanah & Cahyani, 2016).

Monotonous and unvaried methods can bore students, whereas engaging, collaborative, and contextual strategies can spark enthusiasm and deeper understanding of the texts . Critical and creative thinking skills are also essential for reading success. Students trained to analyze texts, draw conclusions, and express opinions tend to have stronger comprehension skills. Therefore, reading instruction should incorporate higher-order thinking (HOTS) to develop deep understanding in learners . Another key factor is language proficiency. Vocabulary knowledge, sentence structure, and grammar are fundamental tools for reading comprehension. Students with limited language skills often struggle to interpret the meaning of texts, making it important for teachers to consistently enrich their students' language abilities (Rosmi & Adilla, 2024).

Reading comprehension is influenced by a range of interconnected factors that stem from both within the learner and their academic environment. Mabborang and Balero (2023) highlighted that students' academic tracks significantly affect their reading performance. Their study revealed that students enrolled in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand demonstrated stronger reading comprehension than those in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) strand. This difference can be attributed to the structure of the curriculum, where HUMSS

students are more frequently engaged in reading-focused tasks. Moreover, regular exposure to various reading materials and active reading habits enhance students' ability to understand and interpret text meaningfully (Grecia, 2024).

Another important aspect influencing reading comprehension is the mode of instruction. The findings indicated that students participating in face-to-face learning performed better in reading comprehension than those in online learning environments. The lack of immediate feedback, reduced interaction with teachers and peers, and limited access to learning support in virtual settings were identified as barriers to effective reading. Interestingly, although gender was also examined as a variable, the study found no significant difference in reading comprehension between male and female students. This suggests that curriculum design, instructional approach, and educational support systems play a more crucial role in developing reading skills than gender-based differences (Adyani, 2022)

C. Strategies and Methods to Improve Reading Comprehension

One effective strategy to enhance students' reading comprehension is the SQ3R method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review). This approach trains students to read actively and systematically, from previewing the text, asking questions, reading in-depth, recalling information, to reviewing content. Research by Mardiah Hasanah shows that this method significantly improves students' ability to understand reading materials comprehensively. Another proven strategy is the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach. This method connects reading material to real-life experiences, making the content more meaningful. A study by Fitria Rosmi revealed that students taught using CTL showed significant improvement in understanding sentence structures and expressing themselves, as well as an increased interest in reading. An additional strategy is the Question Answer Relationships (QAR) method (Rahmadhani, 2024).

It helps students recognize that answers to questions can come directly from the text or from their prior knowledge. With QAR training, students become more skilled at distinguishing between literal, inferential, and evaluative questions, improving their comprehension and critical thinking abilities. The KWL technique (Know, Want, Learn) is another method that provides students with a structured thinking framework before, during, and after reading. Students list what they already know, what they want to know, and what they have learned after reading. This method encourages students to connect their background knowledge with new information and reflect on what they've gained from the text. Ultimately, the most successful instructional strategies are those tailored to students' individual needs and learning styles. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Teachers must be flexible, creative, and responsive in selecting and combining reading strategies to improve comprehension. With such efforts, students' reading comprehension skills can be developed effectively and sustainably (Barus, 2019)

One method that can be applied to achieve this goal is gamification, which involves the use of game elements in a non-game context... By implementing gamification, students are not only involved in the learning process but also motivated to actively participate. This can improve their understanding of the subject matter. (Mardeni, 2021)

Animated videos are one of the learning media that are increasingly popular among educators and students. This media uses moving images and sound to create an interactive and engaging learning experience. The use of animated videos in education has many advantages, especially in improving students' understanding of the material being taught. Research shows that animated videos can help students understand complex concepts in a simpler and more enjoyable way (Romie C, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this literature review, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is a complex and essential skill that requires more than just the ability to read words. It involves understanding, interpreting, and connecting information with prior knowledge. Students' success in reading comprehension is influenced by various factors such as interest in reading, motivation, language proficiency, and the effectiveness of instructional strategies. Several strategies have been proven effective in enhancing students' reading comprehension, including the SQ3R method, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), KWL technique, and Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy. These approaches provide structured, interactive, and student-centered ways of engaging with texts, encouraging deeper understanding and active learning. Furthermore, the role of teachers is critical in selecting and applying suitable strategies that align with students' needs and learning contexts. A supportive learning environment, along with consistent practice and meaningful reading activities, contributes significantly to improving comprehension skills. In conclusion, to improve students' reading comprehension, educators must implement a combination of motivational, contextual, and cognitive strategies. Future efforts in reading instruction should focus on fostering a lifelong reading culture while continuously adapting to students' development and learning challenges.

REFERENCES

Adnyani, K. E. K., Adnyana, I. W., Murniasih, N. N., & Suwastini, N. K. A. (2022). *Implementing Kahoot! for Japanese language learning in Indonesian high school. Journal of Education Technology*, 6(2), 217–225. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jet.v6i2.46102>.

Ahmad Qosyim, Erman Erman, Laily Rosdiana, Enny Susiyawati, *CELL HEALTH LEARNING BASED ON DZIKRULLOH SPIRITUAL PRACTICE αHE NING CIPTO METAPHYSICS MEDITATION, TO BUILD A STRONG BODY IMMUNITY SYSTEM*, *JPPIPA (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA)*: Vol. 6 No. 1 (2021): Juni 2021

Al-jumhuriyah, M. (2025). *Peningkatan Kemampuan Membaca Pemahaman Melalui Strategi Keterampilan Membaca Berbasis Metode SQ3R Pada Siswa Kelas VII di. 9, 7387–7396.*

Barus, S. (2019). Peningkatan Kemampuan Membaca. *Toleransi Masyarakat Beda Agama, 30*(28), 5053156.

Grecia Angelika Nainggolan, Nadhira Hafidzah, & Yosinda Naberti Br Bangun, (2024) Penggunaan Gemifikasi Dalam proses pembelajaran Jarak Jauh Untuk Meningkatkan Motivasi dan Literasi Digital Siswa, *Jurnal Ilmiah multidisiplin, Vol. 2, No. 12*

Khasanah, A., & Cahyani, I. (2016). Peningkatan Kemampuan Membaca Pemahaman Dengan Strategi Question Answer Relationships (Qar) Pada Siswa Kelas V Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pedagogik Pendidikan Dasar, 4*(2), 161–175.

Mardeni, P. R., Azmi, J., & Linda, R. (2021). Pengembangan lembar kegiatan peserta didik (LKPD) berbasis RMS (reading, mind mapping, and sharing) pada pembelajaran kimia. *Jurnal Pijar Mipa, 16*(1), 8-12. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jpm.v16i1.1285>

Rahmadhani, S. L. (2024). *Analisis Faktor Kemampuan Pemahaman Membaca pada Kelas V Sekolah Dasar. 793–799.*

Rosmi, F., & Adilla, F. (2024). *Upaya Meningkatkan Kemampuan Membaca Pemahaman melalui Pendekatan Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL) pada Siswa Kelas 3 . 2 SD Lab School FIP UMJ. 142–152.*

Romie C. Mabborang dan Melecio S. Balero (2023). Exploring Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension Skills: A Quasi-Experimental Study on Academic Track Strands, Learning Modalities, and Gender. *American Journal of Educational Research, 11*(9), 545–554. DOI: 10.12691/education-11-9-2

Retnawati, H. (2016). Analisis Kuantitatif Instrumen Penelitian: Panduan Peneliti, Mahasiswa, dan Psikometri. Parama PublishingSugo, M. N., Nasar, A., & Harso, A. (2021). Efektivitas pembelajaran discovery learning terhadap hasil belajar IPA materi karakteristik zat dan perubahannya. *Radiasi: Jurnal Berkala Pendidikan Fisika, 14*(1), 44-50. <https://doi.org/10.37729/radiasi.v14i1.987>

Purnawanto, A. T. (2023). Pembelajaran berdiferensiasi. *Jurnal Pedagogy, 16*(1), 34-54. <https://jurnal.staimuhblora.ac.id/index.php/pedagogy/article/view/152>

Wahyudi, S. A., Siddik, M., & Suhartini, E. (2023). Analisis pembelajaran IPAS dengan penerapan pendekatan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dalam kurikulum merdeka. *Jurnal Pendidikan MIPA, 13*(4), 1105-1113. <https://doi.org/10.37630/jpm.v13i4.1296>

Yuliastuti, R., & Soebagyo, J. (2021). Pengembangan bahan ajar matematika berbasis matematika terapan pada materi matriks. *Jurnal Cendekia: Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika, 5*(3), 2270-2284. <https://doi.org/10.31004/cendekia.v5i3.811>