



Understanding Reading Comprehension Barriers in Early Elementary Education: An Analysis of Second-Grade Students

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Abstract :

This study aims to analyze the level of reading comprehension difficulties experienced by second-grade elementary school students and identify factors contributing to these difficulties. A descriptive quantitative approach supported by qualitative data was used. Participants consisted of 21 second-grade students selected as the research sample. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, then analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative interpretation. The results showed that 76.19% of students experienced moderate levels of reading comprehension difficulties, with an average score of 55.95. Indicator analysis showed that reading comprehension obtained the lowest average score, while the use of appropriate reading techniques achieved the highest score. Further interviews and observations indicated that limited vocabulary mastery and inadequate information processing skills were the main factors affecting students' reading comprehension. In conclusion, students demonstrated adequate basic reading skills but faced challenges in constructing meaning in the text. These findings imply the need for comprehension-oriented learning strategies that emphasize vocabulary enrichment, guided reading, and active comprehension practice to improve elementary school students' reading achievement.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in fostering sustainable social development because it equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to participate effectively in an increasingly complex society (Navya & Thangam, 2026). As educational systems adapt to rapid technological advancement and evolving workforce demands, elementary education has become a critical stage for establishing foundational competencies that influence lifelong learning (Veckalne & Tambovceva, 2022; Venegas-Mejía et al., 2025). Among these competencies, literacy occupies a central position because it enables learners to access, interpret, and construct knowledge across all academic

disciplines (Bustamante-Mora et al., 2024; Nasirova et al., 2024). Previous studies have emphasized that students with strong literacy skills demonstrate higher academic achievement, better critical thinking, and greater adaptability to educational challenges (Gorčíková, 2025; Tian et al., 2022). Conversely, inadequate literacy development at the primary level often leads to persistent learning difficulties that extend into higher grades. Therefore, strengthening reading comprehension during the early years of schooling is not merely an educational priority but also a societal necessity for improving educational quality and preparing future generations to meet national and global development goals (Khoiri & Harsiati, 2025).

Despite the recognized importance of literacy, many elementary school students continue to experience difficulties in comprehending written texts. Reading comprehension extends beyond the mechanical ability to decode letters and words; it requires learners to construct meaning, identify key ideas, connect information, and interpret textual messages critically (Kuzina et al., 2022; Soares et al., 2023). Students who fail to develop these abilities frequently encounter obstacles in understanding learning materials across various subjects because reading serves as the foundation for most classroom activities (Arslan & Polat, 2025; Wahid et al., 2025). Previous research has reported that limited vocabulary mastery, insufficient background knowledge, low reading motivation, and ineffective instructional practices contribute significantly to poor reading comprehension among elementary students (Li et al., 2026; Nurtanto et al., 2026). These challenges not only reduce academic achievement but also hinder students' confidence, classroom participation, and long-term learning development. Consequently, identifying the underlying barriers to reading comprehension has become an urgent concern for educators and researchers seeking to improve the effectiveness of primary education.

This concern is reflected in classroom realities where many second-grade students still struggle to understand the meaning of texts despite having acquired basic decoding skills (Kutahyalioğlu & Onan, 2026; Little et al., 2022). Classroom observations and discussions with teachers revealed that several students were unable to identify the main ideas of a passage, explain information using their own words, or answer comprehension questions accurately after reading (Little et al., 2022). Such conditions indicate that the challenge lies not merely in reading fluency but in the deeper process of constructing meaning from written texts. In addition, variations in students' learning readiness, reading habits, instructional support, and classroom learning environments appear to influence their comprehension performance (Baki, 2025; Kondal & Bairi, 2025). These conditions suggest that reading comprehension barriers emerge through the interaction of learner-related and instructional factors rather than from a single cause. Therefore, investigating these interconnected obstacles is essential for providing empirical evidence that can guide teachers in designing more effective reading instruction and targeted educational interventions.

Previous studies have extensively investigated reading comprehension and literacy development in elementary education from various perspectives. Several researchers have demonstrated that reading comprehension is positively influenced by vocabulary mastery, reading motivation, and the use of engaging instructional strategies (Hassan et al., 2025; Kitichaidateanan et al., 2026). Other

studies have highlighted the importance of teacher competence, classroom interaction, and the integration of innovative learning media in improving students' literacy outcomes (Chandra & Vaijayanthi, 2026). In addition, research has suggested that effective teacher guidance and continuous learning support enable students to develop stronger comprehension skills and greater confidence in reading activities (Budiarto et al., 2026; Suryadi et al., 2024). Collectively, these studies provide valuable evidence that reading comprehension is shaped by multiple cognitive, motivational, and instructional factors. Nevertheless, most previous investigations have primarily focused on measuring learning outcomes or evaluating instructional interventions, while offering limited explanations regarding the specific obstacles encountered by early-grade students during the reading comprehension process (Basatha et al., 2025).

Furthermore, existing literature has rarely examined reading comprehension barriers through a comprehensive analysis that simultaneously considers learner characteristics, classroom instructional practices, and contextual learning conditions in the early years of elementary education (Aliyyah et al., 2025; Laila et al., 2025). Most studies have emphasized the effectiveness of particular teaching methods or literacy programs without thoroughly exploring why some students continue to experience persistent comprehension difficulties despite receiving similar instruction (Allehyani, 2025). Consequently, the interaction between internal factors, such as vocabulary knowledge, learning motivation, and cognitive readiness, and external factors, including teacher support, classroom management, and learning resources, remains insufficiently understood (Al-Badareen, 2024). This gap limits educators' ability to design interventions that address the root causes of comprehension problems rather than merely improving test performance. Therefore, further investigation is needed to generate a more holistic understanding of the barriers affecting reading comprehension among second-grade students and to provide practical evidence that can strengthen literacy instruction in elementary schools.

This study addresses the identified research gap by providing an integrated analysis of reading comprehension barriers experienced by second-grade elementary students from both learner-centered and instructional perspectives. Unlike previous studies that predominantly assessed learning achievement or evaluated specific teaching approaches, this research investigates how cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and classroom-related factors interact to influence students' ability to construct meaning from written texts. The study also contributes empirical evidence regarding the specific forms of comprehension difficulties encountered during the transition from learning to read toward reading to learn, a developmental stage that remains relatively underexplored in existing literature. By identifying the dominant obstacles and their underlying causes, this research offers practical recommendations for teachers to design more responsive instructional strategies and targeted literacy support. Consequently, the findings are expected to enrich the body of knowledge on early literacy development while contributing to the improvement of reading instruction and educational quality in elementary schools.

Based on the preceding discussion, the present study seeks to answer the following research question: What barriers do second-grade elementary students encounter in reading comprehension, and what factors contribute to these

difficulties? This study is grounded in the argument that reading comprehension difficulties are multidimensional and cannot be adequately explained by students' cognitive abilities alone. Instead, they emerge through the interaction of learner-related factors, including vocabulary mastery, reading motivation, and learning readiness, with instructional and environmental factors such as teaching strategies, classroom support, and the availability of learning resources. Accordingly, this research aims to analyze the barriers experienced by second-grade students in understanding reading texts and to identify the factors influencing these challenges. The findings are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions by expanding current knowledge on early reading comprehension and offering evidence-based recommendations for teachers to develop more effective literacy instruction that responds to students' actual learning needs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the barriers encountered by second-grade students in reading comprehension during Indonesian language learning. A qualitative descriptive approach was selected because it enables researchers to explore educational phenomena in their natural context while capturing participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors without manipulating the learning environment. This design is appropriate for identifying the forms of reading comprehension difficulties and the factors contributing to these challenges, thereby providing rich contextual evidence that cannot be adequately explained through quantitative measurement alone. In qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary research instrument, responsible for planning the study, collecting data, interpreting findings, and drawing conclusions through continuous interaction with participants and the research setting.

The study was conducted at SDN 089/VI Sungai Manau during the 2024/2025 academic year. The school was purposively selected because preliminary classroom observations and discussions with teachers indicated that several second-grade students experienced persistent difficulties in understanding reading texts despite having acquired basic reading skills. These conditions made the school an appropriate setting for investigating reading comprehension barriers in an authentic educational context. The research participants consisted of second-grade students and their classroom teacher, who were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research objectives. Data collection was conducted from January to March 2025 using classroom observations, structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations were undertaken to identify students' reading behaviors during learning activities, questionnaires were administered to obtain information regarding students' reading comprehension difficulties, interviews with the classroom teacher were conducted to explore instructional practices and perceived learning barriers, while relevant learning documents and students' work were analyzed to strengthen the research findings.

Data analysis followed the interactive qualitative analysis model

proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Maehi et al., 2026). Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, coding, categorizing, and organizing the collected information according to the research focus. Subsequently, the condensed data were systematically presented in the form of descriptive narratives, matrices, and thematic categories to facilitate interpretation and identify relationships among emerging themes. The final stage involved drawing conclusions through continuous verification by comparing findings obtained from different sources and collection techniques. This iterative analytical process was conducted throughout the study until data saturation was achieved, ensuring that the identified themes consistently represented the participants' experiences and accurately reflected the phenomenon under investigation.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were implemented, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through method triangulation by comparing evidence obtained from observations, questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis, as well as source triangulation involving both students and the classroom teacher. Member checking was conducted by confirming interview interpretations with participants to ensure the accuracy of the collected information. Transferability was supported through detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and procedures, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings. Dependability was maintained by documenting each stage of the research process systematically, while confirmability was strengthened through an audit trail and reflective documentation to ensure that the findings were grounded in empirical evidence rather than researcher bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Students' Reading Comprehension Difficulties Were Predominantly at the Moderate Level

In this study, the level of reading comprehension difficulty refers to the extent to which second-grade students at SDN 089/VI Sungai Manau experience challenges in understanding written texts. Operationally, this construct was measured through students' ability to comprehend vocabulary, identify key information, understand the main ideas of a text, and retell the content using their own words. The questionnaire results from 21 respondents yielded a mean score of 55.95, with the highest score of 71, the lowest score of 44, and a standard deviation of 7.359, indicating variations in students' reading comprehension abilities. Trend analysis further revealed that 16 students (76.19%) were categorized as having a moderate level of reading comprehension difficulty, 3 students (14.28%) experienced a high level of difficulty, and 2 students (9.53%) were classified as having a low level of difficulty. These findings indicate that although most students possess basic reading skills, they continue to encounter considerable challenges in comprehending written texts.

Table 1. Interview Results on Students' Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Informant Position		Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Grade Classroom Teacher	II	<i>"Most students are able to read the text fluently. However, when I ask them to explain the content of the passage, many of them become confused and simply repeat several sentences without understanding the meaning."</i>	Reading comprehension ability
Grade Student	II	<i>"I can read the story, but when the teacher asks me what it means or asks me to tell it again, I often forget and do not know how to answer."</i>	Difficulty in understanding textual information

Table 1 shows that most second-grade students have acquired basic decoding and reading fluency skills. However, these technical reading skills are not accompanied by adequate comprehension skills. According to teachers, students often struggle when asked to explain the meaning of a reading passage or summarize it in their own words. Rather than demonstrating conceptual understanding, many students simply repeat sentences directly from the text. Researchers interpret this finding as evidence that students have developed mechanical reading skills but have not yet reached the level of meaningful reading comprehension, where readers actively construct meaning from written information.

The student's statement reinforces the teacher's observations by illustrating the learning difficulties from the learner's perspective. Although the student reported being able to read the text fluently, the student acknowledged difficulties in explaining the meaning of the story and retelling the content after reading. This finding indicates that reading fluency alone does not ensure successful comprehension. Students appeared to struggle with processing textual information, integrating ideas across sentences, and constructing meaningful interpretations of the text. Consequently, they often failed to communicate the content using their own words despite demonstrating adequate decoding skills. The researcher interprets these findings as evidence that students' reading development remains concentrated on mechanical reading processes, while higher-order cognitive skills required for comprehension have not yet developed sufficiently.

These interview findings were further supported by classroom observations and quantitative results. During classroom reading activities, most students participated actively and pronounced words correctly; however, only a few were able to answer comprehension questions accurately. Many students remained silent, guessed the answers, or repeatedly referred back to the text to locate information. They also experienced difficulties connecting the reading material with their prior knowledge and everyday experiences, indicating weaknesses in meaning construction and inferential thinking. The integration of questionnaire, interview, and observation data consistently demonstrates that the majority of second-grade students at SDN 089/VI Sungai Manau experience reading comprehension difficulties at a moderate level. Although students have acquired satisfactory basic reading skills, their ability to understand, interpret, and communicate textual meaning remains limited, suggesting that reading instruction should place greater emphasis on developing comprehension skills rather than focusing primarily on reading accuracy and fluency.

Students' Greatest Difficulty Lies in Reading Comprehension

The operational definition of this sub-finding refers to the specific aspects of reading skills that contribute most significantly to students' reading comprehension difficulties. These aspects were measured using five indicators; the use of appropriate reading techniques and methods, efficient reading skills, reading speed, avoiding reading errors, and understanding reading content. The quantitative findings indicate that students achieved the highest average score in the use of appropriate reading techniques and methods (62), followed by efficient reading skills (61), reading speed (58), and avoiding reading errors (57). In contrast, the understanding reading content indicator obtained the lowest average score (55). These findings demonstrate that students have relatively adequate mechanical reading skills but continue to experience considerable difficulties in comprehending textual meaning, identifying essential information, interpreting vocabulary in context, and constructing meaning from written texts.

Table 2. Interview Findings on Students' Difficulties in Understanding Reading Content

Informant Position		Interview Excerpt	Indicator	
Grade Classroom Teacher	II	<i>"Most students can read the text fluently, but they often fail to identify the main idea or explain the meaning of the passage using their own words. They usually repeat sentences directly from the text instead of demonstrating real understanding."</i>	Understanding reading content	
Grade Classroom Teacher	II	<i>"Students frequently ask about the meaning of unfamiliar words. Even after reading the passage several times, many still struggle to determine the important information contained in the text."</i>	Vocabulary comprehension and identifying key information	
Grade Student	II	<i>"I can read the story, but sometimes I do not understand difficult words, so I cannot answer the teacher's questions correctly."</i>	Vocabulary comprehension	
Grade Student	II	<i>"When the teacher asks me to explain the story in my own words, I often forget what I have read and only remember a few sentences."</i>	Retelling content	reading

Table 2 shows that the primary challenge students experience is not decoding written words, but rather constructing meaning from text. Classroom teachers consistently reported that although students demonstrate satisfactory reading fluency, they experience significant difficulty when asked to identify main ideas, interpret textual information, or express content in their own words. This discrepancy suggests that reading instruction has enabled students to develop basic decoding skills; however, these technical abilities have not yet developed into higher-level comprehension skills. From the researchers' perspective, this finding reflects an imbalance between mechanical reading competence and cognitive comprehension processes, where students may pronounce words accurately without fully understanding their meaning.

The students' responses further reinforce the teacher's observations by revealing that unfamiliar vocabulary and limited conceptual understanding hinder their ability to comprehend texts. Students admitted that they often forget the content immediately after reading or experience difficulty answering comprehension questions because they fail to understand important vocabulary. Critically, these findings suggest that vocabulary knowledge functions as a

foundational component of reading comprehension. Limited lexical knowledge restricts students' ability to integrate ideas across sentences, identify relationships among concepts, and construct coherent mental representations of the text. Consequently, reading comprehension difficulties should not be interpreted solely as weaknesses in reading ability but also as indicators of insufficient vocabulary development and inadequate comprehension-oriented instructional practices.

Classroom observations corroborated the interview findings. During reading activities, students generally read aloud confidently and with acceptable pronunciation. However, when the teacher posed comprehension questions requiring students to infer meanings, identify key information, or summarize the passage, only a small number of students responded correctly. Many students repeatedly reread the text before answering, relied heavily on teacher guidance, or remained silent. The researcher also observed that students tended to focus on pronouncing individual words rather than processing the overall meaning of the passage. These observations indicate that classroom reading activities remain predominantly text-decoding oriented, whereas comprehension monitoring and meaning construction receive relatively less emphasis. This instructional pattern may contribute to the persistence of students' reading comprehension difficulties.

The integration of questionnaire, interview, and observational evidence demonstrates that the most significant reading difficulty experienced by second-grade students is understanding the content of reading passages. Although students have acquired satisfactory basic reading skills, they continue to struggle with interpreting vocabulary, identifying essential information, recognizing the main idea, and retelling the text using their own words. Therefore, the principal challenge identified in this study is not related to reading fluency but to the development of higher-order reading comprehension skills, which require students to actively construct meaning while reading.

Limited Vocabulary and Information Processing Skills as the Primary Factors Contributing to Reading Comprehension Difficulties

This sub-finding operationally refers to the underlying factors that contribute to students' reading comprehension difficulties, specifically their limited vocabulary mastery and insufficient ability to process textual information. Vocabulary mastery is defined as students' ability to recognize, understand, and appropriately interpret words encountered in reading passages, whereas information processing refers to students' capacity to identify key ideas, establish relationships among textual information, infer meaning, and restate the content using their own words. Findings from the questionnaire and indicator analysis revealed that students obtained the lowest performance on the understanding reading content indicator (mean score = 55), suggesting that comprehension difficulties extend beyond basic decoding skills. These results indicate that students' inability to fully understand vocabulary and organize textual information significantly constrains their overall reading comprehension.

Table 3. Interview Findings on Vocabulary Limitations and Information Processing Difficulties

Interview Excerpt	Indicator	Informant	
<i>"Many students ask me about the meaning of unfamiliar words while reading. If they do not understand the vocabulary, they usually fail to understand the whole passage."</i>	Vocabulary mastery	Grade Classroom Teacher	II
<i>"When students are asked to explain the reading, they often mention only isolated sentences rather than the main ideas because they have difficulty organizing the information they have read."</i>	Information processing ability	Grade Classroom Teacher	II
<i>"Sometimes I know how to read the words, but I do not know what they mean, so I cannot answer the teacher's questions."</i>	Vocabulary comprehension	Grade Student	II
<i>"I often forget the story after reading it because I do not know which parts are important."</i>	Identifying information retelling	key and Grade Student	II

Table 3 shows that limited vocabulary mastery and insufficient information-processing skills constitute the primary factors underlying students' reading comprehension difficulties. The interview findings revealed that students frequently paused during reading activities to ask about unfamiliar vocabulary, and failure to understand individual words often prevented them from grasping the overall meaning of the text. The classroom teacher further explained that many students struggled to identify the central message of a passage and instead recalled isolated sentences without understanding the relationships among ideas. These findings indicate that vocabulary knowledge is a fundamental prerequisite for successful reading comprehension because it enables students to interpret sentences, recognize conceptual connections, and construct coherent meaning from written texts. From the researcher's perspective, reading comprehension difficulties are not merely linguistic problems but also involve cognitive processes, including organizing, synthesizing, and integrating textual information into meaningful understanding.

The findings presented in table 3 were further supported by students' responses and classroom observations. Students acknowledged that although they could pronounce most words correctly, they often failed to understand unfamiliar vocabulary, resulting in difficulties answering comprehension questions, identifying important information, and retelling the passage using their own words. Classroom observations also showed that students frequently reread texts, relied on teacher assistance when encountering unfamiliar words, and often copied sentences directly from the passage rather than expressing ideas independently. Additionally, many students experienced difficulty distinguishing main ideas from supporting details, leading to incomplete or inaccurate summaries. The researcher interprets these findings as evidence that students tend to devote most of their cognitive resources to word recognition rather than meaning construction. Consequently, limited vocabulary knowledge and underdeveloped information-processing skills substantially hinder students' ability to develop deep reading comprehension, highlighting the need for instructional strategies that explicitly strengthen vocabulary acquisition, comprehension monitoring, and information organization.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that second-grade students' reading comprehension difficulties are predominantly at the moderate level, indicating that most students have acquired basic decoding skills but have not yet developed sufficient comprehension abilities (Marturano et al., 2025). This finding supports the theoretical perspective that reading comprehension extends beyond accurate word recognition and requires readers to actively construct meaning from written texts through vocabulary knowledge, prior knowledge, and cognitive integration (Li et al., 2026; Marturano et al., 2025). The results are consistent with previous studies reporting that many elementary students achieve satisfactory oral reading fluency while still struggling to understand textual meaning (Khoiri & Harsiati, 2025; Soares et al., 2023). However, unlike studies emphasizing inadequate decoding as the primary cause of comprehension problems, the present research reveals that students' major challenge lies in transforming fluent reading into meaningful understanding, emphasizing the importance of balancing technical reading proficiency with explicit comprehension-focused instruction (Bustamante-Mora et al., 2024; Gorčíková, 2025).

Another important finding is that the lowest achievement consistently appeared in the indicator of understanding reading content, whereas appropriate reading techniques and efficient reading skills received relatively higher scores (Farrell et al., 2025). This result is consistent with previous empirical studies showing that mechanical reading skills generally develop earlier than higher-order comprehension abilities among elementary learners (Dewitz & Graves, 2024; Pongsophon, 2026). Existing literature explains that comprehension requires complex cognitive processes, including inference making, identifying main ideas, summarizing information, monitoring understanding, and integrating ideas across sentences (Mustopa et al., 2024). The present study supports these perspectives by demonstrating that students could read texts fluently but experienced considerable difficulty explaining meaning, identifying key ideas, or retelling passages in their own words. Furthermore, qualitative evidence from interviews and classroom observations revealed that these comprehension difficulties became especially evident during authentic classroom learning activities.

The findings further indicate that limited vocabulary mastery and insufficient information-processing skills are the primary factors underlying students' reading comprehension difficulties (Farrell et al., 2025; Pongsophon, 2026). This finding aligns with theories emphasizing vocabulary as a fundamental predictor of reading comprehension because lexical knowledge enables readers to interpret sentences, establish semantic relationships, and construct coherent mental representations of texts (Arslan & Polat, 2025; Wahid et al., 2025). Previous studies consistently demonstrate that students with broader vocabulary knowledge achieve higher comprehension performance than those with limited vocabulary (Gorčíková, 2025). The present study confirms this relationship while also highlighting the important role of information-processing abilities, including organizing ideas, identifying essential information, and synthesizing textual content. Unlike studies examining vocabulary and

comprehension separately, this research illustrates how vocabulary limitations and cognitive processing weaknesses interact simultaneously to constrain students' ability to understand written texts comprehensively (Navya & Thangam, 2026).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to reading comprehension research by demonstrating that comprehension difficulties should be interpreted as the result of interactions among linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and instructional practices rather than isolated weaknesses in reading fluency (Marturano et al., 2025; Quezada et al., 2023). The integration of quantitative findings with interview and observational evidence strengthens the understanding that reading comprehension is a multidimensional construct requiring coordinated development of vocabulary, inferential thinking, comprehension monitoring, and meaning construction (Ferroni & Jaichenco, 2022). Practically, these findings highlight the necessity for elementary teachers to implement comprehension-oriented instructional strategies instead of focusing predominantly on oral reading accuracy (Hurwitz et al., 2022). Classroom instruction should therefore incorporate vocabulary enrichment, guided questioning, collaborative discussion, summarization activities, repeated reading with constructive feedback, and opportunities for students to explain texts using their own language to deepen comprehension (Hunsu et al., 2024).

Overall, this study contributes both theoretically and practically to elementary literacy education by providing empirical evidence regarding the dominant characteristics and underlying causes of reading comprehension difficulties among second-grade students. The triangulation of questionnaire data, interviews, and classroom observations enhances the credibility of the findings by offering a comprehensive explanation of students' reading behaviors and learning experiences. Theoretically, the study enriches existing literature by demonstrating that reading comprehension develops through the integration of technical reading skills, vocabulary mastery, and higher-order cognitive processes (Nasirova et al., 2024). Practically, these findings may serve as a valuable reference for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational policymakers in designing literacy programs that prioritize comprehension development from the early grades. Strengthening vocabulary instruction and active comprehension strategies can promote sustainable improvements in students' reading achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the most significant finding is that second-grade students' reading comprehension difficulties are primarily associated with limited vocabulary mastery and insufficient ability to process textual information rather than weaknesses in basic reading fluency. The findings demonstrate that students are generally able to decode words accurately but continue to struggle with interpreting meanings, identifying key ideas, and reconstructing information from texts. The study contributes to literacy research by providing a comprehensive explanation of reading comprehension difficulties through the integration of quantitative findings, interviews, and classroom observations, thereby enriching the understanding of reading comprehension as a multidimensional construct. Nevertheless, the study was limited to one

elementary school with a relatively small sample size. Future research should involve larger and more diverse populations, employ longitudinal or experimental designs, and investigate the effectiveness of comprehension-based instructional interventions in improving elementary students' reading achievement.

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