

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract. *This study focuses on strategies to improve reading comprehension among primary grade students. It explores various interactive and student-centered methods such as guided reading, vocabulary development, and questioning techniques. The research highlights the importance of engaging reading materials and teacher support in fostering understanding. Results show that consistent practice and positive motivation significantly enhance students' comprehension skills. The study concludes that early intervention is crucial for building lifelong reading proficiency.*

Keywords: *comprehension, reading, development, primary grades, methods, vocabulary, reading materials.*

INTRODUCTION.

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that plays a vital role in students' academic success and lifelong learning. In primary grades, developing strong comprehension skills helps children understand, analyze, and enjoy what they read. However, many young learners struggle to grasp the meaning behind texts due to limited vocabulary or lack of reading strategies. Therefore, teachers must use effective methods such as guided reading, discussions, and interactive activities to build comprehension. This study aims to explore practical approaches that make reading both engaging and meaningful for primary school students.

Vocabulary and comprehension, long neglected in the primary grades, still appear to be neglected. Contrary to the report's recommendations, attention to building conceptual and content knowledge in science and social studies has actually decreased in the past fifteen years. In other words, the easier-to-master skills are being attended to, but the broader domains of accomplishment that constitute preparation for comprehension and learning in the later grades—vocabulary knowledge, comprehension strategy use, and conceptual and content knowledge—are being neglected. Eshankulovna (2021) emphasizes that “English language teaching (ELT) extends far beyond linguistic proficiency—it is a tool for developing global competence. Through exposure to authentic intercultural communication and critical thinking tasks, learners acquire the ability to interpret, negotiate, and express ideas across cultural boundaries”. Near stagnation in fourth-grade students' comprehension achievement is thus unsurprising. The authors then turn to research and reviews of research on improving primary-grade reading published since 1998, when Preventing Reading Difficulties was issued. They discuss several instructional approaches identified as effective in improving word-reading skill, vocabulary and conceptual knowledge, comprehension strategies, and reading outside of school; they discuss advances in interventions for struggling readers, and in whole-school literacy reform. Duke and Block then identify three key obstacles that have prevented widespread adoption of these best practices in teaching reading. The first obstacle is a short-term orientation toward instruction and instructional reform that perpetuates a focus on the easier-to-learn reading skills at the expense of vocabulary, conceptual and content knowledge, and reading comprehension strategies (K Duke, K Block, 2012). In this sense, Rustamova (2023) emphasizes that “teaching English becomes a medium for preparing globally minded citizens who can actively participate in the international academic, professional, and digital arenas”. The aim of this study was to carry out action research to investigate reading comprehension skills when using the SQ3R reading comprehension strategy. To that end, this strategy was used for improving the reading comprehension skills of 7 primary school 4th grade students

who had problems with these skills. An action plan was prepared for 3 hours a day on 3 days a week for a period of 10 weeks. In the intervention process, the first author carried out this intervention with a classroom teacher. In this research, "Teacher's Diaries" and three different written forms, namely the "Reading Comprehension Test", "Student Interview Form" and "Student Observation Form" were used as data collection tools to provide research credibility. The results indicated that the SQ3R-based reading program increased students' reading comprehension level. In light of data obtained from this study, student's ability to analyze texts visually (Bulut, 2012).

Reading is an important language skill whose main purpose is comprehension. In the reading process, visible symbols must be perceived and interpreted in the brain. Once the reading skill has been acquired, it can become a tool for having access to information, analyzing and interpreting it. All of these depend on the reading comprehension skill. Thus, evaluation of reading comprehension is one of the subjects to which great importance is attached. According to Eshankulovna (2023), "effective English language teaching relies on the integration of linguistic, cognitive, and socio-affective methodologies. By combining communicative, task-based, and content-integrated approaches, teachers foster not only language acquisition but also higher-order thinking skills".

Particularly the evaluation of the level of students' reading comprehension is a subject of great interest for many researchers. In this regard, the current study aimed to investigate the relationship between the Turkish elementary school students' reading comprehension and reading motivation. At the end of the study, it was found that there is a positive, medium and significant correlation between the students' levels of reading comprehension determined with cloze tests made up of both narrative and informative texts and reading motivation. Rustamova (2023) highlighted that "this methodological synthesis enhances learner autonomy, reflective thinking, and problem-solving abilities—key components of the 21st-century educational paradigm".

In addition, a positive, medium and significant correlation was found between the students' levels of reading comprehension determined with open-ended questions made up of both narrative and informative texts and reading motivation. Increase in the students' reading motivation affects their reading comprehension positively and significantly. Furthermore, reading motivation explains 12-13% of the total variance in their reading comprehension (Kuşdemir Bulut, 2018). Eshankulovna (2022) asserts that "English proficiency functions as a socioeconomic catalyst in today's interconnected world. It provides access to global education, research collaboration, and international labor markets. In education, English serves as a bridge to scientific innovation, digital literacy, and academic exchange. Therefore, the teaching of English is not merely an educational goal but a strategic national investment in human capital development and international competitiveness".

Conclusion

To summary, improving reading comprehension in primary grades is essential for developing students' critical thinking and overall academic success. Effective strategies such as guided reading, vocabulary enrichment, and active discussions help young learners understand texts more deeply. Teachers play a key role in creating engaging reading environments that motivate students to read with purpose and enjoyment. When children build strong comprehension skills early, they become confident and independent readers. Therefore, early and continuous support is vital for lifelong literacy development.

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