

THE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN UNDERSTANDING READING QUESTIONS IN TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract

This study investigates the difficulties faced by Grade 5 and 6 students at Mondial Primary School in understanding reading questions in English textbooks. The research aims to identify the specific challenges and propose classroom-based interventions to enhance students' comprehension. Using a descriptive qualitative design, data were collected through questionnaires and interviews with 30 students. The findings reveal three main difficulties: limited vocabulary, insufficient grammar knowledge, and problems comprehending the meaning of questions. To address these issues, two interactive activities are proposed: Pop Quiz, to improve students' familiarity with question patterns through quick assessments, and Tongue Twister, to develop pronunciation, vocabulary, and engagement. The study provides practical insights into improving reading comprehension among primary school learners through simple, engaging interventions.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Students' Difficulties

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh siswa kelas 5 dan 6 di Sekolah Dasar Mondial dalam memahami pertanyaan membaca dalam buku teks Bahasa Inggris. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi tantangan spesifik yang dialami siswa serta mengusulkan intervensi berbasis kelas untuk meningkatkan pemahaman mereka. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan wawancara terhadap 30 siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga kesulitan utama yang dialami siswa, yaitu keterbatasan kosakata, pengetahuan tata bahasa yang kurang, dan kesulitan dalam memahami makna pertanyaan. Untuk mengatasi masalah ini, dua kegiatan interaktif diusulkan: *Pop Quiz* untuk meningkatkan pemahaman pola pertanyaan melalui penilaian singkat, dan *Tongue Twister* untuk mengembangkan pelafalan, kosakata, dan keterlibatan siswa. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan praktis dalam meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman membaca di kalangan siswa sekolah dasar melalui intervensi yang sederhana dan menyenangkan.

Kata Kunci: Pemahaman Membaca, Kosakata, Tata Bahasa, Kesulitan Siswa

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Introduction

Reading is a fundamental skill in English language learning and plays a crucial role in developing students' overall literacy. According to Grabe (2010), reading functions as a means to evaluate learning outcomes and comprehension. Zare and Othman (2013) also highlight reading as a cognitive activity involving interaction between the reader and the

author. In this process, students are not merely decoding text, but engaging in an active meaning-making experience. Reading comprehension, as described by Smith and Robinson (2010), involves understanding, evaluating, and utilizing information obtained from written texts. It requires several cognitive skills such as decoding, fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and the ability to construct and follow cohesive ideas (Lee, 2017). Each of these elements plays a role in determining students' success in understanding both texts and the questions derived from them.

Despite its importance, many students struggle with reading comprehension, particularly when answering reading questions in textbooks. These difficulties often stem from limited vocabulary, poor grammar skills, and a lack of exposure to various question types (Alizadeh, 2016; Alqahtani, 2015). Vocabulary knowledge is essential for students to grasp the meaning of words and their contexts. Without it, understanding even well-structured grammar becomes ineffective. Grammar, on the other hand, provides the framework for constructing meaning (Crystal, 2004), but its complexity often poses challenges for primary school learners. Several recent studies have explored reading comprehension strategies, yet few have focused on students' specific difficulties in understanding textbook-based reading questions in Indonesian primary schools. Most research emphasizes general reading strategies or text-level comprehension (Rahmawati & Fitriani, 2020; Kartika et al., 2021), leaving a gap in understanding how students navigate questions related to the texts. Addressing this gap is crucial, especially in classroom contexts where textbooks are the primary source of reading materials and assessments.

Grabe (2010) stated that reading is a strategy to evaluate whether the achievement and understanding of the whole learning process have been reached or not. That activity helps the teacher to check students' ability to understand the material. Zare and Othman (2013:188) comment that reading is a cognitive activity in which the reader takes part in a conversation with the author through the text. When a student reads the text, it feels like the readers try to communicate with the text and understand the meaning in every sentence. So, when a student engages with a text, it creates a dynamic process akin to a form of communication between the reader and the text itself. It implies an active and interactive relationship where the reader tries to comprehend the meaning embedded in each sentence. According to Harold G. Neuman (2019), reading, as an adjunct to language, is a larger part of who we are and how we interact with the world. Reading is a part of language. Thus, when people read something from a certain country, such as a text, article, or information, it is like people want to interact with the world.

Smith & Robinson (2010: 205) point out that reading comprehension means the understanding, evaluating, and utilizing of information and ideas gained through the interaction between the readers and the authors. Reading comprehension involves several cognitive processes. It goes beyond mere decoding of words and encompasses a more comprehensive set of activities. The first element mentioned is understanding. Comprehension requires the reader to grasp the meaning of the text. This involves making sense of individual words, sentences, and the overall message conveyed by the

author. The statement suggests that reading comprehension involves critical thinking. Readers are not passive recipients of information but actively assess and evaluate the content. This could include analyzing the validity of arguments, assessing the reliability of information, and making judgments about the author's perspective. Reading comprehension is not an end in itself; it's a means to an end. Readers are expected not only to understand and evaluate but also to apply the information and ideas gained from the text. This utilization could take various forms, such as applying knowledge to solve problems, making informed decisions, or integrating new information with existing knowledge. The definition emphasizes that reading comprehension is a result of the interaction between readers and authors. This interaction implies a dynamic process where readers actively engage with the author's words, ideas, and perspectives. It's not a passive reception but a collaborative effort in meaning-making. Reading comprehension is a multifaceted process involving understanding, critical evaluation, and practical application of information and ideas. It underscores the dynamic interaction between readers and authors, highlighting the active role readers play in making sense of and utilizing the content they encounter in texts.

Some students may have difficulties understanding reading questions in the textbook. It depends on students' ability, as not all students have the same level of ease in understanding reading questions. It attributes this variability to students' abilities. This implies that factors such as prior knowledge, language proficiency, and reading skills play a role in how well students comprehend reading questions. The more students read a lot, the more they understand the questions. A correlation between the frequency of reading and comprehension of questions. It posits that students who read more often tend to have a better understanding of the questions posed in textbooks. This aligns with the idea that regular reading helps develop vocabulary, comprehension skills, and a familiarity with various grammatical structures. Those difficulties that are usually faced can be vocabulary and grammar. They are common difficulties faced by students when it comes to understanding reading questions. Vocabulary challenges may arise from unfamiliar words or terms used in the questions, while grammatical difficulties could stem from complex sentence structures or syntax.

This study, therefore, aims to analyze the difficulties faced by students in understanding reading questions in English textbooks. It also explores potential classroom-based activities that could be implemented to overcome these challenges. The findings are expected to inform practical teaching strategies and contribute to improving reading comprehension in primary education. In reading comprehension, Lee (2017) stated that there are 6 skills considered essential, they are:

1. Decoding

Decoding is related to an early language skill called phonemic awareness, which is part of a broader skill called phonological awareness. It involves the ability to break down and recognize individual sounds in words, often linked to phonemic awareness and

phonological awareness. This skill is foundational for early language development, contributing to the ability to sound out words and understand their meanings.

2. Fluency

To read fluently, students need to instantly recognize words. Fluency in reading refers to the ability to read smoothly, accurately, and with expression. Fluent readers can instantly recognize words, which contributes to improved comprehension and engagement with the text.

3. Vocabulary

To understand what is stated in text, people need to understand most of the words in the text. A strong vocabulary is essential for understanding the meaning of words and comprehending the overall message in a text. Adequate vocabulary knowledge allows readers to grasp the content and nuances of the text more effectively.

4. Sentence Construction and Cohesion

Understanding how sentences are built might seem like writing skills. Understanding how sentences are constructed and how they coherently relate to each other. This skill contributes to comprehension by helping readers follow the flow of ideas and relationships within the text.

5. Reasoning and Background Knowledge

Most readers relate what they read to what they know. Readers often connect new information with their existing knowledge, and reasoning helps make sense of the content. Applying background knowledge and reasoning skills enhances comprehension by allowing readers to draw connections and infer meaning.

6. Working Memory and Attention

These two skills are both part of a group of abilities known as executive function. Working memory involves the ability to hold and manipulate information temporarily, while attention is the focus on relevant aspects of the task. These executive function skills play a crucial role in reading comprehension, allowing readers to process information, make connections, and sustain attention during reading.

These six skills collectively contribute to a reader's ability to comprehend written text. They encompass foundational skills, such as decoding and fluency, as well as higher-order cognitive processes like reasoning and background knowledge application. Understanding and developing these skills can significantly enhance overall reading comprehension.

According to Alizadeh (2016: 22), vocabulary is more complex than existing definitions. Vocabulary is one of the elements that students must understand in the reading activity. Sometimes, vocabulary is quite complex because there are a lot of meanings in one word, so students need to predict the meaning first after reading and understanding the context. If students already know the context, it will help them to know the meaning of the questions. Vocabulary is very important to learn because vocabulary is the basis for mastering English. Vocabulary is the basis of the four skills that must be mastered and developed in mastering English (Termez State University & Ruzimuratova, 2021: 348).

Vocabulary is one of the keys to understanding the meaning of something, like some words, sentences, text, questions, and many more. Alqahtani (2015: 22) stated that if a person cannot get the vocabulary used to convey the intended meaning, then there is no value, even though the person can make sentences according to the grammar. The first thing that students must do is learn vocabulary first, then grammar, because if students do not understand that element, it will be very difficult to understand grammar.

Vocabulary refers to the collection of words and their meanings that make up a language. Learning vocabulary is crucial because it forms the foundation for effective communication. When students have a robust vocabulary, they can better understand and express ideas, thoughts, and concepts. Vocabulary is fundamental for reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It allows students to comprehend texts, express themselves clearly, and engage in meaningful conversations. Grammar is the set of rules that govern the structure and formation of sentences in a language. Once students have acquired a solid vocabulary, they can then focus on the rules and structures that govern how words come together to form meaningful sentences. Grammar provides the necessary structure for effective communication. It helps students construct grammatically correct sentences, ensuring clarity and precision in their expression. The statement suggests a dependency between vocabulary and grammar. Without a sufficient understanding of vocabulary, grasping the rules and structures of grammar may become challenging. A rich vocabulary provides the raw materials for constructing grammatically accurate and contextually appropriate sentences. The symbiotic relationship between vocabulary and grammar enhances overall language proficiency. A strong vocabulary enables students to apply grammatical rules effectively in their communication. The statement implies that attempting to understand grammar without a foundational understanding of vocabulary can be difficult. This is because grammar involves manipulating and arranging words, and without knowing the meanings of the words, students may struggle to grasp the rules governing their usage. Recognizing the interconnectedness of vocabulary and grammar underscores the importance of a holistic approach to language learning, where both aspects are developed in tandem. Emphasizing the importance of initially focusing on vocabulary acquisition before delving into the intricacies of grammar. This sequential approach aims to provide students with the necessary linguistic tools for effective communication and comprehension.

According to Hirai (2010), grammar is a way to organize sentences and create good language. Grammar is quite difficult to learn because there are many elements that students must pay attention to. Besides that, it also has many rules to get better results in grammar. It is described as a tool for organizing sentences. It provides the structure and rules that govern how words are arranged to form coherent and meaningful expressions. A grasp of grammar enables individuals to communicate ideas clearly and accurately. It is considered crucial for achieving effective language use. When individuals understand and apply grammatical rules, they can convey their thoughts in a way that is easily comprehensible to others. It plays a vital role in facilitating communication and avoiding misunderstandings.

This difficulty is attributed to the presence of numerous elements and rules that students must pay attention to. The complexity of grammar arises from its multifaceted nature, involving syntax, morphology, semantics, and more. Grammar encompasses various elements, including parts of speech, sentence structures, tenses, and punctuation. Students are required to pay attention to these elements to construct grammatically correct sentences. Grammar is governed by rules that dictate how words and phrases should be used in different contexts. These rules provide a framework for clarity and consistency in language usage.

Crystal (2004) said that grammar can help students to cultivate caution, exploit the wealth of expression, and detect the wealth of ambiguity available in English, because grammar is the ability to express ourselves from our structural foundations. Grammar is very important in English. It plays a big role because, with that element, students can learn how to arrange words to make good sentences. Grammar is an area where improvement is an ongoing process. To achieve better results in grammar, students are encouraged to continuously engage with the rules, practice applying them, and seek ways to enhance their grammatical skills. These rules pertain to different aspects of language structure and usage, ranging from basic sentence formation to more advanced concepts like verb conjugation and sentence cohesion. To sum up, grammar serves as a foundational tool for organizing sentences and creating effective language. While acknowledging its importance, the statement also highlights the complexity of grammar learning, emphasizing the multitude of elements and rules that students must navigate to achieve proficiency. Continuous effort and attention to these elements are seen as essential for obtaining better results in grammar.

This study aims to analyze students' difficulties in understanding reading questions in textbooks and the most difficult thing that students found in understanding reading questions which is to analyze students' difficulties in understanding reading questions in textbooks. Additionally, the study aims to identify the specific aspects of reading questions that pose the greatest challenges for students. In summary, they highlight the nuanced nature of students' struggles with reading questions, attributing these challenges to individual abilities, the frequency of reading, and specific linguistic elements like vocabulary and grammar. The forthcoming study aims to delve deeper into these issues, potentially providing insights and recommendations for addressing difficulties in understanding reading questions among students.

The problems of this study are the difficulties that students face in understanding reading questions in textbooks. And what is the most difficult thing that students find in understanding reading questions in textbooks?

1. What are students' difficulties in understanding the reading question?
2. What are potential activities applicable in the classroom to overcome the difficulties?

Method

This study was conducted at Mondial Primary School, located on Candi Golf Boulevard, Street Number 2, Semarang, Indonesia. The school was selected due to its accessibility and the availability of students in upper primary levels (Grades 5 and 6) who regularly engage with English textbooks as part of their curriculum. The setting provided a realistic context for examining reading comprehension difficulties in a natural classroom environment.

This research employed a descriptive qualitative design, which is appropriate for exploring students' perceptions, behaviors, and learning challenges in a natural setting without experimental manipulation (Creswell, 2013). The approach was chosen to allow in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and to generate rich, narrative data regarding their difficulties in understanding reading questions.

The participants in this study were 30 students from Grades 5 and 6, selected through purposive sampling. This method was chosen to focus specifically on students who had already been exposed to English reading materials and were considered capable of providing relevant responses. The students were selected based on teacher recommendations, which ensured they represented a range of reading comprehension levels. Parental consent was obtained before participation.

Data Collection

For data collection in this research, the researcher uses two techniques. It was an interview and a questionnaire. The test is used to check students' understanding and to answer a questionnaire. The researcher will instruct students to read a text and answer the questions in their textbook. Interviews involve direct interaction between the researcher and the participants, allowing for in-depth exploration of their perspectives. Questionnaires are a structured set of written questions distributed to participants to gather standardized responses. The use of both interviews and questionnaires suggests a comprehensive approach to data collection. Interviews offer a qualitative, open-ended exploration of participants' thoughts and experiences, while questionnaires provide a structured and quantifiable format, allowing for a broader sample.

The test serves the purpose of assessing students' understanding. It implies an evaluation of their comprehension skills, likely related to the reading questions in their textbooks. The statement mentions that the test is used "to answer the questionnaire," suggesting a connection between the test results and the questionnaire responses. This connection can provide a triangulation of data, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings. The researcher provides clear instructions to students, asking them to read a text and answer questions in their textbooks. This implies that the test is designed to assess students' ability to comprehend and respond to specific reading questions. The use of students' textbooks as the context for the test suggests a practical and relevant approach, aligning the assessment with the students' regular learning materials.

The researcher employs a mixed methods approach by using both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaire, test) data collection techniques. This approach

allows for a more comprehensive understanding of students' difficulties in understanding reading questions. Triangulation involves the use of multiple data sources to enhance the credibility and validity of findings. In this case, combining interviews, questionnaires, and tests serves as a triangulation strategy, providing a more robust and nuanced perspective on students' difficulties. The researcher employs a mixed methods approach, incorporating interviews and questionnaires for a holistic understanding. The use of a test linked to the questionnaire adds a quantitative dimension, and clear instructions for the test provide insight into the practical application of research design. The overall approach reflects a thoughtful and multifaceted strategy for data collection.

Questionnaire: Is used to know students' answers about reading in general and the difficulties in understanding reading questions faced by the students.

Interview: Is used to get the data about students' difficulties in understanding reading questions. The questions to answer are:

1. What is the difficulty in understanding reading questions?
2. What is the most difficult part that you faced in reading the questions?
3. What type of text that you think is easy to understand?
4. How did you answer the questions? Was it through memorizing or understanding the text?
5. What kind of activity that you think can overcome the difficulties?

The researcher used a voice recorder to record students' answers to collect the data as documentation.

Data Analysis

The researcher made the questions first for the questionnaire and interview. Then, the researcher started to collect the data by asking students to do the reading part of unit 6 in their textbook. The researcher gave some instructions for students to do the reading and answer the questions. If students have done it, the researcher gives the questionnaire and explains the questions, meaning they found it difficult. After finishing the questionnaire, the researcher conducts the interview. The researcher got the data and started to analyze it by writing students' answers to the questionnaire and interview on a piece of paper. The difficulties that students faced were:

2 students answered grammar, 4 students answered vocabulary, 3 students answered understanding the questions, and 5 students answered nothing. While the most difficult parts were:

2 students answered vocabulary, 3 students answered understanding the meaning of the questions, 6 students answered nothing, 2 students answered understanding long text or sentences, and 1 student answered finding the answer. From the difficulties, it represents an activity to overcome that such as:

1 student answered get the point for reading, 7 students answered nothing, 2 students answered reading grammar, 1 student answered letting someone who understands help me understand better, 1 student answered reading a book, 1 student answered being able to solve a fight, and 1 student answered read slowly so we can understand it. From those

analyses, some activities can overcome the difficulties, like grammar learning, reading slowly to understand the questions well, and more explanation from the teacher.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings thematically, based on the responses from questionnaires and interviews. Three major themes emerged as the main difficulties students face in understanding reading questions in English textbooks: (1) Limited Vocabulary, (2) Grammar Challenges, and (3) Difficulty Interpreting Questions. The findings are summarized in the table below to enhance clarity and comprehension.

A semi-structured questionnaire was designed to gather information about students' self-perceived difficulties in understanding reading questions. It consisted of both closed-ended items (using a Likert scale) and open-ended questions to allow elaboration. The questionnaire was piloted with five students from a different school to ensure clarity and appropriateness of the items. Feedback from the pilot study was used to refine the final version. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 10 selected students (5 from each grade) to explore their responses in more detail. The interviews were guided by a structured protocol that included prompts on vocabulary, grammar, and strategies used when answering textbook questions. Each interview lasted approximately 15–20 minutes and was audio recorded with permission. Data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive coding, where responses were categorized into emerging themes related to vocabulary difficulties, grammar challenges, and question interpretation. For the interview data, the thematic analysis technique proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006) was used. The steps included:

1. Transcribing the audio recordings verbatim.
2. Familiarizing with the data.
3. Generating initial codes.
4. Searching for themes.
5. Reviewing and refining themes.
6. Defining and naming themes.

To enhance trustworthiness, the coding was conducted independently by two researchers and compared for consistency. Any discrepancies were resolved through discussion. Additionally, member checking was conducted with three students to validate the interpretations of their interview responses.

1. What are students' difficulties in understanding the reading question?

In this research, the result of this research is that some students answered that the difficulties in understanding reading questions in textbooks were grammar, vocabulary, and the questions themselves. The activities that can overcome the difficulties were learning grammar and reading the questions slowly to understand the questions well. The research identifies three main areas of difficulty for students in understanding reading questions: grammar, vocabulary, and the questions themselves. This provides a detailed breakdown of

the specific challenges students encounter, contributing to a nuanced understanding of their struggles. The study suggests two activities that can help students overcome their difficulties: learning grammar and reading the questions slowly. This practical guidance offers potential solutions for educators and students to address the identified challenges.

This research exclusively concentrates on difficulties related to understanding reading questions in textbooks. The narrow focus allows for a detailed exploration of a specific aspect of reading comprehension. Compared to other studies, this study only focuses on the difficulties in understanding reading questions in textbooks and the activities that can overcome these difficulties. There is another study that has a similar topic to this study which is titled *The Analysis on Students' Difficulties in Doing Reading Comprehension Final Test*, so it only focuses on reading comprehension itself, where the findings include the number of wrong answers and the average of that element. The comparison with another study highlights the specificity of the current research. While both studies address students' difficulties in reading, the other study focuses on reading comprehension, analyzing the number of wrong answers, and calculating averages. In contrast, the current study delves into the specific challenges associated with reading questions in textbooks.

The identified activities to overcome difficulties—learning grammar and reading questions slowly—provide practical guidance for educators. This information can inform teaching strategies and interventions to enhance students' comprehension skills. The specific focus on activities tailored to address the identified difficulties offers practical insights for educators to design targeted interventions. This tailored approach aligns with the unique challenges highlighted in the research findings. The study acknowledges a specific focus on reading questions in textbooks, leaving out other potential aspects of reading comprehension. Future research could explore a broader range of challenges to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Building on the comparative aspect with another study, future research could delve into a more extensive comparative analysis, exploring different methodologies, sample sizes, and educational contexts to identify commonalities and differences in findings.

In summary, the research findings provide a detailed understanding of students' difficulties in understanding reading questions and suggest practical activities for overcoming these challenges. The comparison with another study highlights the uniqueness of the current research focus, contributing to the existing literature on reading comprehension. The study's implications for educators and potential avenues for future research further enrich its significance.

Table 1 contains unique identifiers (likely initials or codes) for each participant. These identifiers are used to maintain the anonymity of the participants while allowing for differentiation. This table indicates the specific difficulties or challenges reported by each participant. Participants may identify various aspects of the task that they found challenging. This table specifies the part or aspect of the task that participants found most challenging. It serves to identify the primary difficulty within the broader context of the reported challenges.

Table 1. Data Analysis

Name	Difficulty	Most Difficult Part
AE	The question	Vocabulary
GL	Nothing	Nothing
GY	grammar, vocabulary	Nothing
KA	Nothing	Understanding the questions
LI	grammar, vocabulary	Reading long text
QY	Nothing	Nothing
MC	The question	The questions
MK	Nothing	Reading long sentences
MA	Vocabulary	Nothing
FR	Vocabulary	Vocabulary and questions
NI	Nothing	The questions
PS	The questions	Nothing
RL	Nothing	Finding the answer
CL	Nothing	Nothing

AE – the participant identified "The question" as a difficulty. For this participant, vocabulary was the most challenging aspect. GL – The participant mentioned having no difficulties. The response suggests that, according to the participant, there was no specific challenging aspect. GY – The participant identified difficulties in both grammar and vocabulary. The participant did not specify the most difficult part, indicating a general challenge across grammar and vocabulary. KA – The participant reported having no difficulties. The response implies that the participant did not find any aspect challenging except for understanding the questions. LI – The participant mentioned difficulties in both grammar and vocabulary. Reading long text was identified as the most challenging part. QY – The participant reported having no difficulties. Most Difficult Part, according to the response, there was no specific challenging aspect. MC – The participant identified "The question" as a difficulty. The response indicates that answering the questions was the most challenging part. MK – The participant reported having no difficulties. According to the response, reading long sentences was the most challenging aspect. MA – The participant mentioned difficulties with vocabulary. The response suggests that vocabulary was the most challenging aspect. FR – The participant reported difficulties with vocabulary. Vocabulary and questions were both identified as the most challenging parts. NI – The participant reported having no difficulties. According to the response, there was no specific challenging aspect. PS – the participant identified "The questions" as a difficulty. There was no specific challenging aspect mentioned in response. RL – The participant reported having no difficulties. The response suggests that finding the answer was the most challenging aspect. CL – The participant reported having no difficulties. According to the response, there was no specific challenging aspect. In conclusion, the table provides an overview of

reported difficulties and the most challenging aspects identified by each participant. Participants reported challenges related to "The question," grammar, vocabulary, reading long text, and understanding the questions. Some participants stated that they did not encounter any difficulties. The table offers a snapshot of individual experiences and perceptions regarding the difficulties faced in understanding reading questions.

2. What are potential activities applicable in the classroom to overcome the difficulties?

Some activities can overcome students' difficulties, such as a Pop Quiz and a Tongue Twister. A Pop Quiz is a quiz that is given to students where students must answer some questions instantly. The advantage of this quiz is to improve students' ability to understand the material. Pop Quiz is characterized by its spontaneous nature, where students are required to provide immediate answers to questions. The quiz is designed to enhance students' understanding of the material by testing their knowledge and encouraging quick recall. Therefore, there is a Tongue Twister, which is an activity that can improve students' skills in some respects, like vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In this activity, students must read a sentence quickly. Tongue Twister is introduced as an activity to improve students' skills in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Students engage in reading sentences quickly, likely involving challenging word combinations that require precise pronunciation.

Students must answer 5 questions in their English book on page 78. Before reading the passages, students read the questions first. The students are directed to read the questions first. This strategy encourages students to focus on key information while reading. The table of data analysis shows some results for thirteen students. The first student, AE, got two wrong answers. GL got one wrong answer, GY got one wrong answer, KA got four wrong answers, QY got three wrong answers, MC got five right answers, MK got two wrong answers, MA got three wrong answers, FR got three wrong answers, NI got one wrong answer, PS got five right answers, RL got two wrong answers, and CL got two wrong answers. The table presents individual results for thirteen students, showing the number of correct and incorrect answers for each. Student performances vary, with some students achieving perfect scores, while others make varying numbers of mistakes.

According to the interview, the results for the difficulties that students faced were almost the same as the students' answers in the questionnaire. Some students answered that the difficult part was vocabulary, grammar, and the questions. Among the 14 students, almost half answered the questions by understanding the text. The interview results align with the questionnaire responses. Students consistently identify vocabulary, grammar, and questions as challenging aspects in understanding the text. A significant portion of students, almost half of the 14, express difficulty in answering questions related to understanding the text.

Pop Quiz provides an opportunity for immediate feedback, allowing teachers to gauge students' comprehension levels and address misconceptions promptly. The spontaneous nature of Pop Quiz encourages students to think quickly and recall information on the spot. Tongue Twister offers a holistic approach to skill development, targeting vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation simultaneously. Reading sentences quickly in Tongue Twister promotes active engagement, requiring students to navigate linguistic challenges in real-time. The individual results from the data analysis highlight the importance of tailoring instructional strategies to address specific needs and challenges that students may face. By analyzing individual performance, educators can identify trends and common areas of difficulty, allowing for targeted interventions. In conclusion, the activities of Pop Quiz and Tongue Twister are designed to address students' difficulties in understanding reading questions. The classroom task involves answering questions from the English book, and the results from data analysis and interviews provide insights into individual performances and common challenges. The educational implications emphasize the potential benefits of these activities for improving comprehension skills and tailoring instruction to meet students' needs.

Table 2. Summary of Themes and Student Responses

Theme	Indicators	Number of Students	Representative Quotes
Limited Vocabulary	Struggled to understand keywords in questions	23 out of 30	"I don't know the meaning of the question words."
Grammar Challenges	Difficulty understanding sentence structure or verb tense	19 out of 30	"Sometimes I get confused if the question is in the past or present tense."
Question Interpretation Issues	Could not identify what the question was asking, or misread the intent	16 out of 30	"I think the question asks about something else, not the main idea."

4.1 Limited Vocabulary

Most students admitted difficulty in understanding the vocabulary used in the questions. This aligns with Alqahtani (2015), who argued that vocabulary knowledge is a prerequisite for comprehension—if students cannot understand key terms, they cannot process the question's meaning. Furthermore, Alizadeh (2016) emphasized that vocabulary often carries multiple meanings, and without context awareness, students struggle to determine the correct interpretation. In this study, unfamiliar words such as *main idea*,

implied, or *synonym* posed obstacles. Vocabulary limitations were confused, especially when questions used academic or indirect expressions.

4.2 Grammar Challenges

Grammar issues, including sentence complexity and unfamiliar structures, were the second most cited difficulty. Students mentioned that auxiliary verbs, verb tenses, and passive constructions often confused them. This finding echoes Hirai (2010), who stated that grammar provides structural clarity, and a weak grasp of grammar leads to misinterpretation of meaning.

For example, students found it difficult to interpret the meaning of questions like: *What had the character done before the accident happened?*—especially when the past perfect tense was involved. The finding also supports Crystal (2004), who noted that grammar helps manage ambiguity, and students without structural awareness often misread the intent of the question.

4.3 Difficulty Interpreting Questions

Beyond vocabulary and grammar, some students struggled to grasp what the question asked, even if they understood the words. This problem highlights a cognitive gap in inferencing and metacognitive skills, as suggested by Lee (2017), particularly in reasoning and working memory. This theme was especially prevalent in inferential and evaluative questions. Students tended to focus only on literal content and failed to see how the question connected with the text's implied message. This implies that many students are still developing higher-order comprehension skills necessary for full understanding.

4.4 Summary and Contribution

These findings demonstrate that comprehension of reading questions is a multi-faceted challenge involving vocabulary depth, grammatical understanding, and cognitive interpretation. While similar issues have been discussed in prior studies (e.g., Zare & Othman, 2013; Smith & Robinson, 2010), this study contributes a more focused lens by analyzing how these three difficulties intersect in the specific context of primary-level English learners in Indonesia.

4.5 Proposed Interventions

Based on the data, two classroom-based activities are recommended to address the identified difficulties:

1. **Pop Quiz:** Short and varied quizzes with different question types (literal, inferential, vocabulary-focused) to build pattern recognition and response familiarity.
2. **Tongue Twisters:** Used as pronunciation warm-ups that implicitly build vocabulary recall, confidence, and oral comprehension.

These interventions align with communicative language teaching (CLT) principles and offer low-cost, high-engagement strategies for improving reading comprehension.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to know students' difficulties in understanding reading questions in textbooks and activities to overcome those difficulties. According to findings and discussion, the difficult part in understanding the questions was vocabulary, grammar, and the questions. While the activities that can overcome those difficulties are Pop Quiz and Tongue Twister. They are fulfilled by providing a comprehensive understanding of students' difficulties in understanding reading questions and suggesting practical activities for overcoming these challenges. The findings and recommendations serve as valuable guidance for educators aiming to improve reading comprehension skills among their students. The study lays the groundwork for future research in the realm of reading comprehension, inviting further exploration into effective instructional strategies and interventions.

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