

Profile of Reading Comprehension Skills In Narrative Texts Among Fifth Grade Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the profile of fifth-grade elementary students' reading comprehension in narrative texts based on four dimensions of Barrett's taxonomy: literal, reorganization, inferential, and evaluative–appreciative comprehension. A quantitative descriptive approach was employed and supported by qualitative data. The research subjects consisted of 28 elementary school students. Quantitative data were collected through reading comprehension tests, while qualitative data were obtained from classroom observations, teacher interviews, and analysis of Indonesian language teaching modules. The data analysis technique used was Miles and Huberman with data analysis components, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

The results of the study show that, in general, students' reading comprehension skills are still moderate to low. Of all participants, no students achieved the excellent category, while 21.4% were in the good category, 21.4% in the fair category, and the rest (57.2%) were still in the poor to very poor category. The highest achievement was seen in the literal aspect, which indicates that students are relatively able to recognize the information expressed in the text. However, in the reorganization, inferential, and evaluative-appreciative aspects, most students showed difficulty in rearranging the plot, drawing implied meanings, and critically and reflectively assessing the content of the reading. These results indicate the need to apply more interactive and contextual learning strategies and media to improve the ability to understand the content of reading comprehensively.

Keywords: reading comprehension skills, narrative text, reading literacy, elementary school

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INTRODUCTION

The direction of education development in Indonesia in recent years has increasingly emphasized the importance of strengthening students' literacy skills. The Merdeka Curriculum makes literacy skills the basis for shaping students who are able to think critically, creatively, and communicatively (Kusmana, 2017). This effort is in line with global education policy, which places reading literacy as one of the essential skills of the 21st century.

Reading literacy skills are fundamental to success in various subjects. Students with a good level of reading comprehension usually find it easier to understand concepts, solve problems, and connect information from various sources (Mardiyanti, Maula, & Amalia, 2022). Furthermore, Handayani et al. (2023) found that reading comprehension skills are not only influenced by internal factors such as interest and motivation to learn, but also by the learning strategies and media used by teachers when teaching in the classroom. Thus, the

development of reading literacy skills must be in line with innovative, contextual, and enjoyable Indonesian language learning.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international study that measures reading literacy skills, particularly in elementary schools in various countries. Based on the 2011 PIRLS results, Indonesia ranked 45th out of a total of 48 countries with an average score of 428, which is well below the international average of 500 (IEA, 2012). This data shows that the reading skills of Indonesian elementary school students are still relatively low. The Education Assessment Center (2023) also explains that the PIRLS results are used as the basis for the development of national and digital literacy assessments (e-PIRLS) to monitor the development of elementary school students' reading comprehension skills.

In addition, the results of the Computer-Based National Assessment (ANBK) conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology show that the reading literacy skills of elementary school students in Indonesia are still relatively low. Most students are still unable to understand texts in depth and are still at a basic level in finding meaning, interpreting information, and drawing conclusions from reading (Kemdikbudristek, 2023). This condition confirms that mastery of reading literacy at the elementary school level is a serious challenge that requires attention in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Reading comprehension skills play an important role in student learning success because they include not only the ability to recognize language symbols, but also the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate the content of the reading (Rahmawati, Wulan, & Fajrussalam, 2023). Reading comprehension is a fairly complex cognitive process, in which readers must be able to connect the information obtained from the text with their existing knowledge to form new meaning (Aziz & Yasin, 2017, in Riani, Ngatman, & Suryandari, 2021). This means that this ability requires the involvement of higher-order thinking processes, encompassing literal, inferential, critical, and creative abilities (Dalman, 2017).

In the context of basic education, Indonesian language learning is the main means of fostering and developing these skills. Indonesian language learning focuses not only on language skills, but also on the ability to understand the meaning of texts and use them to think and communicate effectively (Riani et al., 2021). One type of text that plays an important role in learning is narrative text, because this text trains students' ability to understand the plot, characters, setting, conflict, and moral message. Through narrative text, students not only learn to understand the information presented implicitly, but also interpret implied meanings and assess the actions of the characters in the story (Salsabilah, Latifah, & Magdalena, 2023).

Various local studies indicate that the reading comprehension skills of elementary school students in Indonesia still show considerable variation. Riani et al. (2021) stated that, in general, the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 6 Jatisari were in the good category, but students still had difficulty answering questions with the question words why and how, determining the main idea, and distinguishing between facts and opinions. Research by Mardiyanti et al. (2022) also shows that the use of the Sukuraga Big Book media effectively improves reading comprehension outcomes, indicating the importance of using attractive and contextual media in learning.

In addition, the results of studies conducted by Handayani et al. (2023) and Nurlaila (2022) show that many students are still unable to achieve inferential and evaluative levels of comprehension. Students often have difficulty summarizing reading texts and understanding the implied meaning in texts. This is in line with the findings of research conducted by Agustiani et al. (2025), which revealed that most students can only answer questions at the literal level, while their inferential and evaluative abilities are still relatively low. These findings certainly reinforce the PIRLS results, which show that students' ability to understand reading deeply is still a challenge in education in Indonesia.

Based on the conditions described above, the author aims to conduct research with the objective of describing and explaining the profile of narrative text comprehension skills among fifth-grade elementary school students. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of students' abilities in the literal, inferential, and evaluative-appreciative aspects, as well as serve as a basis for teachers in developing more effective, contextual, and student-centered reading learning strategies.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative descriptive method supported by qualitative data. This method was chosen with the aim of obtaining an overview and describing the reading comprehension abilities of fifth-grade elementary school students as a whole based on reading comprehension tests and learning activities in the classroom. Quantitative data was used to provide an overview of the students' level of comprehension through data in the form of numbers and percentages. Meanwhile, qualitative data in this study served to complement, deepen, and strengthen the research results through classroom learning observations, teaching module document reviews, and interviews with several fifth-grade teachers.

The subjects involved in this study were 28 fifth-grade elementary school students. Quantitative data. The research design used in this study was descriptive with a quantitative dominance, conducted in stages and in a planned manner. Initially, quantitative data was obtained through reading comprehension tests with the aim of analyzing students' ability levels.

The reading comprehension test was compiled based on the aspects of comprehension in Barret's taxonomy, which consists of literal, reorganization, inferential, evaluative, and appreciative comprehension. The test instruments used were validated by experts in the field of basic education and language to ensure they were in line with the learning objectives and characteristics of the students.

In the next stage, qualitative data was collected through classroom observation, document analysis, particularly teaching modules, and interviews with several teachers. The data obtained will be used to interpret, explain, and reinforce the findings obtained from the previous reading comprehension test. In addition, qualitative data will also be used to explain the understanding of factors that influence students' reading comprehension skills, the learning strategies used, and the availability of learning media in the classroom or at school.

The methods and approaches used enable quantitative data to be analyzed in a more contextual manner based on real situations during the learning process, rather than just numbers. The study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how students' reading comprehension skills are formed in Indonesian language learning in elementary schools.

The research instruments are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Reading comprehension test instrument

Number	Reading Comprehension Aspect	Barrett's Taxonomy Comprehension Level	Comprehension Indicators	Question Indicators	Taxonomy Level	Question Type
1.	Understanding the meaning of words and expressions	Literal Comprehension	Identifying facts (recognition details)	Explaining the meaning of words or expressions based on sentence context	C2 (Comprehending)	Short answer

2.	Answering questions with explicit answers	Literal Comprehension	Identifying explicit facts in the text	Identifying characters, places, or times	C1 (Remembering)	Short answer
		Literal Comprehension	Identifying explicit cause-and-effect relationships (<i>recognition of cause and effect relationship</i>)	Explaining the cause or effect of events in a narrative text	C2 (Comprehending)	Short answer
		Reorganization	Classifying actors, objects, places, and/or events (<i>classifying</i>)	Grouping important information (characters, activities, setting) based on text content	C3 (Applying)	Short answer
			Sequencing (<i>recognition of sequence</i>)	Determining the logical sequence of events in a narrative text	C3 (Applying)	Short answer
3.	Answering a question with an implied answer	Inferential Comprehension	Interpreting implicit cause and effect	Explaining the reasons behind characters' actions based on text content	C4 (Analyzing)	Short answer
			Drawing conclusions or messages from the text content	Drawing conclusions about the moral message or meaning of the story	C5 (Evaluating)	Essay
4.	Drawing conclusions (retelling)	Evaluation	Ability to evaluate the content of the discourse	Evaluating the characters' behavior in the narrative text	C5 (Evaluating)	Essay
		Appreciation	Connecting the text content with personal experiences	Connecting events or values in the text to personal experiences	C6 (Creating)	Essay
			Ability to express feelings, appreciate literary works (Expressing attitudes toward cultural, moral, or social values in texts)	Expressing opinions and feelings about the content of narrative texts	C6 (Creating)	Essay

To strengthen reliability, two Indonesian language teachers reviewed the instrument to check wording clarity and level of difficulty. The test results were categorized using Adam and Hani's (2023) criteria:

Table 2. Category

Category	Range
Very Good	86-100%
Good	70-85%
Sufficient	55-70%
Insufficient	40-55%
Very Sufficient	< 40%

(Source: Adam & Hani, 2023)

Qualitative data was collected from various sources, including classroom observations, review of teaching modules, and interviews with teachers. Observations were conducted to examine classroom learning activities, teaching strategies used by teachers, and student engagement in understanding reading texts. The teaching module documents were reviewed to assess the relevance and completeness of the teaching tools in supporting the strengthening of reading comprehension skills. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted to find out the teachers' perspectives on the continuity of the learning process or the obstacles encountered during learning.

The research procedure was carried out in three stages, including: 1) the preparation stage, which included preliminary research to identify learning problems, the preparation and validation of instruments used in the research, such as reading comprehension tests, observation guidelines, document reviews, and interviews. The preparation stage also included obtaining permission to conduct research at the school; 2) the implementation stage, which included administering reading tests to 28 students for 60 minutes, observing Indonesian language learning in the classroom, interviewing teachers to reinforce and clarify the findings, and reviewing teaching modules; 3) the data analysis stage, which was carried out by processing the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis to draw conclusions from the research.

The quantitative data obtained from the reading test results were then analyzed descriptively by calculating the average score, percentage, and assigning categories of students' reading comprehension abilities in each aspect of comprehension. Meanwhile, the qualitative data were analyzed through three stages according to Miles Huberman and Saldana (2014), namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

Qualitative data obtained from learning observations, document reviews, and interviews were then used to reinforce and enrich the understanding of the test results, so that the results would provide a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the various factors that can affect students' reading comprehension skills.

The methods used in this study are expected to provide a comprehensive picture, both through the presentation of statistical data related to students' reading comprehension abilities and by explaining the dynamics that occur during the learning process that underlie this. Therefore, this study will not only present a profile of students' reading comprehension abilities but also provide references for the development of Indonesian language learning media at the elementary school level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Reading Comprehension Test Results

This study was conducted with the aim of determining and describing the reading comprehension abilities of fifth-grade elementary school students, as assessed based on indicators developed from four aspects of Barrett's taxonomy, namely literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, and evaluative-appreciative comprehension. The reading test used narrative texts, with assessment indicators compiled based on a validated instrument grid. The students' test results are shown in the following table.

Table 3. Percentage of Student Test Result Achievement

Category	Range	Number of Students	Percentage
Very Good	86–100	0	0%
Good	70–85	6	21,4%
Sufficient	55–70	6	21,4%

Insufficient	40–55	8	28,6%
Very Insufficient	< 40	8	28,6%
Amount		28 students	100%

The table above shows that no students were able to achieve the “Very Good” category, which means that no students have mastered all four aspects of reading comprehension. Most students were in the “Insufficient” and “Very Insufficient” categories (57.7%), and 6 students (23.1%) were in the “Good” category. This condition illustrates that students' reading comprehension skills in general still need to be improved.

Based on the results of the reading comprehension test of 28 fifth-grade elementary school students, it was found that the students' abilities were in the moderate to low category. Of all students, none were able to reach the excellent category, while 6 students (21.4%) were in the good category, 6 students (21.4%) in the fair category, 8 students (28.6%) in the poor category, and 8 students (28.6%) in the very poor category.

The distribution of the data obtained shows that more than half of the students in the class (57.2%) have not been able to achieve the expected reading comprehension skills. These results indicate that students have difficulty understanding the content of the reading, especially aspects that require reasoning and reflection.

The analysis of the test results was then carried out by referring to the four aspects of comprehension in Barret's taxonomy, namely literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, and evaluative and reflective comprehension. Each aspect of comprehension was further developed into several indicators to describe the depth of students' comprehension in understanding the text they read.

The results of student achievement for each indicator are presented in the table below.

Table 4. Student Achievement for Each Indicator

Aspect / Indicator	Good (%)	Sufficien t (%)	Insuffi cient (%)	Very Insuffi	General Information

				cient (%)	
Literal (identifying characters, setting, time, events)	42,8	32,1	14,3	10,8	Most students are already able to identify the main character (number 2), but some still misunderstand the sequence of events.
Literal (identifying characters, setting, time, events)	21,4	25,0	28,6	25,0	Most students are still unable to correctly reorganize information and are still copying sentences from the text.
Inferential (drawing conclusions, understanding implied meaning)	14,3	21,4	35,7	28,6	Students are having difficulty connecting events and drawing implied meaning, with most answering by guessing.
Evaluative–Appreciative (evaluating characters, connecting to personal experiences)	7,1	17,9	35,7	39,3	Most students are not yet able to evaluate the characters' actions and connect the reading content to their personal lives.

Based on the test results that have been processed for each question, the highest achievement was obtained in the aspect of literal comprehension. This was indicated by the students' answers, which showed that they were able to grasp explicit information, such as the names of places or events that occurred in the reading passage. However, in terms of reorganization, inference, and evaluative-appreciative aspects, the scores obtained by students tended to be lower. These findings indicate that some students are still at the surface level of comprehension and are not yet able to connect information, interpret implied meanings, or reflect on the content of the reading.

Analysis of the literal comprehension indicator shows that this aspect is the highest achievement. A total of 42.9% of students were able to answer questions related to the explicit information in the text, such as recognizing characters, place names, and major events that occurred. However, these results also need to be examined more critically because there are still students who have difficulty understanding text structure, especially when determining the sequence of events or simple cause-and-effect relationships. This means that students' literal comprehension skills are not yet uniform, where they are quite good at recognizing the basic elements of a text but are still weak in understanding the relationships between parts of the text.

Barret (1968) explains that literal comprehension is the basis for higher levels of comprehension. These results are in line with the findings of a study conducted by Triana et al. (2023), which states that elementary school students are generally able to answer factual questions but still have difficulty connecting information in the text. Strengthening literal skills should be followed by learning activities that train the interconnection between text elements, for example through character maps or flowcharts, in order to build a strong foundation for the development of reorganization and inferential skills.

Analysis of the reorganization aspect shows that students' abilities in this indicator and aspect are still relatively weak. Only about 21.4% of students were able to achieve a good category, while the majority, namely 57.2%, were still in the poor and very poor categories. This condition seems to be caused by learning habits that emphasize speed of answering rather than deep thinking processes. Many students have a habit of copying answers directly, so they rarely practice reorganizing information or forming new structures from the texts they read.

Weaknesses in this aspect of reorganization can cause students to have difficulty understanding the overall storyline and more complex cause-and-effect relationships. These results are in line with the research by Puspita et al. (2023) and Juliati et al. (2025), which found that activities such as paraphrasing, concept mapping, and collaborative discussions can also help improve reorganization skills. Thus, teachers can address and remedy this issue by giving students challenging tasks such as rewriting stories in their own words, creating story maps, and working together to rearrange the sequence of events in the text.

The results of the inferential comprehension indicator analysis show that this aspect is one of the weakest points in students' reading abilities. As many as 64.3% of students fall into the category of poor to very poor in drawing conclusions and interpreting the implied meaning

of the text. The patterns of answers that emerged tended to be guesswork or irrelevant, indicating an underdeveloped thinking strategy that supports the inference process, such as the ability to ask questions, relate to context, and activate prior knowledge.

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) explain that inferential skills require cognitive activities at the analysis and evaluation levels. Putri et al. (2025) add that the application of active learning methods, such as SQ3R and Reciprocal Teaching, has been proven to improve this ability because it trains students to ask questions, make predictions, and review hypotheses about the content of the text. Improvements in inferential abilities can be achieved through repeated practice.

The results of the evaluative and appreciative indicators show the lowest achievement compared to other aspects. Only 7.1% of students were able to assess the characters' actions or relate moral messages to personal experiences logically and reasonably. Most students provided descriptive answers that tended to repeat the content of the text without showing any process of reflection or personal assessment. This condition indicates that learning activities still lack space for the development of reader response, which is the interaction between the reader and the text that fosters the ability to appreciate and evaluate the content of the reading.

The findings in this evaluative aspect are reinforced by the results of research conducted by Aisyah et al. (2024), which explains that students' abilities in the evaluative aspect can be improved, among other things, by implementing learning that facilitates students to be able to relate the content or context of the reading text to the students' real experiences, for example by conducting reflective discussions. Based on this, when students are able to connect the concepts being studied with concepts they already possess, it will involve the students' emotional attachment.

As revealed in research conducted by Intang et al. (2024), the use of locally-based teaching materials will strengthen students' emotional involvement and will have an impact on the growth and formation of appreciation for the content of the reading.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that learning media developed with reference to local culture has the potential to improve and develop students' ability to evaluate and appreciate text content because the values presented are closer and more relevant to students' daily lives.

2. Document Review Results

Based on the results of document analysis, particularly in the Indonesian language teaching module for grade V, it was found that the teaching tools created by teachers already included the main components that must be present in a lesson plan, such as module identity, learning objectives, learning activities, and assessment.

However, in terms of substance, there were still several things that needed to be improved and enhanced so that they could be used more optimally, especially to support the development of student literacy in learning. The material included in the module does not fully describe the concept of in-depth understanding, and the learning strategies are still general in nature, not focused on developing students' higher-order thinking skills.

The use of learning media listed in the module and to be used in learning is still limited and does not show a variety of media. The reading sources used by teachers still rely on textbooks, without involving other additional media that can foster students' interest and motivation to learn, as well as connect the material being studied with the students' social and cultural environment. This condition causes learning to tend to be less contextual and does not fully facilitate the development of literacy skills, especially in understanding and writing narrative texts.

These findings are in line with the results of research by Juliati, Afendi, and Sutisno (2025), which states that Indonesian language learning tools at the elementary school level often do not provide adequate space for developing critical and reflective thinking skills in students. Therefore, teaching modules need to be improved by adding reading and writing activities rooted in the local cultural context so that students can construct meaning in a more meaningful way.

3. Learning Observation Results

Observations of Indonesian language teaching at SD Negeri 1 Darmaraja show that teachers have implemented teaching systematically in accordance with the preliminary, core, and concluding stages, and demonstrate good mastery of the material. However, the teaching process is still conventional and tends to be teacher-centered. Learning activities still do not show active student involvement. Most students only focus on answering literal questions from the reading text without engaging in deep reasoning. The learning strategies applied do not fully encourage the development of students' critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills.

The use of learning media in learning activities is still limited. Teachers do not make sufficient use of visual and digital media that can attract students' interest and help them understand the reading material better. The limitations of the learning media used by teachers result in an ineffective learning process where students tend to be passive and unenthusiastic. The media used only consists of images that, upon examination, do not contain cultural components or elements, even though incorporating cultural elements into learning would serve as a good bridge between the learning experience in the classroom and the daily lives of students.

The results of this classroom observation are also supported by research conducted by Intang et al. (2024), which explains that locally-based teaching materials used in learning will increase students' motivation and desire to learn, as well as improve their comprehension skills because they will feel closer to the content of the stories being studied.

Based on this, one of the efforts that can be made to improve the learning process is to develop more interactive learning media that highlights local culture as a reflection of the students' socio-cultural environment. This type of media is expected to help increase students' active involvement because it is more meaningful, deepens their understanding, and also fosters their thinking skills.

4. Teacher Interview Results

Interviews with several fifth-grade teachers provided an overview of Indonesian language learning, particularly in terms of reading comprehension, as well as the obstacles and challenges faced by teachers.

The interviews revealed that students' reading comprehension skills are still low, even though teachers mentioned that reading comprehension is a basic competency that students must have, especially in language learning. However, in reality, it is still difficult for students to master this skill. Teachers mentioned that, if presented in percentages, around 60-70% of students still have difficulty understanding text content, finding main ideas, or writing coherent stories using correct spelling and punctuation. Meanwhile, only around 30-40% of students have been able to achieve the Learning Objective Completion Criteria (KKTP).

Previous results from document reviews and classroom observations, which mentioned that the use of learning media was still limited, were reinforced by teachers' statements that the media used so far was still limited to textbooks, pictures, or simple videos

available on YouTube. These media did have an impact at the beginning of reading lessons, but their use was still not routine and did not really suit the needs and learning characteristics of students. Although teachers rarely incorporate local cultural elements into their teaching, they believe that doing so is one way to instill and foster character values and students' love for the local culture.

The findings from these interviews are in line with the results of research conducted by Puspita et al. (2023), which shows that literacy activities in schools have not been optimal in increasing students' interest in reading because learning media based on local culture is still very limited.

Based on the results of reading comprehension tests, classroom observations, document analysis, and interviews with several fifth-grade teachers, it appears that the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade elementary school students are generally at a moderate to low level. Most students are only able to answer questions that require explicit information, while their skills in reorganization, inference, and evaluation-appreciation are underdeveloped. This condition indicates that the Indonesian language learning process is not yet fully oriented and focused on developing higher-order thinking skills, which are at the core of reading literacy.

Findings from classroom observations show that even though teachers have implemented all stages quite well, the learning process is still dominated by teachers and is still conventional. The use of learning media is still limited to textbooks, without the support of contextual learning resources that attract students' attention. The results of interviews with teachers also support these findings, with around 60-70% of students still experiencing difficulties in understanding the content of reading texts in a coherent and in-depth manner.

Therefore, the low reading comprehension skills of students are not only related to individual factors but are also influenced by learning approaches and the use of learning media that have not been able to foster creative and reflective thinking skills.

Reading comprehension is a higher-order thinking skill because it requires individuals to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from the text they read. Barret categorizes reading comprehension into five aspects of understanding: literal, reorganization, inferential, evaluative, and appreciative. This classification indicates that reading is an individual's ability to understand and critically assess the content of a text, not just recognize the symbols of words. Furthermore, reading comprehension skills at the elementary school level play an important role as a foundation that affects whether or not students succeed in their studies.

The 2023 ANBK results show that the literacy skills of elementary school students in Indonesia are still relatively low, with more students falling into the categories of needing special and basic intervention than those who have reached the proficient or advanced levels. Questions that require the ability to interpret and evaluate the content of reading texts are the biggest challenge that causes students to still achieve low results. This condition shows that students find it easier to understand information that is explicit rather than implicit and requires evaluation of the content of the reading.

Students' reading comprehension skills can be improved through the use of learning strategies that are tailored to their needs and characteristics. Various learning strategies, such as SQ3R, Reciprocal Teaching, and Problem-Based Learning, have been proven to help students understand implicit reading, ask questions, and relate the content of the reading to their personal experiences.

Reading comprehension skills can be developed and improved if teachers are able to use learning strategies that suit the characteristics of their students. Various strategies, such as SQ3R, Reciprocal Teaching, and Problem-Based Learning, have been proven effective in helping students actively discover meaning, ask questions, and connect the content of the text to their personal experiences (Putri et al., 2025; Juliati et al., 2025). In addition, another thing that must be considered is the selection of learning media. The media used should be relevant to students' daily lives so that in the learning process, students feel that reading is more real, interesting, and meaningful.

Efforts to improve reading comprehension cannot be done solely through practice questions, but must involve a learning approach that touches on the cognitive, affective, and cultural aspects of students. Literacy needs to be viewed as a social and cultural activity that connects the learning process with students' real experiences in their daily lives. Therefore, the development of culture-based learning media is a strategic step in creating Indonesian language learning that is more contextual, meaningful, and relevant to the students' world.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade elementary school students are in the moderate to low category. Of the 28 students who were the subjects of the study, none achieved the excellent category, while more than half (57.2%) were classified in the poor and very poor categories. These findings show that students'

abilities are still predominantly at the literal level, which is limited to recognizing the information explicitly stated in the text. At the reorganization, inferential, and evaluative-appreciative levels, most students were unable to reorganize information, draw implied meanings, or provide reflective assessments of the reading content.

Analysis of the learning process indicates that reading activities in the classroom are still often dominated by the teacher and do not fully encourage active student participation. In addition, the use of learning media is still limited to student textbooks, which does not sufficiently stimulate students' critical and creative thinking skills. Interviews with teachers reinforce that the limitations of contextual media and low reading interest are the main obstacles in improving students' understanding of narrative texts.

Therefore, improving reading comprehension skills needs to be done through learning that focuses on higher-order thinking activities and the use of media that is meaningful to students. The integration of local cultural contexts, such as Sundanese culture, can be an effective strategy because it provides reading materials that are close to students' lives and social values. Thus, Indonesian language learning in elementary schools is expected to not only focus on text mastery but also foster reflective and appreciative abilities and a love of literacy as part of a lifelong learning culture.

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