

READING COMPREHENSION BARRIERS AND TEACHER INTERVENTIONS : A STUDY OF GRADE 7 STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI 1 KANDANGSERANG

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the reading comprehension barriers experienced by seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang and examines the efforts made by teachers to address these challenges. The research used a qualitative case study approach involving interviews, classroom observations, and documentation to obtain a complete picture of students' difficulties. The findings show that students struggle mainly with limited vocabulary, weak grammatical understanding, difficulty identifying main ideas, lack of impactful reading strategies, and low motivation toward reading. These problems are reinforced by external factors, such as limited exposure to English outside the classroom, reading materials that do not match students' ability levels, a translation-centered learning approach, limited access to learning media, and an unsupportive literacy environment at school and at home. The study also reveals that teachers have applied several strategies to overcome these obstacles, including the use of contextual reading materials, gradual vocabulary and comprehension support, small-group reading activities, visual and audio media, and emotional encouragement during learning. In addition, the study underlines the importance of combining productive teaching strategies, adequate learning resources, and a supportive reading environment to improve students' reading comprehension and foster long-term literacy development.

Keywords: *reading comprehension, learning barriers, vocabulary, reading strategies, teacher intervention, junior high school*

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INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a key skill in the learning process, especially at the junior high school level (Setiawati&Budiasih, 2021). For seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang, this skill serves as the foundation for understanding material from various subjects. However, in practice many students still struggle to fully comprehend texts. This situation indicates that reading comprehension barriers remain a problem that requires special attention in the English language learning process.

According to Hezam et al (2022) that students' reading comprehension challenges can manifest in various ways. Some students struggle with vocabulary, while others struggle with connecting main ideas within a text. Still others struggle to identify explicit and implicit information, resulting in a failure to grasp the overall meaning of a text. These diverse

challenges show that reading comprehension is not simply a matter of language skills but also involves complex cognitive processes.

These types of barriers can generally be grouped into several categories, such as linguistic barriers, cognitive barriers, motivational barriers, and barriers related to reading strategies (Ecker, 2022). Linguistic barriers relate to limited mastery of vocabulary and sentence structure. Cognitive barriers include poor information processing skills, such as finding the main idea or making inferences. Meanwhile, motivational barriers arise when students lack interest or a strong drive to learn. Finally, barriers to reading strategies occur when students lack knowledge of the appropriate techniques or steps for understanding text.

The causes of reading difficulties vary. Limited learning environments, lack of access to reading materials, and suboptimal teaching methods can all impair students' comprehension. Additionally, family background, poor reading habits, and a lack of support in developing literacy interests also contribute to these difficulties. Internal factors such as low self confidence or anxiety about learning English can also impact students' reading comprehension performance. People who have difficulty reading and writing certainly exhibit phonological disorders, which suggests that difficulties can stem not only from motivation and environment, but also from cognitive processing challenges that affect how students decipher and understand text (Stein, 2022).

Facing these various obstacles, the teacher's role is crucial in providing appropriate interventions. These efforts can include providing visual or audio media, using a variety of reading strategies, providing individual guidance, and simplifying texts. In line with this, Nguyen (2022) states that teachers often apply techniques such as questioning, predicting, retelling, and picturing to support students during reading activities, and underline that the majority of the students gave enough feedback on the tactics used by their teachers. Teachers also strive to foster student motivation by creating an engaging and supportive learning environment. Appropriate interventions not only help students overcome their obstacles but can also improve long term literacy skills.

This study aims to identify barriers to reading comprehension experienced by seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang and analyze teachers' efforts to address them. By understanding the types of barriers and their contributing factors, this study is expected to provide a clearer picture of student needs and impactful strategies that can be implemented in learning. These findings are expected to contribute to improving reading instruction practices in junior high schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies have shown that a lack of exposure to English outside the classroom is one of the factors that most often hinders students' reading comprehension. Fitriah et al. (2025) state that language learners need consistent contact with texts to develop vocabulary and the ability to comprehend ideas. In many schools, including junior high schools, students only interact with English texts during lessons. This situation slows down the development of their reading skills. When students are not accustomed to reading at home or in their environment, the learning process in the classroom does not have a maximum impact.

Educational literature also emphasizes the importance of matching text difficulty to student abilities. According to Namaziandost et al. (2022), reading material that is too difficult can decrease motivation and cause anxiety, while material that is too easy does not provide meaningful skill development. In the context of 7th grade junior high school students, the

diversity of reading abilities is often not matched by the variety of materials used by teachers. This mismatch causes many students to feel overwhelmed when asked to read English texts. Ultimately, their comprehension of the reading content is severely limited.

Several studies have shown that a translation oriented learning approach negatively impacts students' reading skills. Apfani & Tulljanah (2025) explain that reading involves more than simply converting words into a native language, but also understanding the context, main ideas, and relationships between parts of a text. However, in many English classes, students are still directed to translate word for word. This method causes students to lose focus on the overall meaning of the text. This results in their reading comprehension skills not developing optimally.

Modern educational literature emphasizes the crucial role of diverse learning media in enhancing students' reading interest and skills. Huseynli (2024) states that the use of authentic media such as stories, articles, and digital materials can help students understand language in real world contexts. However, many schools face limitations in providing engaging and age appropriate reading resources. Without diverse media, reading activities tend to be monotonous and unmotivating for students. This contributes to low reading interest and comprehension of English texts.

Research on literacy shows that the learning environment has a significant influence on students' reading habits and abilities. Aryani & Purnomo (2023) stated that students will be more motivated to read if they are in an environment that values literacy activities. At school, this support can take the form of a conducive classroom atmosphere or opportunities for independent reading. At home, family support is also crucial for developing reading habits. When the learning environment does not provide sufficient encouragement, students tend to view reading as a burdensome task rather than a rewarding activity.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research employed a qualitative case study design to explore the obstacles faced by grade VII students in understanding English reading texts at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang. This approach was selected because it provides the depth needed to examine students' experiences, perceptions, and real challenges during the reading process, supporting Creswell's (2021) view that qualitative methods are suitable for understanding complex educational issues. The study focused on identifying the main difficulties students encounter, examining the linguistic and non-linguistic factors that contribute to these problems, and describing the strategies used by teachers to address them. Data were drawn from interviews with students and English teachers, classroom observations, and documentation such as worksheets, textbooks, LKS, and assessment results, allowing for a comprehensive picture of the reading challenges. Data collection included participatory observation of reading activities in English classes, in-depth interviews designed to explore students' and teachers' perspectives on reading difficulties, and analysis of documents that reflected students' performance and teachers' instructional practices.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, several validation techniques were used, including source triangulation to compare information from different informants and documents, extended participation through repeated classroom visits, and member checking by sharing transcripts and preliminary interpretations with participants. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (2014), beginning with data reduction to organize and refine information related to vocabulary limitations, grammatical understanding, and reading strategies. The next stage involved presenting the data in narrative and thematic

descriptions to clarify patterns and relationships. The final step was drawing and verifying conclusions to ensure the interpretations accurately reflected the students' reading comprehension obstacles and the factors influencing them.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Drawing on insights gathered through interviews, classroom observations, and supporting documentation from grade VII students and English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang, the analysis reveals several interconnected findings that directly address the stated research problems and form the basis for the following discussion.

Types of Obstacles

Students' difficulty in understanding English reading texts can be seen through several interrelated issues that influence how they process meaning, respond to linguistic features, and engage with the reading material. These problems, which appeared consistently in classroom observations and student explanations, show that reading comprehension is not shaped by a single factor, but by the interaction between vocabulary knowledge, grammatical understanding, strategic reading behavior, and students' motivation. Together, these elements create a pattern that explains why many learners struggle to grasp the meaning of a text even after repeated reading. As expressed by two students, they stated what difficulties they faced when reading English content:

"I often have trouble reading English texts because there are many words I've never seen before. If there's a word I don't know, I just guess. " (S, 2025)

"When reading texts, I often pause for a long time on a sentence because I don't understand the meaning." (A, 2025)

A major issue that emerges in students' reading comprehension is their limited vocabulary, which often prevents them from understanding sentences as a complete unit of meaning. When students do not recognize key words, they tend to guess or focus only on isolated terms, which disrupts their ability to follow the writer's ideas. Limited vocabulary also affects how they interpret grammatical patterns, since understanding a sentence depends not only on knowing the structure but also on understanding the words that fill that structure. This is supported by Rahmani (2023), who showed that repetition and reading are the most productive ways to memorize words, expressions, and collocations, and that many learners rely on strategies such as memorization and using dictionaries to help. As a result, they struggle to connect ideas, identify relationships between clauses, and grasp the overall message of a text.

These difficulties usually stem from minimal exposure to English outside the classroom and from classroom practices that do not provide enough vocabulary enrichment or repeated encounters with new words. without adequate tools and strategies, learners may struggle to interpret meaning accurately (Chowdhary, 2020). Therefore, insufficient vocabulary instruction and limited exposure hinder students' ability to connect ideas, identify relationships between clauses, and understand the overall message of a text (Chowdhary, 2020).

Closely related to vocabulary problems is students' inability to understand sentence structure and grammar, which makes it hard for them to interpret how ideas are organized within a text.

“When there's a long sentence, I often stop in the middle because I don't know how the meaning connects to the rest. So I end up guessing, and I often get it wrong.”
(B, 2025)

When students cannot recognize how clauses connect, how tenses signal time, or how grammatical markers show relationships between subjects, actions, and objects, they lose the logical flow of the sentence. This inability often leads them to read in fragments, relying on individual words rather than understanding how the parts work together to create meaning. Which weakens the cognitive effort needed to process sentence structure independently (Zhai et. al., 2024). The problem usually arises because students have limited practice analyzing sentences in meaningful contexts, and grammar teaching in class may focus more on memorizing rules than on applying them in actual reading. As Listia and Febriyanti (2020) note, that lack of mastery of grammatical forms directly affects comprehension. As a result, students struggle to identify cause and effect relationships, comparisons, descriptions, and other patterns that help them make sense of a text.

Another difficulty involves identifying main ideas and important information in texts. Like how these two students state that they focus on small details or unfamiliar words instead of recognizing the central message the writer wants to convey.

“When reading English texts, I often struggle to find the main idea. I end up focusing on words I don't understand, so I end up forgetting what I'm trying to understand.”
(S, 2025)

“I often read slowly because I'm afraid of misinterpreting a word. So I stop at every unfamiliar word, I just read without understanding the purpose of the text. It's stressful because it feels like it's pointless to read and still not grasp the meaning.”
(B, 2025)

This difficulty often appears because they have not developed the habit of distinguishing between essential and supporting information, and they may not understand how topic sentences, repeated key terms, or transitions help signal the main point. Without this skill, students read passively and miss the overall purpose of the passage, which leads to confusion and an incomplete understanding of the content. These challenges are usually linked to limited reading practice, insufficient guidance on text-organization features, and a tendency to rely on word level comprehension rather than idea level processing. This result is in line with Ekorini (2020), who found that many students experience similar problems, stating that they could not determine the main idea of the passage because mostly they did not understand the vocabulary used in the text, and that difficulties are also related to factors such as low interest in reading and poor reading strategies.

Students also tend to lack impactful reading strategies such as scanning and skimming, which are essential for locating information quickly and gaining a general understanding before reading in depth

“I often get confused when reading English texts. I usually read slowly, word by word, because I'm afraid I'll miss something. But that takes too long, and I end up not understanding the story.” (N, 2025)

“When it comes to reading tests, I often panic because I read everything slowly from beginning to end. I don't know how to find information quickly, and sometimes I don't get the answer because I don't know which part is important.” (S, 2025)

There are students who read every sentence slowly and with equal attention, which causes them to miss the purpose of the text and spend too much time on parts that are not essential. Without strategies like scanning to locate specific information or skimming to get a general idea, they struggle to build an initial understanding before moving to deeper reading. This lack of strategic reading usually comes from limited exposure to different types of texts and from classroom practices that focus more on translating than on guiding students to read with a clear goal. As a result, students approach reading passively, relying only on word by word decoding rather than using techniques that help them process information more efficiently. This aligns with the statement by Mambua (2020) who explains that skimming and scanning techniques are productive in improving students' reading comprehension, underlining their role in supporting purposeful reading. Similarly, Shidiq et al. (2024) argue that skimming and scanning are important for saving time and reading wisely, reinforcing the need for students to adopt these strategies in academic contexts.

Low motivation to read further intensifies these comprehension problems. Many students view English texts as difficult and boring, which makes them less willing to engage with the material. Like how these students state that they just want to stop and lose enthusiasm when they read English content.

“When I read English texts, I often get tired quickly. It feels really difficult and gives me a headache. I usually want to stop immediately if I come across a word I don't know the meaning of.” (D, 2025)

“I find reading English texts boring. Sometimes the material isn't interesting and it's really long. I often lose enthusiasm because I feel like it's going to be difficult.” (G, 2025)

When students approach reading with this mindset, they are less willing to engage with the material, and they tend to give up quickly when they encounter unfamiliar words or complex sentences. This is consistent with Zhou (2025), who notes that there is a significant negative correlation between reading enjoyment and perceived material difficulty, showing that students lose motivation when texts feel too challenging. This low motivation is often linked to limited positive reading experiences, a lack of interesting or level appropriate materials, and classroom activities that emphasize accuracy over enjoyment. Similar concerns are reflected in Johansson (2023), who states that students frequently perceive reading as difficult and a little bit boring, which affects their willingness to engage with texts. As a result, students see reading as a stressful task rather than a meaningful activity that can help them learn. This attitude reduces the amount of time they spend reading, which in turn limits their progress and reinforces the idea that English texts are too demanding.

Factors Causing Reading Obstacles

From the interview results, the teacher revealed that there were several factors that caused students to experience difficulties in reading. Lack of exposure to English reading outside the classroom clearly has a significant impact on students' ability to comprehend reading (Samosir, 2022). When students are limited to reading in the school environment, the process of getting used to new vocabulary becomes slow. This causes students to feel less confident when they have to read English texts in different situations. If they rarely read outside of class, their ability to absorb information and expand their knowledge also stagnates. After conducting class observations, the researchers conducted interviews with 2 students from grade 7 to strengthen their data. They are N and D, so they're said that :

"I rarely read English texts outside of class, so when I have reading assignments at school, I often feel less confident. A lot of the vocabulary is also new because I'm not used to it." (N, 2025)

Another student also said :

"If I read every day, like articles or short stories in English, it becomes easier for me to understand sentence patterns. I also feel more fluent when taking reading tests at school." (D, 2025)

The interview results stated a clear difference between student A and student B. Student A rarely reads English-language materials, making it difficult for him to follow the class. Meanwhile, student B diligently reads English-language materials, making it easier for him to follow the class. According to Daniels (2023) that students need regular practice in their daily lives, such as reading storybooks, articles, or even just looking at English bulletin boards. By making reading a habit outside of class, students will become familiar with various sentence patterns, terms, and contexts. This will ultimately impact their fluency when facing exams or reading assignments at school. Therefore, it is important to encourage the creation of an environment that facilitates the habit of reading as a recreational and sustainable activity outside of formal school hours.

Using reading materials that are not appropriate for students' ability levels can be a major obstacle in learning to read. When students are presented with reading materials that are too difficult, they can become frustrated and ultimately lose interest in learning (Novak et al, 2022). Conversely, reading materials that are too easy also do not challenge them to develop. Teachers also revealed that limited material choices make it difficult for them to tailor texts to each student's needs. As a result, reading becomes a barrier for most students, rather than an engaging activity. In this regard, teachers need to recognize students' abilities so they can provide appropriate texts that are not too challenging and still motivate them to study harder. By paying attention to the appropriateness of the material, students more easily understand the content of the reading and learn gradually.

After conducting class observations, the researchers conducted interviews with 2 students from grade 7 to strengthen their data. They are G and A, so they're said that :

"I often find it difficult when the reading is too difficult, so sometimes I don't want to read. But if the text is appropriate, I understand it more quickly and become enthusiastic about learning." (G, 2025)

Another student also said :

"If the reading is too easy, I get bored quickly. I like it when teachers give me appropriate reading material, so I feel challenged but still understand." (A, 2025)

The data shows that when learning materials are not aligned with students' ability levels, it results in a decrease in their enthusiasm for learning in class. This also creates a more comfortable learning environment because students feel capable of completing the assigned tasks. If reading materials are aligned with students' abilities, they will be more enthusiastic about participating in reading lessons (Ekayani, 2023).

Interview results indicate that the learning process still focuses heavily on literal translation of sentences, rather than on understanding the overall content of the text. This method makes students accustomed to viewing reading as a word by word translation task,

rather than as a process of understanding meaning (Asâ et al, 2021). As a result, they struggle to grasp the main idea, inferences, or relationships between paragraphs in a reading. The researchers also conducted interviews with 2 students from grade 7 to strengthen their data. They are N and Z, they're said that :

"When I read English texts, I usually translate them word for word. This makes it difficult to understand the content, and I often don't know the main idea." (N,2025)

Another student also said :

"The teacher often asked us to translate sentences, so I rarely used reading strategies. Sometimes I didn't understand the relationship between the paragraphs." (Z, 2025)

From the interview results, the researchers stated that the classroom learning process has a significant impact on students. If teachers do not plan it well, the students will be the victims. Mekuria (2024) states that learning practices that underemphasize reading strategies also prevent students from developing reading skills. Teachers recognize that this approach does little to help students develop critical thinking skills in reading, often resulting in them missing the meaning of the text they are trying to understand.

According to Abi et al (2023) that the limited availability of learning media, such as storybooks, authentic texts, and digital access, poses a significant obstacle to developing students' reading skills. Schools do not provide an adequate variety of reading materials, leaving students with limited text choices to explore. The researchers also conducted interviews with 2 students from grade 7 to strengthen their data. They are Z and B, they're said that :

"I often get bored when reading because the books available are always the same. Sometimes I want to read something different, but there aren't many choices at school." (B,2025)

Another student also said :

"The teacher said we should read a lot, but the library has few books. There are no apps or digital reading materials, so it's hard for us to find interesting texts." (Z,2025)

From the results of the interview, the researchers stated that the limited number of English reading books provided by schools for their students has a profound impact on students' interest in reading. Limited access to modern reading resources, such as reading apps or e-books, also prevents students from becoming familiar with the various types of texts that could help them develop (Xodabande&Hashemi, 2023). Teachers have stated that this makes reading monotonous and less engaging for students. When learning resources are limited, students' opportunities to expand their knowledge through reading are also severely limited.

An unsupportive learning environment, both at school and at home, contributes to students' reading difficulties. At school, the classroom atmosphere is sometimes less conducive to independent reading or group discussions, making students feel uncomfortable when trying to comprehend what they read. Meanwhile, at home, many students lack a reading habit because their family environment provides little support or motivation (Collins, 2023). The lack of a literacy culture around them means that reading is not seen as important (Jabbar et al, 2021). In this discussion, the researchers also conducted interviews with two 7th grade students to strengthen their data. They are N and A, who said that :

"In my class, there's rarely any group reading, so when I read alone, I sometimes feel confused and embarrassed to ask questions. At home, no one reads, either, so I'm not used to it." (A, 2025)

Another student also said :

"The classroom wasn't comfortable for reading, and it was often noisy. There wasn't any encouragement to read at home, so I rarely practiced comprehending English texts." (N, 2025)

From the interview results above, the researchers defined that a comfortable environment will make the learning process more conducive. An interest in English is influenced by the environment in which a person lives. As a result, students do not develop a habit of reading regularly, which directly impacts their ability to comprehend English texts. Teachers and schools need to create a welcoming environment, for example by providing reading corners in the classroom, shared reading sessions, or reading discussion groups. Greenleaf et al (2023) stated that support from the surrounding environment helps students get used to reading and share their understanding of texts. A conducive environment is an important foundation for building a sustainable reading habit.

Teacher Efforts in Overcoming Reading Obstacles

A contextual approach helps students connect reading content to their everyday experiences, making comprehension easier and more meaningful. Setyowati & Sukmawan (2018) explain that learning materials linked to real life contexts reduce students' cognitive load because they can interpret information more naturally. When teachers provide simple texts that reflect students' daily activities, students process language more efficiently and can focus on understanding the message rather than struggling with unfamiliar vocabulary or sentence structures. This is supported by Yuliana (2020), who states that context based materials increase students' engagement and motivation to read. Such an approach is especially impactful for beginner learners who require additional support to understand basic elements of reading.

This idea is reinforced by Mr. R, a seventh grade English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang. He explained,

"A contextual approach is very helpful for students in comprehending reading. When the reading materials are related to their daily activities, students understand the content more easily and do not get overwhelmed."

He further added that using simple and familiar texts allows students to concentrate on the meaning of the passage instead of being stuck on language difficulties.

According to him, *"Context based texts can also increase students' motivation and interest in reading, especially for beginner learners who still need support in understanding basic reading structures."*

In addition to contextual materials, teachers also provide vocabulary and reading comprehension exercises in gradual stages. This strategy helps students build their reading abilities step by step from simple to more complex tasks. According to Tang (2020), systematic vocabulary learning forms a strong foundation that enables students to understand texts more deeply. Similarly, Hidayati (2016) emphasizes that scaffolding through tiered reading activities

prevents students from being confronted with texts that are too difficult at the beginning. With clear stages, students gain confidence and can gradually expand their reading skills. This approach is especially beneficial for students who still have limited vocabulary mastery.

In addition to contextual instruction, Mr. R states the importance of providing vocabulary and reading comprehension exercises in gradual stages. According to him,

“Vocabulary and reading comprehension exercises in stages are very helpful for students, especially those with limited vocabulary.”

He explained that systematic vocabulary mastery prepares students to understand texts better. He also added that tiered exercises function as scaffolding, preventing students from being confronted with overly difficult material at the beginning.

“With clear stages, students gain confidence and allow their reading skills to develop gradually,”

He noted. This aligns with Tang (2020) and Hidayati (2016), who both argue that structured, step by step support is essential for building strong foundations in reading comprehension, particularly for beginner learners.

Another effort implemented by teachers is encouraging students to read and discuss texts in small groups. This strategy helps students improve comprehension through collaboration and shared understanding. Gillies (2016) defines that cooperative learning allows students to process texts more actively through discussion with their peers. Similarly, Nugraha & Suparno (2019) stated that small group interaction encourages students to clarify difficult parts of the text to one another, resulting in a negotiation of meaning that strengthens comprehension. This is supported by a teacher interviewed in this study, who stated,

“Encouraging students to read and discuss in small groups significantly improves their comprehension.”

He further noted that students become more active in asking questions and explaining unclear parts of the reading to each other. Students who are usually reluctant to speak in large classes also become more confident in smaller groups. Therefore, he considers group discussions a productive strategy for overcoming reading difficulties and enhancing students' comprehension.

Moreover, the use of visual and audio media also plays a significant role in helping students understand reading content. These media present information in a more concrete and engaging way, making complex ideas easier to grasp. Susanti (2017) states that visual media can clarify concepts that may be difficult to understand when presented solely through text. Salihatul (2021) also states that multimedia such as images, videos, or audio can increase students' motivation and strengthen their retention of information. By activating multiple cognitive channels, visual and audio media help students make stronger connections between the content of the text and the supporting visuals. With appropriate media support, students are better able to overcome comprehension challenges posed by complex reading materials.

In an interview, the teacher further explained that the use of visual and audio media greatly supported students' comprehension during reading activities. He stated,

“The use of visual and audio media significantly helps students understand the content of the reading. Images, videos, or audio recordings make information more concrete, making it easier for students to grasp the meaning of the text.”

He added that certain concepts in reading are often difficult for students to understand when explained verbally alone ; therefore, the media can help clarify and reinforce the material. His explanation aligns with previous research underlining the importance of multimodal input in improving students’ understanding of complex texts.

Besides media use, teachers also employ emotional support and positive reinforcement to create a comfortable and encouraging learning environment. Providing praise and reassurance plays an important role in reducing students’ fear of making mistakes, especially during reading tasks. Dewaele & Li (2021) defined that teacher support significantly influences students’ positive emotions and helps lower anxiety in language learning. When students feel appreciated and emotionally supported, they are more willing to challenge themselves with difficult texts without worrying about judgment. Similarly, Setiyadi (2020) states that positive encouragement from teachers boosts students’ motivation, leading to better reading performance and more active participation. A supportive classroom climate is particularly crucial for students who still lack confidence in their reading abilities.

The teacher also states the motivational impact of multimedia on students’ reading engagement. He noted,

“Students become more engaged and motivated when learning involves multimedia.”

In his view, visual and audio materials activate multiple senses, making it easier for students to remember and connect the information they see with the content of the text. He added that with appropriate media support, many of the comprehension barriers students face especially when dealing with complex reading materials can be significantly reduced. This perspective reinforces the idea that combining emotional support with multimodal learning tools can impactfully help students overcome reading difficulties.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kandangserang still experience significant obstacles in understanding English reading texts. The main difficulties come from limited vocabulary, lack of grammatical understanding, inability to identify the main idea, and unfamiliarity with impactful reading strategies. These internal obstacles are strengthened by external factors such as limited exposure to English outside the classroom, learning materials that do not match students’ ability levels, a translation-focused approach, limited availability of reading media, and a learning environment that does not yet support literacy development.

To address these problems, teachers have taken several meaningful steps, including selecting contextual reading materials related to students’ daily lives, providing vocabulary and comprehension exercises gradually, applying small group reading discussions, using visual and audio media, and giving continuous emotional support and encouragement. These efforts have helped increase students’ confidence, motivation, and participation in reading activities.

As a whole, improving students’ reading comprehension requires consistent collaboration. Teachers need to continue adapting learning strategies, schools must provide

varied and engaging reading resources, and families can help build reading habits at home. With these supports, students are expected to develop stronger comprehension skills and a more positive attitude toward reading in the future.

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