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THE EVALUATION OF INTENSIVE READING INSTRUCTION AT FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Intensive reading instruction plays a crucial role in developing elementary students' basic literacy. However, its effectiveness is often inadequately evaluated due to limited instruments that capture both learning processes and outcomes. This study aims to analyze the quality of intensive reading instruction through the integration of classroom observation and standardized tests as a holistic evaluation strategy. A mixed-methods approach with a convergent parallel design was employed, where qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and then integrated. Participants included 12 fifth-grade students and one teacher, selected through purposive sampling for the teacher and total sampling for students. Qualitative data were gathered via structured observations and semi-structured interviews, while quantitative data were obtained through standardized reading tests. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns of interaction, reading strategies, and student engagement, while quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using averages and score distributions. The findings indicate that learning effectiveness is influenced by consistent reading strategies, clear objectives, and varied literacy activities. The integration of both data types provides a comprehensive and accurate evaluation of instructional quality, offering valuable insights for improving literacy practices in elementary education.

Keywords: *Classroom observation, Intensive reading, Instructional evaluation, Mixed Methods*

ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran membaca intensif merupakan komponen penting dalam pengembangan literasi dasar siswa sekolah dasar. Namun, efektivitas pelaksanaannya sering belum dievaluasi secara menyeluruh karena keterbatasan instrumen dan pendekatan yang mampu menangkap aspek proses dan hasil belajar secara bersamaan sekaligus. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis kualitas pembelajaran membaca intensif secara mendalam melalui integrasi observasi kelas dan tes standar sebagai strategi evaluasi holistik. Penelitian menggunakan mixed methods dengan desain convergent parallel, di mana data kualitatif dan kuantitatif dikumpulkan secara simultan, dianalisis terpisah, dan kemudian dikonvergensikan untuk memperoleh gambaran evaluatif mendalam. Partisipan terdiri dari 12 siswa kelas 5 SD dan 1 guru. Teknik sampling: purposive untuk guru dan total sampling untuk siswa. Data kualitatif diperoleh melalui observasi kelas

terstruktur dan wawancara semi-terstruktur, sedangkan data kuantitatif melalui tes standar membaca. Analisis kualitatif dilakukan dengan thematic analysis untuk mengidentifikasi pola interaksi, strategi membaca, dan keterlibatan siswa, sedangkan data kuantitatif dianalisis secara deskriptif, termasuk rata-rata dan distribusi skor. Hasil menunjukkan efektivitas pembelajaran dipengaruhi konsistensi strategi membaca, kejelasan tujuan, dan variasi aktivitas literasi. Integrasi kedua jenis data menghasilkan temuan saling melengkapi, memberikan gambaran akurat mengenai kualitas pembelajaran membaca intensif, serta menjadi rujukan penting bagi guru dan pengambil kebijakan untuk meningkatkan praktik literasi di sekolah dasar.
Kata Kunci: Evaluasi pembelajaran, Membaca intensif, Mixed Methods, Observasi kelas

1. Introduction

Reading ability is the main foundation for student learning success at the elementary level. Reading is not only understood as the ability to recognize words or understand literal information, but also includes inferential, critical, and evaluative skills that enable students to interpret, integrate, and assess information in depth. Recent research shows that reading skills developed in elementary school are significantly related to long-term academic success, higher-order thinking skills, and readiness for cross-curricular learning (Oakhill et al., 2020; Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Follmer & Sperling, 2023).

Intensive reading instruction is viewed as a strategic approach to strengthening basic literacy because it emphasizes students' active engagement in deep text comprehension through gradual practice, modeling of reading strategies, higher-order thinking questions, and ongoing monitoring of comprehension. Recent meta-analyses show that reading instruction that explicitly teaches comprehension strategies, such as making inferences, asking questions, and summarizing text content, has a significant effect on improving the reading comprehension of elementary school students (Ueno et al., 2022; Okkinga et al., 2021; Cervetti et al., 2020).

In the context of the national curriculum, reading literacy is one of the key competencies in the Pancasila Student Profile that must be developed systematically and continuously. Intensive reading instruction is expected to foster meaningful reading habits and build the ability to understand texts that are relevant to students' real lives. Globally, international assessments such as PIRLS and PISA also confirm that the ability to understand texts from an early age is an important predictor of academic success in later education (Mullis et al., 2023; OECD, 2023).

However, various studies show that the implementation of intensive reading learning in elementary schools still faces a number of challenges. Many teachers have not consistently applied intensive reading strategies, such as close reading, exploration of text structure and meaning, and in-depth discussion of comprehension. Reading instruction often takes place procedurally and is oriented towards completing the material, without providing adequate space for deepening the meaning of the text and developing students' critical thinking skills (Duke et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2022; Filderman et al., 2023).

These challenges are exacerbated by limited learning time, teachers' administrative burdens, and a lack of professional training focused on evidence-based literacy strategies. Recent studies show that the quality of reading instruction is greatly influenced by teachers' pedagogical competence in designing, implementing, and evaluating text-based learning (Reutzel et al., 2022; Lupo et al., 2023). Without adequate professional development support, teachers tend to rely on traditional methods that are less effective in improving students' reading comprehension.

In addition, the practice of reading assessment in elementary schools is still dominated by end-of-term test-based assessment. This type of assessment approach has not been able to capture the dynamics of the learning process that occurs in the classroom, such as the quality of teachers' questions, the intensity of student interaction with the text, and the level of student cognitive engagement during learning. In fact, research shows that the quality of the learning process has a strong relationship with student literacy achievement (Pianta et al., 2020; Connor et al., 2021).

The gap between process evaluation and learning outcomes is also reflected in previous studies that tend to highlight one aspect separately. Studies that focus on the learning process often do not directly link it to students' reading comprehension achievements, while learning outcome-based research tends to ignore the instructional quality that underlies these achievements (Shanahan et al., 2020; Goldman et al., 2022). As a result, the picture of the effectiveness of intensive reading learning becomes partial and less comprehensive.

Therefore, an evaluation approach that can simultaneously integrate process and learning outcome assessments is needed. The integration of classroom observation and standardized reading tests offers a more holistic evaluation approach. Classroom observation allows for the assessment of instructional strategies, interaction patterns, and student engagement, while standardized tests provide an objective measure of students' reading comprehension achievements (Brookhart & Nitko, 2023; Moss et al., 2021). The mixed methods approach is considered an appropriate methodological framework for combining these two types of data to produce a more valid and meaningful learning evaluation (Creswell & Creswell, 2021).

This study uses a mixed methods research design to measure students' intensive reading abilities. However, previous applications of these two data collection techniques alone do not provide evidence of mutually related impacts on reading skills. Researchers could consider using a descriptive research method as an alternative. Indicators observed in the classroom include teacher questioning strategies, student engagement, use of reading strategies, and depth of text discussion. Indicators in the intensive reading tests include literal comprehension, inferential understanding, critical evaluation, and summarization ability. Furthermore, to assess the relationship and impact of these two methods, analysis should be conducted not only in one class but across two or three classes. This approach allows the evaluation of how intensive reading test performance correlates with classroom behavior and instructional quality, providing a clearer picture of the effectiveness and interplay of observation and test-based assessment.

Based on this urgency, this study aims to analyze the quality of intensive reading instruction in elementary schools through the integration of classroom observation and standardized reading tests using a mixed methods approach. This study is expected to provide a comprehensive evaluative picture, explain the relationship between the learning process and students' reading comprehension achievement, and provide empirical contributions to the development of learning strategies and literacy policies at the elementary education level.

2. Method

This study used a mixed methods approach with a convergent parallel design, which allows qualitative and quantitative data to be collected simultaneously so that both types of data can be compared, linked, and integrated directly (Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2020). This design was chosen to obtain a more comprehensive evaluative picture of intensive reading learning. In the context of learning evaluation, the use of only one approach often results in partial information; therefore, the convergent parallel design is highly relevant because it is able to bring together two types of evidence equally to produce a stronger, triangulated, and layered understanding.

The research participants consisted of a classroom teacher who taught intensive reading material and twelve fifth-grade students who were involved in three learning sessions. The teacher was selected purposively, considering their teaching experience, involvement in the school literacy program, and willingness to implement intensive reading strategies. Meanwhile, students were selected as a source of learning achievement data through standardized tests that reflected their reading comprehension abilities.

Data collection utilized two main techniques, namely classroom observation and standardized tests. Classroom observation was used to record the dynamics of learning directly, including the reading strategies used by the teacher, the types of questions asked, the interaction between the teacher and students, and the level of student engagement in each phase of learning. The observation was conducted using a structured observation sheet developed based on indicators of literacy learning quality and validated through expert review. Indicators observed included students' ability to make inferences, summarize text, answer higher-order questions, identify main ideas, and critically evaluate information. Standardized tests were used to objectively measure the ability to understand texts after students participated in learning. Test questions included examples of literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension, with short texts that were both fiction and non-fiction, some illustrated to support understanding. This allowed comparison of student reading ability based on text type. Given the small sample size, descriptive reporting was sufficient. The analysis also identified which intensive reading indicators had the highest and lowest scores; observations were then used to explain the causes behind these outcomes, such as specific student behaviors, reading strategies, or instructional support that contributed to high or low performance.

The quantitative data obtained from the standardized tests were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including average scores, completion rates, and score distribution, providing an overview of students' reading comprehension achievement. Qualitative data from classroom observations were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This allowed researchers to identify patterns of instructional strategies, alignment of learning processes with intensive reading principles, and student responses during activities.

In the final stage of the research, the two types of data were converged by integrating findings. This involved comparing learning process indicators with student learning outcomes to determine whether teaching strategies contributed to improving reading comprehension. Integration was carried out numerically, narratively, and conceptually to produce a valid, comprehensive evaluative picture. Through this approach, the relationship between the quality of the learning process and reading outcomes could be clearly seen, while also providing insight into the impact of text type, instructional strategies, and student engagement, thereby forming a strong basis for improving intensive reading instruction in elementary schools.

3. Result and Discussions

3.1 Results

To obtain an objective picture of the level of intensive reading skills of students, this study involved measurement through a standardized reading test administered to all fifth-grade students. This test was designed to assess several aspects of reading skills, ranging from literal, inferential, to evaluative comprehension. Example test items included short texts followed by multiple-choice and open-ended questions, asking students to identify main ideas, make inferences, summarize, and evaluate information. Texts used in the test varied in type, including both illustrated and non-illustrated texts, as well as fiction and non-fiction, allowing the comparison of reading ability based on text type.

The presentation of these quantitative results aims to show the overall achievement patterns of students through descriptive statistics, distribution of ability categories, and comparison of scores based on student group characteristics. Among the intensive reading indicators, some showed the highest achievement, such as summarization skills, which classroom observations suggested resulted from students' active engagement in discussion and teacher modeling of the strategy. Conversely, indicators with the lowest scores, such as critical evaluation, were explained through observed behaviors showing limited depth of analysis or hesitation in responding to higher-order questions.

This quantitative data is then used as a basis for identifying learning achievement trends and linking them to the findings of classroom observations in the next section, providing insight into how instructional strategies, student engagement, and text types influence reading comprehension outcomes.

3.1.1 Standard Reading Test Score Data (N = 12)

A. Individual Score

Individual scores on the standardized reading test show variations in the abilities of the 12 fifth-grade students who participated. Each student received a score that reflects their level of mastery of intensive reading skills, ranging from literal to evaluative comprehension. The scores show a relatively diverse range of achievements, with some students performing very well, while others are still in the moderate to low categories. The presentation of these individual scores is the starting point for analyzing the distribution of reading abilities in the class. This information also helps identify the need for additional support for students with low achievements.

Table 1. Standard Reading Test Score Data (N = 12)

No	Student	Gender	Score
1	Student 1	Male	85
2	Student 2	Male	78
3	Student 3	Male	90
4	Student 4	Male	72
5	Student 5	Male	88
6	Student 6	Male	65
7	Student 7	Male	75
8	Student 8	Female	82
9	Student 9	Female	70
10	Student 10	Female	60
11	Student 11	Female	76
12	Student 12	Female	68

B. Bar Chart of Standard Reading Test Score Distribution (N=12)

To provide a visual representation of the variation in student achievement, the standardized reading test scores are presented in a bar chart. This visualization allows researchers to see the distribution pattern of scores more clearly, including the position of each student in the range of achievements

obtained. Thus, this chart helps reinforce the interpretation of the quantitative data presented earlier. It also makes it easier to identify which reading indicators had the highest and lowest performance among the students

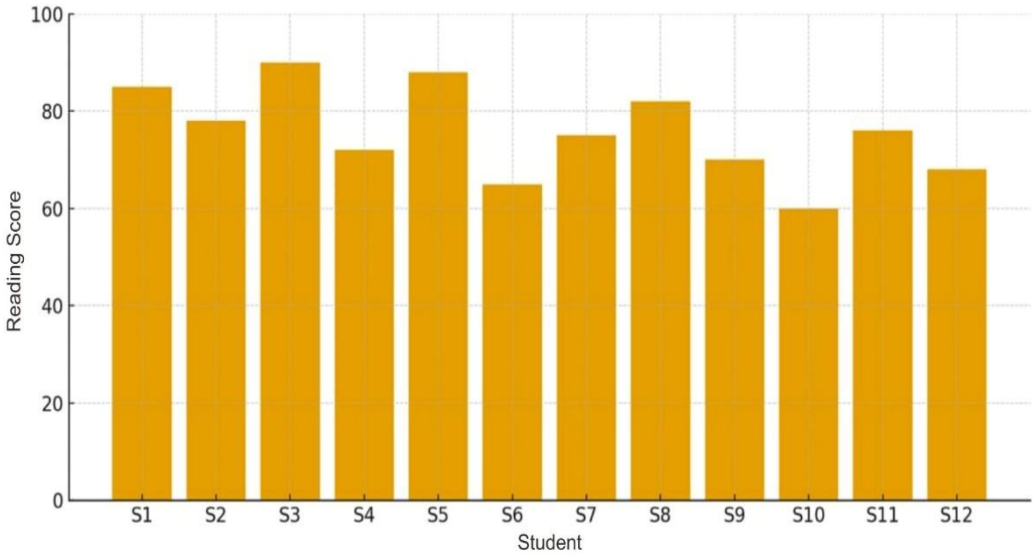

Figure 1. Bar Chart of Standard Reading Test Score Distribution (N=12)

The bar graph shows the variation in reading scores of 12 fifth-grade students, most of whom scored between 70 and 90, reflecting moderate to high reading abilities. Some students, such as S3 and S5, achieved near-excellent scores (≥ 88–90), while S6 and S10 scored lower (60–65) and required additional support. This pattern confirms that there are clear differences in ability between students, in line with the standard deviation value, which indicates high achievement variation. Overall, the graph provides an informative visual overview of the distribution of reading performance as a basis for further learning analysis.

3.1.2 Descriptive Statistics

A. Descriptive Statistics of Standard Reading Test Results

After viewing the distribution of individual scores through bar graphs, the next step is to analyze the data more comprehensively through descriptive statistical calculations. This analysis is important to understand the overall picture of students' reading abilities, not only based on individual scores, but also on aggregate class achievement trends. Thus, descriptive statistics provide a stronger quantitative basis for assessing variations in reading abilities within the class.

Table 2. Standard Reading Test Scores

Mean	77.75
Median	76
Maximum score	90
Minimum score	60
Standard deviation (SD)	9.94

B. Descriptive Statistics Graph of Standard Reading Test Results

To understand the general trends in student reading achievement more comprehensively, descriptive statistics were calculated, including the mean, median, maximum score, minimum score, and standard deviation. This statistical summary provides an overview of the overall level of reading ability and the level of variation among students in the class. The following visualization presents these statistical components in a bar chart, making it easier to read and interpret the data more clearly.

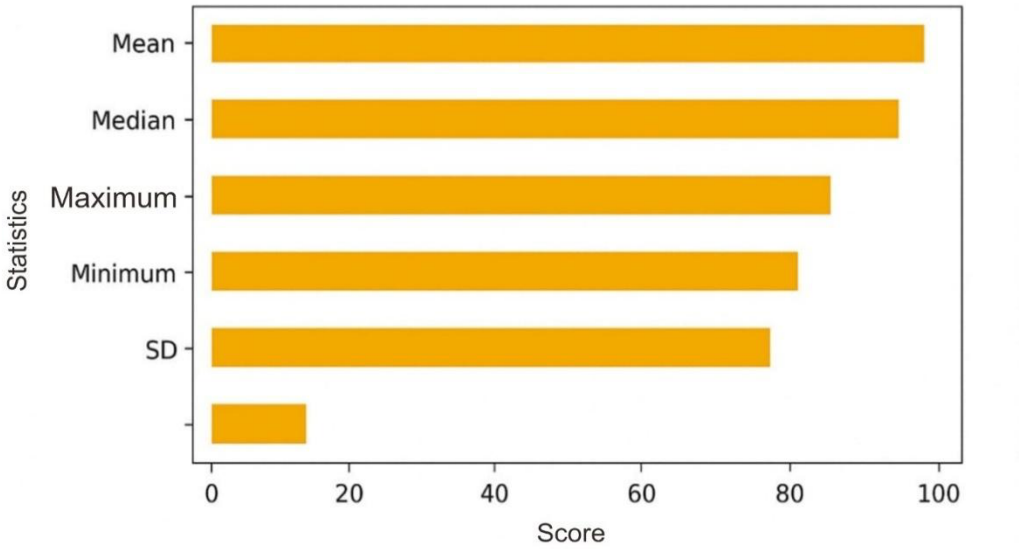

Figure 2. Descriptive Statistics Graph of Standard Reading Test Results

The graph shows a summary of descriptive statistics from the reading test scores obtained by 12 students. The mean score of 75.75 indicates that the students' reading abilities are generally in the moderate category. The median of 76 shows that half of the students have scores above and half below that number, describing a relatively balanced data distribution. The maximum score reached 90, while the minimum score was 60, confirming a fairly wide range of achievement within the class. The standard deviation of around 9.94 reflects that the variation between scores is quite high, indicating that there are significant differences in reading ability between high-achieving students and those who still need support. Overall, this graph confirms that although

some students have shown good achievement, the group of students with low scores still needs attention in intensive reading instruction.

3.1.3 Distribution of Reading Achievement

A. Distribution of reading achievement based on performance category

Based on the distribution of reading achievement, students' abilities vary considerably across the classroom. The majority are in the moderate category (41.7%), indicating that most have mastered basic competencies but still need additional reinforcement. A total of 33.3% of students are in the high category with scores ≥ 85, while the remaining 25% are in the low category and require special attention.

Table 3. Distribution of Reading Achievement

Category	Interval	Number	Percentage
High	≥ 85	4 students	33.3%
Medium	70–84	5 students	41.7%
Low	< 70	3 students	25%

B. Graph of reading achievement distribution based on performance category

To see the distribution of reading abilities, student achievement was grouped into high (≥ 85), medium (70–84), and low (< 70) categories. The majority of students were in the medium category, followed by the high category, while a small number were still in the low category. This variation indicates the need for more adaptive learning strategies. The following graph shows the distribution of these categories to facilitate analysis.

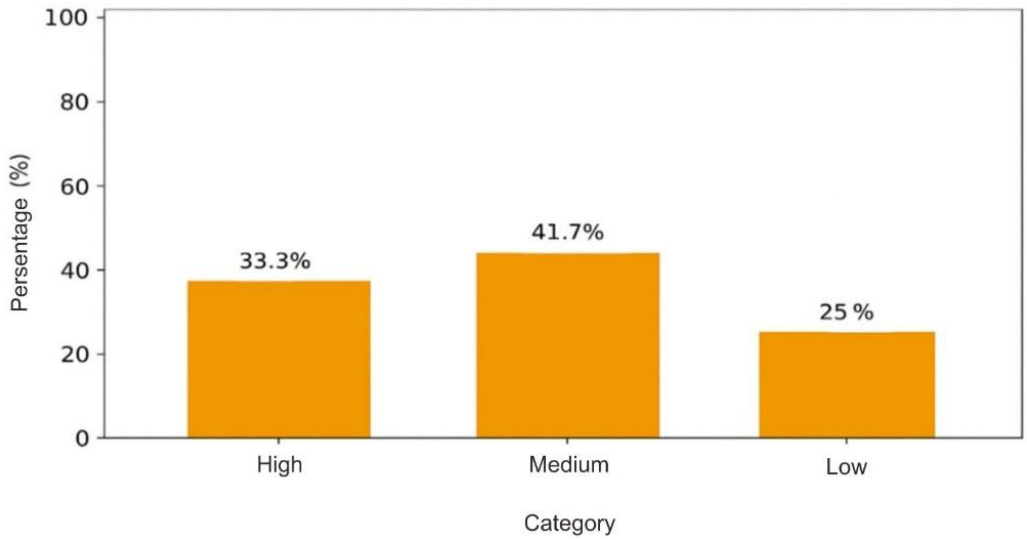

Figure 3. Distribent.ution of reading achievem

The bar chart above shows the proportion of students based on predetermined reading achievement categories, namely high, medium, and

low. It can be seen that the medium category is the largest group with a percentage of 41.7%, indicating that most students have reading abilities that are within the range of fairly good but not yet optimal competence. The high category is in second place with a percentage of 33.3%, which shows that one-third of students have achieved excellent reading performance. Meanwhile, the low category still includes 25% of students, indicating that a quarter of students require more intensive learning intervention. Overall, this graph shows that the majority of students are at a moderate to high level of achievement, but special attention is still needed for students in the low category.

3.1.4 Comparison Based on Gender

To gain a deeper understanding of the variations in reading ability among students, a further analysis was conducted by comparing achievements based on gender. This comparison aimed to see whether there were certain tendencies between male and female groups in terms of intensive reading comprehension. The results of the analysis are presented in the following two sections.

A. Boys (7 students) With scores of 85, 78, 90, 72, 88, 65, 75

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Male Students

Average:	79.0
High category	3 Students
Low category	1 Student

After examining the achievements of the male group, the analysis then continued with the female group to identify emerging achievement patterns and compare them with the previous group.

B. Girls (5 students) With scores of 82, 70, 60, 76, 68

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Female Students

Average:	71.2
High category	0 Siswa
Low category	2 Siswa

Based on the distribution of reading achievement, students' abilities appear to vary considerably. The majority are in the moderate category (41.7%), indicating that most have mastered basic competencies but still need reinforcement. A total of 33.3% of students are in the high category with scores ≥ 85, while the other 25% are in the low category and require special attention. This condition indicates the need for more adaptive learning interventions to reduce the reading ability gap in the classroom. These findings also emphasize

the importance of learning strategies that are able to effectively and sustainably reach the entire range of student abilities in order to improve results.

Meanwhile, the female group (5 students) had a lower average score of 71.2, with no students reaching the high category and two students in the low category. This shows that the reading ability of the female group tended to be in the moderate to low range, with a lower maximum score than the male group. Overall, the male group showed better reading performance, so more adaptive learning strategies are needed to strengthen the achievements of female students.

3.1.5 Analysis of Reading Indicator Achievement

This analysis was conducted to examine the depth of students' reading abilities based on four main indicators, namely literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, critical comprehension, and reading speed. Each indicator was assessed on a scale of 0-100, then the average was calculated for all students (N = 12).

Table 6. Reading Indicator Achievement

Reading Indicator	Average	Category
Literal Understanding	82	Height
Inferential Understanding	75	Currently
Critical Understanding	70	Currently
Reading Speed	68	Low-Medium

Literal comprehension was the highest-scoring indicator, demonstrating students' ability to understand explicit information. Conversely, reading speed was the lowest-scoring indicator and requires special attention. This difference highlights the need for structured intervention to improve aspects of reading that require fluency. Classroom observations suggest that the lower reading speed may be linked to students pausing frequently to decode words or struggling with unfamiliar vocabulary.

3.1.6 Bar Chart of Reading Indicator Achievement

To see students' achievements in more detail, scores are analyzed based on four reading indicators: literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, critical comprehension, and reading speed. This division helps identify students' strengths and weaknesses so that learning strategies can be targeted more accurately. The following graph shows a comparison of the average achievements for each indicator.

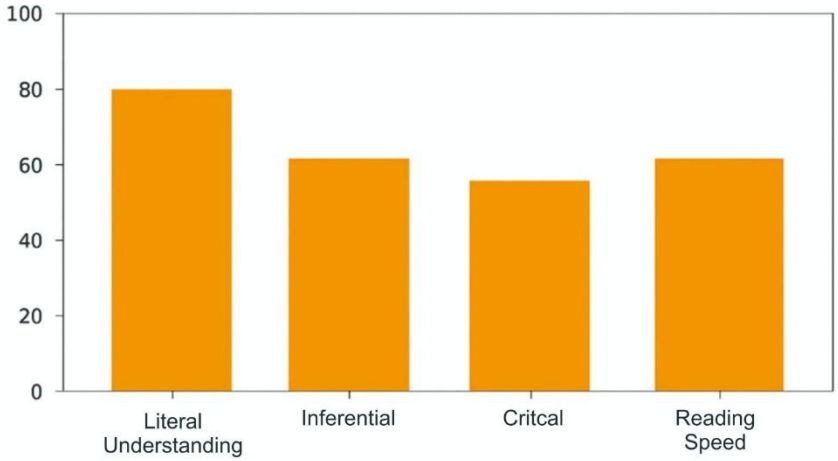

Figure 4. Bar Chart of Reading Indicator Achievement

The analysis results show that students' reading skills are stronger in literal comprehension than in other indicators. Inferential and critical comprehension are in the moderate category, indicating that students still need practice in drawing conclusions, interpreting implied meanings, and evaluating reading content. Reading speed is the weakest area, so intervention is needed through repeated reading exercises, independent reading habits, or speed reading techniques appropriate to the students' level of development.

3.1.6 Changes in Reading Achievement (Pre–Post Test)

The pre-post test results show a significant improvement in reading skills after students participated in intensive reading lessons. In the pre-test stage, student achievement in the four reading indicators was still in the moderate to low category, especially in inferential and critical comprehension. After the lessons were given, all indicators showed consistent improvement.

Literal comprehension increased from 68 to 82, indicating an improvement in students' ability to find explicit information more accurately. The inferential and critical indicators, which were previously the lowest, increased by 15 points each, indicating progress in the ability to interpret implied meaning and evaluate reading content. In addition, students' reading speed also increased from 58 to 72, showing that continuous practice helps improve reading efficiency.

Overall, the class average increased from 57.75 on the pre-test to 72.25 on the post-test, with an increase of 14.5 points. Although all indicators showed improvement, critical understanding remained the weakest area and required further reinforcement. Conversely, literal comprehension became the aspect that students mastered best after learning. These findings confirm that intensive reading instruction has a positive impact on improving students' reading skills, but additional strategies are needed to improve their analytical and evaluative skills.

Table 7. Changes in Reading Achievement Based on Indicators

Reading Indicator	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Increase Difference	Example Test Item / Task	Scoring Technique	Student Ability Classification
Literal Understanding	68	82	14	Identify main idea in a short paragraph	Each correct answer scored 1 point; total summed	Low: <60, Moderate: 60–79, High: ≥80
Inferential Understanding	60	75	15	Make inferences from a text segment	Points assigned for correct inference; partial credit for reasonable logic	Low: <60, Moderate: 60–79, High: ≥80
Critical Understanding	55	70	15	Evaluate author's argument or opinion	Rubric scoring (0–3) based on reasoning quality	Low: <60, Moderate: 60–79, High: ≥80
Reading Speed	58	72	14	Read a passage aloud in 1 minute	Words per minute (WPM) calculated; errors subtracted	Low: <60 WPM, Moderate: 60–79 WPM, High: ≥80 WPM
Overall Average	57.75	72.25	14.5	–	–	–

In this study, students' reading abilities were measured based on several indicators, namely literal understanding (understanding explicit information), inferential understanding (drawing conclusions from the text), critical understanding (evaluating arguments or opinions), and reading speed. Sample questions included finding the main idea, making inferences, evaluating the content of the text, and reading illustrated fiction and non-fiction texts within a certain time limit. The scoring techniques used differed according to the indicator: literal and inferential used a point score per answer, critical comprehension used a 0-3 assessment rubric, and reading speed was calculated based on the number of

words read correctly per minute (WPM), minus errors. Students are then classified into three ability categories: low, medium, and high. Analysis shows a positive relationship between reading speed and reading comprehension ability, where students with higher WPM tend to score higher on inferential and critical comprehension, while students with low reading speed show limitations on more complex comprehension indicators.

3.1.7 Graph of Changes in Reading Achievement (Pre–Post Test)

To assess the effectiveness of intensive reading instruction, student achievement was measured through pre-tests and post-tests on four key indicators: literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, critical comprehension, and reading speed. A comparison of these two scores shows the extent to which instruction contributed to improvements in reading ability for each indicator. The following graph illustrates these changes in achievement more clearly.

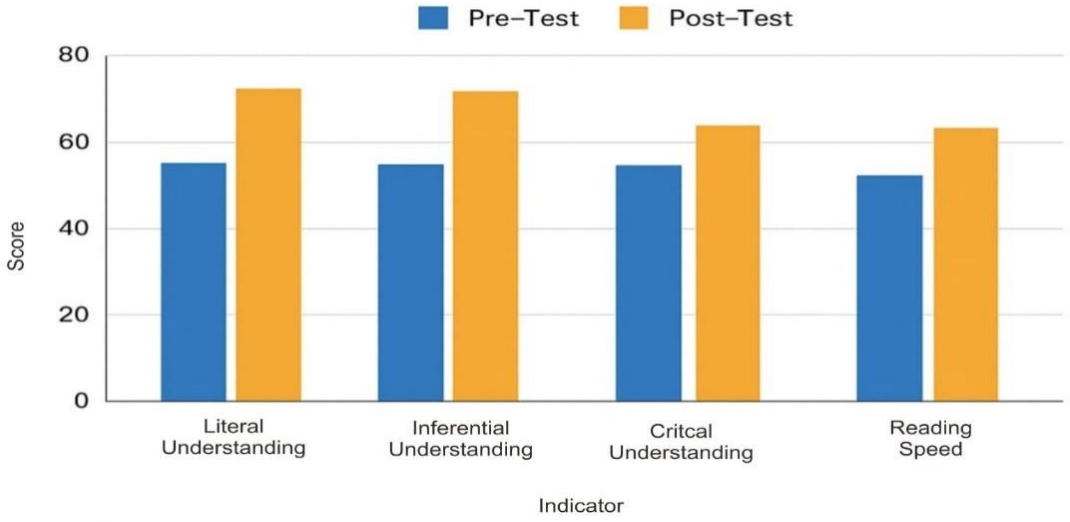

Figure 5. Graph of Achievement Changes (Pre-Post Test)

The Achievement Change Chart (Pre-Post Test) shows an increase in reading ability across all indicators after intensive learning was provided. The largest increase occurred in literal comprehension, followed by inferential and critical comprehension, which also showed improvement despite remaining the lowest achievement. Reading speed also increased, although not as much as the other indicators. Overall, the chart confirms that intensive learning can improve all aspects of students' reading ability.

3.1.8 Qualitative Results (Classroom Observation)

Class observations show that intensive reading learning takes place through structured stages, starting from perception, guided reading, group exercises, to reflection. Teachers apply a tiered reading practice model and monitor student comprehension through guided questions, emphasis on key words, and

comprehension checks throughout the reading process. From the students' perspective, their engagement appears to be quite good, especially when teachers provide examples and direct guidance, although some students still need reinforcement of focus and repetition of instructions. The main difficulties for students were in identifying main ideas, making inferences, and maintaining concentration when reading longer texts. Interaction between teachers and students was active, characterized by direct feedback and two-way discussion, while student interaction with the text developed through activities such as marking important sections and summarizing. Collaboration among students was sufficient, although participation was not yet evenly distributed in some groups. Learning is supported by student readiness and the availability of learning resources, but still faces obstacles in the form of wide variations in reading ability, time constraints, and the need for individual assistance that cannot be optimally met. Overall, the dynamics of learning reflect a combination of strengths and challenges that need to be followed up in future planning. In addition, more varied literacy support strategies are needed so that all students can develop proportionally. These observations suggest that targeted interventions focusing on both individual support and group engagement could help maximize reading comprehension outcomes for all students.

3.1.8 Thematic Observation Results

To clarify the qualitative findings from classroom observations, the narrative results are summarized in a thematic table. This table presents the main patterns that emerged during intensive reading instruction, including teacher activities, student engagement, quality of interaction, and supporting and hindering factors. This presentation facilitates reading and analysis, providing a more complete picture of the dynamics of classroom learning.

Table 8. Qualitative Findings from Intensive Reading Learning Observations

Main Theme	Subtheme / Focus	Observation Findings	Indicators / Reference
Teacher Activities	Learning Stages	Teachers follow a systematic process: perception, guided reading, group exercises, independent reading, reflection.	Stages of intensive reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Duke, 2021)
	Reading Practice Model	Teachers use a tiered model: guided reading, group reading, and independent practice.	Use of scaffolded reading models (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017)
	Comprehension Monitoring	The teacher provides guiding questions, emphasizes key words,	Indicators: questioning techniques,

		and conducts periodic comprehension checks.	comprehension checks (Brookhart & Nitko, 2023)
Student Activities	Engagement	Students are quite active, especially during guided reading; some lose focus on longer texts.	Student engagement indicators (Fredricks et al., 2004)
	Response to Instructions	Generally follow instructions well, although some need repetition.	Following teacher cues, responsiveness (Reutzel et al., 2022)
	Learning Difficulties	Difficulties in identifying main ideas, making inferences, summarizing, and maintaining concentration.	Comprehension challenge indicators (Pianta et al., 2020)
Interaction Quality	Teacher–Student Interaction	Two-way interaction; teacher gives direct feedback and encourages thinking.	Interaction quality (Vygotsky, 1978; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017)
	Student–Text Interaction	Students can highlight important parts and summarize, though deep analysis remains weak.	Text engagement indicators (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000)
	Student Collaboration	Group discussion is sufficient but participation uneven in some groups.	Collaboration indicators (Johnson & Johnson, 2017)
Supporting and Inhibiting Factors	Supporting Factors	Students' readiness is adequate; reading materials are sufficient; learning resources available.	Resource and readiness indicators (Allington, 2012)
	Inhibiting Factors	Wide variation in reading ability; limited time; individual assistance not optimal.	Constraints indicators (Connor et al., 2021)

3.1.9 Integration of Findings (Mixed Methods Results)

The findings were integrated by combining the quantitative results from standardized reading tests and the qualitative findings from classroom observations. This combination aimed to assess student achievement on various reading indicators. The results of the integration show that the behavior, engagement, and learning strategies that emerged during the observation had a consistent relationship with the patterns of student test scores. For example,

students who were less engaged in guided reading exercises tended to score lower, especially in the areas of inferential and critical comprehension. Conversely, groups of students who were active in discussions and followed the graded readers showed higher achievement on the indicators of literal comprehension and reading speed. In addition, time constraints and a lack of individual guidance appear to have an effect on the uneven improvement in learning outcomes among students. Thus, the combination of these two findings provides a comprehensive picture of how the intensive reading learning process impacts student learning outcomes.

Table 9. Matrix of Observation Results and Standard Test Integration

Focus	Observational Findings (Qualitative)	Standard Test Findings (Quantitative)	Integrative Conclusion
Student involvement in guided reading	Some students lack focus when reading aloud; they need to be guided again.	Students who lack focus score low on literal and inferential indicators.	Low engagement contributes to low text comprehension.
Tiered guidance by teachers	Tiered mentoring has not been consistent; some stages have been skipped due to time constraints.	Inferential and critical indicators were the lowest.	The lack of scaffolding affects the ability to analyze texts.
Teacher-student interaction	Teachers actively provide feedback, but not evenly to all students.	Students who frequently received feedback showed a significant improvement in their post-test scores.	Immediate feedback improves reading skills.
Group collaboration	The group actively discussed, but some members were passive.	The active group had a higher average score than the passive group.	Group discussions were effective, but participation was uneven.
Readiness and variation in student abilities	The variation in ability among students is quite large.	Se The score distribution is quite wide (SD ±10).	Variations in ability affect disparities in achievement.
Learning time	Limited time reduces opportunities for	The smallest improvement in	Suboptimal training leads to

	individual practice.	reading speed indicators.	uneven improvement.

The integration of mixed methods findings shows that the quality of the learning process is directly related to students' reading test results. Less active students tend to score lower, especially in inferential and critical aspects, while students who are actively involved and receive intensive feedback achieve higher scores. Variations in ability and time constraints also contribute to the unevenness of learning outcomes. Overall, an effective learning process has been proven to be the main determinant of student reading achievement.

3.2 Discussion

Students' varying reading achievements, particularly in inferential and critical aspects, are closely related to the classroom learning process. Observations indicate that teachers tend to ask literal questions more frequently, so students are accustomed to extracting explicit information without sufficient opportunities to practice higher-order reasoning. This aligns with previous research showing that inferential and critical thinking skills develop when teachers provide scaffolding and higher-order questions that encourage deep elaboration of meaning (McMaster, Hwang, & Duffy-Hester, 2023; Zhang & Wu, 2020). Conversely, students who actively participate in guided reading and class discussions demonstrate better literal comprehension, benefiting from validation and direct feedback during learning.

The effectiveness of teacher strategies can be seen in the relationship between observed practices and student performance on standardized tests. Guided reading and timely feedback support literal comprehension, but are not yet sufficient for developing inferential skills. This suggests that alignment between teaching strategies and targeted competencies needs strengthening to achieve more balanced learning outcomes.

Integrating qualitative and quantitative data provided a comprehensive evaluative understanding. Observation and test results complemented each other, showing that students with low engagement tended to have lower scores, while those receiving intensive guidance and actively participating achieved better results. This confirms that learning processes directly influence student outcomes and highlights the value of mixed methods for evaluating intensive reading (Fetters & Molina-Azorín, 2020; Guetterman, Molina-Azorín, & Fetters, 2020).

These findings are consistent with research showing that teacher-student interaction quality and higher-order questioning significantly affect reading comprehension (Reutzel, Smith, & Fawson, 2022; Lupo et al., 2023). Differences from studies reporting stronger gains in inferential skills may stem from the short duration of instruction and inconsistent application of inferential strategies. Therefore, continuity of teacher support and diversity in cognitive strategies are critical for effective intensive reading instruction.

Practically, the results emphasize increasing the use of higher-order questions, strengthening scaffolding, and allocating more reading time to support inferential and critical understanding. Schools should also provide diverse reading materials and maintain consistent learning schedules. For researchers, these findings demonstrate that mixed methods effectively reveal the link between learning processes and reading achievement. Additionally, teachers can use these insights to tailor reading interventions according to observed student needs, and policymakers can design professional development programs to strengthen reading instruction at the elementary level.

This study has limitations: observations were conducted with one teacher and a small sample, limiting generalizability, and the test instruments measured only certain reading aspects, not overall reading competence. Future research could address these limitations using larger samples, more comprehensive instruments, and multi-context observations. Further studies could also explore longitudinal effects of intensive reading strategies to determine sustained improvements in inferential and critical reading skills.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that intensive reading instruction is effective not merely as a remedial technique for improving basic reading skills, but as a pedagogical framework whose impact is strongly shaped by the quality of instructional design and classroom enactment. The findings indicate that while students' literal comprehension benefits substantially from intensive reading instruction, higher-order skills particularly inferential and critical comprehension remain constrained when instructional practices do not consistently incorporate analytical questioning, guided reasoning, and adequate time for deep engagement with texts. This suggests that effectiveness is not inherent in the model itself, but emerges from the interaction between structured instruction, meaningful feedback, and differentiated support.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the literature on reading instruction by providing empirical support for the integration of quantitative outcomes and qualitative classroom processes. It reinforces theoretical perspectives that position reading comprehension as a multidimensional construct requiring explicit scaffolding beyond surface-level understanding. The study also adds methodological value by illustrating how mixed-methods approaches can reveal not only whether an instructional approach works, but why variations in implementation lead to unequal learning outcomes.

In terms of practical and policy implications, the findings underscore the importance of professional development that equips teachers with skills in designing higher-order questions, managing instructional time effectively, and delivering responsive feedback within intensive reading programs. For schools and policymakers, the study highlights that adopting intensive reading instruction as a programmatic label is insufficient unless accompanied by clear pedagogical standards and monitoring of classroom practices to ensure instructional equity.

Given the acknowledged limitations particularly the small sample size and the focus on a single classroom context future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples across multiple schools and grade levels. Longitudinal studies would be valuable to examine the sustainability of gains in higher-order reading skills, while experimental or quasi-experimental designs could further clarify causal relationships between specific instructional components and student outcomes. Additionally, future studies may explore how digital or adaptive learning tools can be integrated into intensive reading instruction to support inferential and critical comprehension more effectively.

Take-home message: Intensive reading instruction holds meaningful potential to reduce learning gaps and foster deeper literacy development, but its true power lies in thoughtful, reflective, and human-centered teaching practices. When instruction moves beyond procedural intensity toward intellectual depth and pedagogical care, reading becomes not only a skill to be mastered, but a pathway for students to think critically, engage meaningfully, and participate more fully in their educational and social worlds.

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