IMPROVING COMPREHENSION USING GUIDED READING STRATEGY: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This quasi-experimental study examined the effectiveness of the Guided Reading Strategy in improving the reading comprehension skills of Grade 6 pupils. Using a pretest-posttest design with 20 student participants, the study assessed comprehension across three domains: literal, inferential, and critical. Pretest results revealed low proficiency in all areas, especially in literal and critical comprehension. Following the implementation of the Guided Reading Strategy over a specified period, posttest data showed a significant improvement in overall comprehension, particularly in inferential skills ($t = -4.485$, $p < .001$). However, the strategy showed minimal impact on literal ($t = 1.437$, $p = 0.167$) and critical comprehension ($t = 0.271$, $p = 0.789$), suggesting the need for supplemental approaches in those domains. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant increase in total comprehension scores ($t = -3.426$, $p = 0.003$). The findings affirm the strategy's potential in enhancing higher-order thinking but also highlight its limitations in addressing foundational and evaluative reading skills. The study recommends integrating more targeted instruction for literal and critical comprehension within guided reading sessions.

Keywords: *guided reading strategy, reading comprehension, inferential thinking, elementary education*

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill essential for academic success, yet many students struggle with understanding texts due to ineffective reading strategies. According to Banditvilai (2020), guided reading, an instructional approach that involves small group reading sessions with teacher support, has been shown to enhance comprehension skills This approach fosters active engagement, allowing students to develop critical thinking and analytical reading abilities (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). However, despite its proven effectiveness, challenges persist in implementing guided reading strategies, particularly in classrooms with diverse learning needs (Brevik, 2019).

Research in Indonesia conducted by Öztürk, Akkan and Kaplan (2020) found that guided reading interventions improved comprehension performance by 22% among elementary students. These findings emphasize the pressing need for effective reading interventions in Southeast Asia.

The Philippines faces persistent reading challenges, with national assessments revealing that 90% of Filipino students do not meet the expected reading proficiency level (Department of Education, 2021). Furthermore, research conducted in Cebu by Peña and García (2019) highlighted the positive impact of structured reading strategies on literacy development among struggling readers These studies underscore the urgency of implementing effective reading strategies in Filipino classrooms.

Locally, this is a similar case in Bunawan, Agusan del Sur which highlights the critical need for evidence-based literacy programs to address reading difficulties. Despite extensive research on reading comprehension, there remains a gap in studies focusing on the long-term impact of guided reading strategies on student achievement. For this reason, the researcher is motivated to embark on this study using guided reading strategy to improve the reading comprehension skills of the learners.

This study looks at the long-term effects of guided reading strategies on reading comprehension. It focuses on Bunawan, Agusan del Sur, where many students struggle with reading. By gathering local, evidence-based insights, it seeks to guide teaching methods, inform literacy programs, and offer lasting strategies to boost student performance and encourage a culture of reading.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The results of this study provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the Guided Reading Strategy in improving the reading comprehension of Grade 4 pupils. This study would benefit the following stakeholders:

Learners. The results of this study would directly benefit the learners would assess and improve their comprehension skills at literal, inferential, and evaluative levels. These improvements would increase their confidence in academic reading and contribute to better learning outcomes in all subject areas.

Teachers. The results of this study would give insights to the teachers that guided reading is a good strategy to be used by them to improve the performance of the learners in terms of reading comprehension. Additionally, results would help teachers refine their instructional methods, adopt best practices for guided reading implementation, and address reading difficulties more effectively. The study would also emphasize the importance of scaffolding techniques, questioning strategies, and differentiated instruction to support struggling readers.

School Administrators. The results of the study would assist administrators in designing literacy-focused programs, allocating resources for teacher training, and enhancing reading interventions within the school. Additionally, results would support the formulation of school policies aimed at strengthening reading comprehension initiatives for students at risk of reading difficulties.

Department of Education (DepEd) Officials. The results of the study would provide research-based insights into the reading comprehension challenges faced by elementary pupils and evaluate guided reading as a potential solution to the formulation of curriculum improvements and teacher training initiatives to enhance literacy instruction. The findings would aid DepEd officials and policymakers in developing evidence-based reading remediation programs.

Future Researchers. The results of the study would serve as a valuable reference for future research on reading comprehension strategies, literacy interventions, and guided reading methodologies. The study would contribute to the growing body of literature on evidence-based reading instruction and help guide future studies aimed at improving literacy outcomes among students.

1.2 Literature Review

The following related literatures and studies provide information and further discussions on the results of this study:

Comprehension

Comprehension is central to academic achievement, as it allows learners to extract and build meaning from texts (Pearson, Palincsar, & Biancarosa, 2020). Without sound comprehension skills, learners cannot understand fundamental concepts in different subjects, which constrains their overall academic achievement (Shaari & Singh, 2019). As per Özdemir and Akyol (2019), struggling readers in comprehension also have challenges in other literacy skills like writing and critical thinking. Sound reading approaches, like guided reading, bridge these gaps by providing more interaction with texts. Building comprehension, therefore, is imperative to allow learners to build higher-order cognitive abilities that promote learning and subsequent academic achievement.

The function of comprehension in the process of literacy acquisition goes beyond decoding words to the comprehension of sophisticated concepts (Hjetland et al., 2019). Empirical evidence indicates that poor readers lack comprehension skills, and therefore, they are unable to use knowledge in practical situations (Babayiğit & Shapiro, 2020). Inadequate reading comprehension also results in poor problem-solving skills, which have implications for performance in mathematics and science (Krawitz, Chang, & Yang, 2022). Comprehension skills are required to develop analytical skills that enable independent learning. Interventions in education to enhance comprehension enhance students' skills for critical engagement with academic and daily-life information substantially.

Reading comprehension is closely associated with cognitive development and academic accomplishment (Guzmán-Simón & Gil-Flores, 2020). Students that have poor understanding usually show less motivation since they cannot grasp and remember content (Choose et al., 2019). Furthermore, research by Soto, Gutiérrez de Blume, and Jacovina (2019) underline how crucial metacognitive strategies are for improving comprehension so that students might correctly check their knowledge. Students run across long-term academic challenges compromising general

learning performance without these skills. Schools should so implement teaching strategies meant to increase knowledge to assist intellectual development and critical thinking.

The relationship between reading comprehension and language acquisition is significant, as comprehension skills directly impact vocabulary development and fluency (Fitria, 2019). Studies have shown that students with poor comprehension struggle with inferencing and textual analysis, which are key components of language learning (Kim & Kendeou, 2020). Additionally, Dela-Peña and Luque-Rojas (2021) emphasize that comprehension is essential for developing cognitive flexibility, enabling learners to process and analyze various forms of textual information. Thus, enhancing comprehension through structured reading programs ensures that students can effectively engage with different academic and linguistic contexts.

Educational research stresses the need for systematic approaches to reading comprehension instruction, as it is foundational to lifelong learning (Double, McGrane, & Stiff, 2019). According to Ramadhianti and Somba (2023), integrating technology into reading instruction has shown promising results in enhancing students' engagement and understanding of complex texts. Similarly, Elleman and Oslund (2019) argue that policy reforms in education should prioritize comprehension strategies to bridge literacy gaps. Strengthening comprehension skills from an early age prepares students for academic success and professional growth, reinforcing the importance of structured literacy development in educational curricula.

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that many students struggle with due to limited vocabulary and background knowledge. According to Nanda and Azmy (2020), students who lack prior exposure to a wide range of words find it difficult to decode and understand texts, leading to surface-level comprehension. Similarly, Darjito (2019) emphasizes that inadequate vocabulary knowledge contributes to reading anxiety, discouraging students from engaging with academic materials. Magnusson and Roe (2019) found that students with weak vocabulary skills also struggle to infer meaning, limiting their ability to grasp implicit ideas. These challenges highlight the importance of integrating explicit vocabulary instruction within guided reading strategies to enhance comprehension.

Another challenge is the difficulty in making inferences and synthesizing information from complex texts. Tomas, Villaros, and Galman (2021) argue that many students struggle with identifying key ideas and drawing logical conclusions, leading to misinterpretations. Afflerbach, Hurt, and Cho (2020) also found that students often fail to connect prior knowledge with new information, affecting their ability to comprehend intricate concepts. Vaughn, Roberts, Capin, and Miciak (2019) indicate that students with weak inferencing skills exhibit lower academic performance across subjects. These issues underline the necessity of structured guided reading interventions that provide scaffolded support to develop analytical reading skills.

Cognitive overload is another significant barrier to reading comprehension. According to Sabatini, Wang, and O'Reilly (2019), students often experience cognitive strain when processing large amounts of information, causing disengagement and reduced retention. Yapp and de Graaff (2023) found that excessive text complexity results in students resorting to passive reading, leading to fragmented understanding. Ghaith and ElSanyoura (2019) highlight that students who face cognitive overload struggle with maintaining focus, further impeding comprehension. Guided reading approaches that incorporate gradual exposure to complex texts can alleviate cognitive strain and support students in developing reading endurance.

A lack of metacognitive strategies significantly hinders students' ability to monitor their understanding while reading. According to Kim, Relyea, and Burkhauser (2021), students who do not actively engage in self-monitoring struggle to adjust their reading strategies, leading to comprehension breakdowns. Burkhauser, Mesite, and Scherer (2021) emphasize that students with limited metacognitive awareness fail to recognize when they misunderstand a text, reducing their ability to self-correct. Tovani (2023). found that explicit instruction in metacognitive strategies improves reading engagement and comprehension outcomes. Guided reading programs that incorporate metacognitive training help students develop self-awareness in reading, fostering independent learning and deeper textual engagement.

Reading comprehension remains a significant challenge for students due to limited vocabulary and background knowledge. Khalid, Kussin, and Zulkepli (2024) emphasize that students with restricted vocabulary struggle to decode words, leading to difficulties in understanding texts. Similarly, Alghonaim (2020) highlights that a lack of exposure to diverse words and contexts affects comprehension, making it difficult for students to infer meanings. Torppa, Vasalampi, and Eklund (2020) found that vocabulary limitations contribute to reading anxiety, leading to disengagement from academic texts. Addressing vocabulary gaps through guided reading strategies helps students develop the necessary linguistic skills to comprehend complex materials. By incorporating structured vocabulary instruction, educators can support students in overcoming this fundamental challenge.

Students also struggle with inferential thinking and critical analysis of texts, affecting their ability to synthesize information. Tomas, Villaros, and Galman (2021) argue that many students fail to identify key ideas,

resulting in shallow engagement with reading materials. Capin, Cho, Miciak, and Roberts (2021) found that weak inferencing skills correlate with lower academic performance, particularly in subjects that require deep comprehension. Razali (2019) emphasizes that students who lack the ability to connect prior knowledge with new information struggle to retain and apply what they read. Guided reading strategies can provide structured support by teaching students explicit inferencing techniques, enabling them to construct meaning and engage more critically with texts.

Cognitive overload is another major factor that negatively impacts reading comprehension. Sabatini, Wang, and O'Reilly (2019) found that students often experience cognitive strain when processing large amounts of text, leading to surface-level reading. Goodwin, Cho, and Reynolds (2020) highlight that digital reading environments exacerbate cognitive overload, as students struggle to maintain focus and process information effectively. Lupo, Tortorelli, and Invernizzi (2019) argue that reading comprehension tasks that require sustained attention can overwhelm students, reducing their ability to understand complex passages. Implementing guided reading strategies with scaffolded text exposure can help students manage cognitive demands by breaking down information into more digestible segments. Metacognitive deficiencies further hinder students' reading comprehension, as they often fail to monitor their understanding. Hall, Vaughn, and Barnes (2020) found that students who do not actively self-monitor their comprehension struggle to adjust their reading strategies, resulting in gaps in understanding.

Further, Bråten, Braasch, and Salmerón (2020) emphasize that many students lack the ability to question and reflect on what they read, reducing their ability to retain information. Elleman and Oslund (2019) highlight that explicit instruction in metacognitive strategies, such as summarization and selfquestioning, improves reading outcomes. Guided reading programs that incorporate metacognitive training help students become more independent readers, equipping them with the skills needed for lifelong learning.

Identifying the main idea is a fundamental reading comprehension skill that many students struggle with, particularly in complex or lengthy texts. According to Erya and Pustika (2021), students often fail to recognize the main idea because they focus excessively on isolated details rather than understanding the overall message of a passage. Similarly, Manihuruk (2020) found that ineffective reading strategies, such as overreliance on word-for-word reading, contribute to students' inability to extract key concepts from texts. Clinton (2019) emphasizes that students who struggle with identifying main ideas tend to experience difficulties in summarizing and synthesizing information, which negatively affects their academic performance. Guided reading strategies that emphasize active reading techniques, such as summarization and questioning, have been shown to enhance students' ability to determine main ideas effectively.

The difficulty in identifying main ideas is further compounded by students' limited inferential reasoning and cognitive overload when processing information. Wahyono (2019) highlights that students often lack the ability to distinguish between essential and supplementary information, making it challenging to determine the central theme of a passage. Coiro (2021) states that poor reading comprehension is often associated with weak metacognitive awareness, where students fail to monitor their understanding and adjust their reading strategies accordingly. Snowling, Hulme, and Nation (2022) argue that digital reading environments add another layer of complexity, as students must filter through vast amounts of information while maintaining focus on key ideas. Integrating guided reading strategies that provide explicit instruction on identifying main ideas can significantly improve students' reading proficiency and comprehension.

Moreover, the structure of texts can pose additional challenges in determining the main idea, especially in expository or non-linear formats. Ayu (2021) found that students often struggle with reading materials that do not follow a clear, chronological sequence, leading to confusion in identifying the central argument. Buehl (2023) argues that students who lack familiarity with text structures, such as cause-and-effect or compare-and-contrast formats, often misinterpret key points. Grabe and Stoller (2019) further emphasize that recognizing textual cues, such as topic sentences and transitional phrases, is essential for successfully identifying main ideas. Guided reading strategies that teach students how to navigate different text structures and recognize key indicators can enhance their ability to extract relevant information efficiently.

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Students face multiple challenges in reading comprehension, with vocabulary limitations being one of the most significant barriers. According to Banditvilai (2020), a lack of vocabulary knowledge prevents students from grasping the main ideas of texts, leading to difficulties in interpreting information. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2019) emphasize that students with limited vocabulary struggle with context clues, making it harder to infer meaning and understand complex passages. Ramadhianti and Somba (2023) found that vocabulary deficits directly impact reading fluency, causing students to spend excessive time deciphering words instead of focusing on overall comprehension. Guided reading strategies that emphasize contextual learning and explicit vocabulary instruction can help mitigate these challenges, allowing students to develop stronger reading skills and improve comprehension outcomes.

Another common difficulty students encounter in reading comprehension is the inability to process and synthesize large amounts of information effectively. Støle, Mangen, and Schwippert (2020) highlight that many students struggle with distinguishing key details from irrelevant information, leading to cognitive overload. Erlangga (2022) points out that students who lack strategic reading skills often fail to organize their understanding of texts, which results in fragmented comprehension and poor retention of information. Mogea (2021) further emphasizes that students who do not apply effective reading strategies, such as skimming, scanning, and summarizing, often become disengaged and struggle with academic reading. Implementing guided reading strategies that provide structured support, such as chunking texts and summarization exercises, can help students enhance their reading efficiency and comprehension abilities.

Details play a fundamental role in reading comprehension by helping students construct meaning and draw logical connections between concepts. According to Cho et al. (2021), students who struggle to recognize supporting details often fail to fully understand the main idea, leading to fragmented comprehension. Similarly, Choi and Zhang (2021) emphasize that reading comprehension is not only about identifying main points but also about understanding how supporting details contribute to the overall meaning of the text. Al Roomy (2022) highlights that effective comprehension requires integrating both explicit and implicit details, as missing key pieces of information can result in misinterpretation. Guided reading strategies that encourage students to analyze and synthesize supporting details improve their ability to engage critically with texts and develop a deeper understanding of content.

The ability to discern relevant details enhances inferential reasoning, which is essential for reading comprehension. Arifin (2020) argues that details provide contextual clues that help readers make predictions and interpretations beyond the surface-level meaning of a text. Goodwin and Petscher (2022) found that students who focus on details within a passage are better at constructing mental models that aid in comprehension and retention. Miyamoto (2024) further emphasizes that comprehension skills are strengthened when students learn to connect supporting details with background knowledge, allowing for more meaningful engagement with texts. Integrating guided reading strategies that teach students how to extract, evaluate, and organize textual details significantly enhances comprehension, enabling them to read with greater accuracy and depth.

One of the major challenges students face in reading comprehension is identifying key information from texts, which is essential for accurate understanding. According to Zhou, Duan, Liu, and Shum (2020), students who struggle with distinguishing critical information often experience difficulty in constructing a coherent representation of the text. Yao, Duan, Xu, Sun, and Zhang (2024) emphasize that students overwhelmed by excessive details fail to prioritize essential information, leading to poor comprehension and retention. Additionally, Fitria (2019) found that weak key information recognition impedes students' ability to summarize and synthesize information effectively.

Guided reading strategies that encourage active engagement, annotation, and questioning techniques help learners develop their ability to focus on crucial details, enhancing comprehension skills.

Cognitive overload further complicates students' ability to extract relevant information from texts, making comprehension more challenging. Dwivedi, Kshetri, Hughes, and Slade (2023) argue that digital reading environments increase distractions, making it harder for students to filter essential details. Indah and Toyyibah (2022) highlight that students lacking metacognitive strategies often misinterpret texts due to their inability to differentiate between main ideas and minor details. Sun, Yu, Chen, and Choi (2019) found that guided reading interventions that provide explicit instruction on text structure and signaling words improve students' ability to identify critical information. Implementing structured reading strategies helps students develop a systematic approach to information processing, reducing cognitive overload and improving overall reading comprehension.

Inference skills play a crucial role in reading comprehension, allowing students to go beyond the literal meaning of a text and derive implicit information. Oakhill, Cain, and Elbro (2019) emphasize that inference-making is essential for constructing a coherent mental representation of a text, as it enables readers to fill in gaps and connect ideas. Hall, Vaughn, and Barnes (2020) found that students who struggle with inference skills often exhibit poor comprehension, as they fail to integrate background knowledge with textual information. Additionally, Samiei and Ebadi (2021) highlight that inference skills are particularly significant in understanding complex or ambiguous texts, as they allow students to draw logical conclusions based on context. Guided reading strategies that focus on developing inference skills enhance students' ability to engage critically with texts and improve their overall reading comprehension.

The ability to make inferences is also strongly linked to academic success, as it supports critical thinking, problem-solving, and knowledge construction. Pearson and Palincsar (2020) argue that inferential reasoning helps students comprehend complex academic texts, as it enables them to interpret meaning beyond explicit statements. Clinton, Taylor, and Bajpayee (2020) highlight that inferential comprehension is particularly crucial when reading expository texts, where readers must integrate various sources of information. Similarly, Elleman and Oslund (2019) stress that inference generation contributes to learning across disciplines, as it allows students to analyze patterns, predict outcomes, and develop deeper conceptual understanding. By implementing guided reading strategies that encourage inferential thinking, educators can equip students with essential skills for effective reading comprehension and academic achievement.

One of the most prevalent challenges students encounter in reading comprehension is their struggle to identify main ideas and relevant supporting details. Wahyuni (2020) states that students often find it difficult to differentiate between essential and non-essential information, leading to poor summarization and misinterpretation of texts. Erlangga (2022) highlights that this difficulty is compounded by a lack of vocabulary, which hinders students from understanding key concepts. Additionally, Tatipang, Oroh, and Liando (2021) found that students with weak reading strategies often fail to establish connections between different sections of a text, resulting in fragmented comprehension. Guided reading strategies that emphasize explicit instruction in identifying main ideas and supporting details can significantly improve students' ability to process and understand texts more effectively.

Another major difficulty students face in reading comprehension is their inability to infer meaning and make logical connections within a text. Mariana and Sutisna (2020) found that students with weak inference skills struggle to grasp implied meanings, which limits their ability to analyze complex passages. Banditvilai (2020) asserts that inferential comprehension is crucial for understanding implicit ideas and drawing conclusions, but many students lack the cognitive strategies necessary for this skill. Furthermore, Puspitaloka (2022) discovered that students who do not engage in active reading techniques, such as questioning and predicting, often fail to connect prior knowledge with new information, leading to superficial comprehension. Guided reading strategies that incorporate inference training and scaffolded questioning can enhance students' ability to extract deeper meaning from texts and improve overall comprehension.

Inference skills play a crucial role in drawing conclusions during reading comprehension, as they enable readers to interpret implicit information and develop logical understandings beyond what is explicitly stated. Magnusson and Roe (2019) found that students who actively engage in inferential reasoning can construct deeper connections between textual elements, leading to more accurate conclusions. Similarly, Fitria (2019) highlights that inference-making helps students assess the validity and reliability of textual claims, allowing them to synthesize multiple ideas effectively. Gutiérrez de Blume and Jacovina (2019) emphasize that students with strong inferencing skills demonstrate better comprehension performance as they can bridge gaps in information and integrate their prior knowledge with new material. Guided reading strategies that emphasize inferential thinking encourage students to extract meaningful insights from texts and improve their ability to draw well-reasoned conclusions.

The process of drawing conclusions is significantly influenced by a reader's ability to identify textual cues and relate them to broader themes. Groen and Kleemans (2021) assert that successful conclusion-making requires

students to process textual details and apply cognitive reasoning to infer authorial intent. Elleman and Oslund (2019) found that students who struggle with inference often fail to form logical conclusions, leading to superficial comprehension and fragmented understanding of complex texts. Spencer, Wagner, and Petscher (2019) highlight that guided reading strategies that incorporate questioning techniques and scaffolded discussions enhance students' ability to develop well-supported conclusions. By engaging in structured inferential exercises, students improve their comprehension skills, enabling them to analyze, evaluate, and interpret information effectively.

One of the main challenges students face in conclusion-making during reading comprehension is their difficulty in synthesizing information from various parts of a text. According to Banditvilai (2020), many students struggle to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant details, making it difficult to form accurate conclusions. Tatipang, Oroh, and Liando (2021) found that students who lack structured reading strategies tend to rely on surface-level understanding rather than deeper analytical thinking, affecting their ability to draw meaningful inferences. Similarly, Saraswati, Dambayana, and Pratiwi (2021) emphasize that weak inferential skills hinder students from connecting textual information to broader themes, resulting in incomplete or incorrect conclusions. Implementing guided reading strategies that focus on structured questioning, summarization, and critical thinking exercises can help students improve their ability to extract essential details and develop well-founded conclusions.

Cognitive overload and limited metacognitive awareness further contribute to students' struggles in making conclusions. Baye and Inns (2019) found that students who encounter excessive information without proper guidance often experience difficulty in filtering key ideas, leading to confusion and misinterpretation. Haerazi and Irawan (2020) highlight that students with weak self-regulation skills struggle with drawing conclusions because they do not actively monitor their comprehension or evaluate the logical flow of ideas. Elleman and Oslund (2019) assert that guided reading strategies that encourage reflection, prediction, and discussion can help students develop a more structured approach to conclusion-making. By integrating inference training and cognitive scaffolding techniques, educators can enhance students' ability to analyze textual information and construct well-supported conclusions.

Guided Reading

Guided reading plays a crucial role in enhancing reading comprehension by providing students with structured support as they engage with texts. Banditvilai (2020) asserts that guided reading improves comprehension by fostering active engagement, where students apply reading strategies such as predicting, questioning, and summarizing. Proctor, Silverman, and Harring (2020) highlight that guided reading interventions that integrate academic language instruction significantly enhance students' ability to understand complex texts, particularly among bilingual learners. Additionally, Magnusson and Roe (2019) emphasize that guided reading strengthens goal-directed reading behaviors, which improve comprehension by encouraging students to focus on extracting meaning from texts rather than merely decoding words. Through guided reading, students develop critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of textual content, making it an effective approach to improving reading comprehension.

The effectiveness of guided reading lies in its ability to provide differentiated instruction tailored to students' reading levels and needs. Cilliers, Fleisch, and Prinsloo (2020) found that guided reading sessions incorporating in-classroom coaching lead to significant improvements in comprehension, as students receive immediate feedback and targeted support. Gutiérrez de Blume and Jacovina (2019) highlight that inferential comprehension skills, which are crucial for reading success, are better developed through structured reading activities like guided reading. Moreover, Duke, Ward, and Pearson (2021) assert that guided reading enhances students' ability to make connections between prior knowledge and new information, improving overall comprehension. By focusing on scaffolded instruction and individualized learning experiences, guided reading allows educators to address students' specific reading challenges effectively.

Guided reading also fosters metacognitive awareness, enabling students to monitor and regulate their comprehension processes. Petscher, Cabell, and Catts (2020) emphasize that guided reading interventions help students develop self-monitoring skills, which are essential for identifying comprehension breakdowns and applying corrective strategies. Brevik (2019) found that explicit reading strategy instruction, such as think-alouds and teacher-led discussions, improves students' comprehension by making the reading process more transparent and accessible. Similarly, Tovani (2023) underscores that guided reading encourages students to engage in deeper textual analysis, enhancing their ability to synthesize information and draw meaningful conclusions. By integrating metacognitive strategies, guided reading equips students with essential comprehension skills that contribute to lifelong reading success.

Implementing guided reading requires a structured approach to ensure its effectiveness in improving students' reading comprehension. According to Banditvilai (2020), the first step involves assessing students' reading

levels through diagnostic tests to place them into appropriate groups. Amin (2019) emphasizes that once students are grouped based on their reading abilities, educators must select appropriate texts that match their instructional needs and cognitive abilities. Bettany-Saltikov and McSherry (2024) suggest that before engaging students in guided reading, teachers should introduce vocabulary and provide background knowledge to facilitate understanding. These preparatory steps are essential to ensuring that students receive differentiated instruction that aligns with their specific reading levels, ultimately fostering more meaningful engagement with texts.

The next step in guided reading implementation involves structured reading sessions that promote student interaction and comprehension monitoring. Rashid and Warraich (2019) highlight that educators should model reading strategies, such as predicting, questioning, and summarizing, to help students develop metacognitive skills. Boushey and Moser (2023) found that allowing students to read independently while providing guidance through teacher-led discussions enhances comprehension and critical thinking. Amin (2019) suggests that post-reading activities, such as reflective writing and group discussions, encourage students to internalize their understanding and apply learned strategies to other texts. By systematically implementing guided reading in stages, educators create a scaffolded learning environment that promotes independent reading comprehension and analytical skills.

Research has consistently shown that guided reading is an effective strategy for improving students' reading comprehension. Banditvilai (2020) found that guided reading significantly enhances students' ability to process and retain information, particularly when paired with explicit instruction on reading strategies such as summarization and questioning. Apriliana (2022) observed that guided reading interventions led to a measurable improvement in students' comprehension skills, particularly in contexts where teachers actively facilitated discussions and monitored students' progress. Similarly, Magnusson and Roe (2019) highlighted that goal-directed reading instruction within guided reading frameworks enhances metacognitive awareness, helping students apply comprehension strategies across various text types. These findings indicate that guided reading fosters active engagement and provides students with the necessary tools to navigate complex texts effectively.

The effectiveness of guided reading has also been linked to improved academic outcomes, particularly among struggling readers. BogaerdsHazenberg et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis on guided reading and found that structured text instruction significantly enhances comprehension among upper elementary students. Haerazi and Irawan (2020) found that guided reading techniques were particularly effective in increasing students' motivation and self-efficacy in reading, contributing to long-term improvements in comprehension skills. Duke, Ward, and Pearson (2021) emphasized that guided reading enhances students' ability to synthesize information and make inferences, which are critical skills for academic success. These studies collectively support the notion that guided reading is a valuable instructional approach for fostering comprehension and critical thinking skills across diverse learning environments.

Developing students' comprehension skills requires strengthening their ability to identify main ideas, details, inferences, and conclusions. Stevens, Park, and Vaughn (2019) emphasize that explicit instruction in main idea identification significantly enhances reading comprehension, as it enables students to organize information efficiently. Elleman and Oslund (2019) found that inference-making plays a crucial role in comprehension since it requires readers to connect textual information with prior knowledge, thereby improving understanding. Additionally, Novasyari (2019) argues that the ability to analyze text structures helps students extract critical details, leading to better comprehension and the ability to make informed conclusions. These studies suggest that fostering these four comprehension components enhances
students' ability to interpret and synthesize information effectively.

The integration of guided reading strategies has been shown to improve students' ability to recognize main ideas, details, inferences, and conclusions. Yulian (2021) found that guided reading activities that incorporate questioning and discussion improve students' ability to draw inferences from texts. Amin (2019) suggests that structured reading approaches, such as guided reading, enhance students' ability to extract details and synthesize conclusions by fostering interactive learning experiences. Similarly, Duke, Ward, and Pearson (2021) highlight that guided reading enables students to actively engage with texts, thereby reinforcing their skills in recognizing key details and drawing conclusions. These findings indicate that guided reading is an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing multiple aspects of reading comprehension.

Teacher readiness plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of guided reading strategies. Ersin, Atay, and Mede (2020) emphasize that professional development programs significantly influence teachers' ability to deliver effective guided reading instruction, particularly in adapting lessons to diverse student needs. Similarly, Puzio and Colby (2020) highlight that educators who undergo targeted training in differentiated instruction are better equipped to scaffold students' comprehension skills effectively. Mahmudah and Rasyid (2022) assert that teachers who engage in continuous learning and reflection on their instructional practices demonstrate improved competency

in guided reading facilitation. These studies suggest that teacher preparation and professional development are essential in ensuring the effectiveness of guided reading strategies in enhancing student comprehension.

The availability of adequate teaching resources also significantly impacts the implementation of guided reading. Ayanwale, Sanusi, and Adelana (2022) found that limited access to instructional materials, such as leveled books and digital reading platforms, hinders teachers' ability to effectively conduct guided reading sessions. Karatas and Arpaci (2021) argue that technology-enhanced learning environments, including digital literacy tools and online collaborative platforms, support teachers in delivering engaging and interactive guided reading instruction. Lee and Hwang (2022) further emphasize that integrating innovative teaching resources, such as virtual reality-assisted reading programs, enhances students' comprehension and motivation in guided reading sessions. These findings underscore the necessity of providing educators with sufficient instructional resources to maximize the benefits of guided reading strategies.

2. Methods

This study used a quasi-experimental single-group design to assess how effective the Guided Reading Strategy is in improving the reading comprehension of Grade 4 students in selected public schools. This design was suitable because it aimed to measure the impact of an instructional intervention without having a separate control group, a common method in early research stages. The participants took a pretest and posttest to evaluate their reading comprehension levels before and after they used the Guided Reading Strategy.

All participating students received guided reading instruction through structured, teacher-facilitated reading sessions designed to support comprehension development. Participants were selected non-randomly, and pretest results were used to establish their baseline reading comprehension levels.

To evaluate progress, a standardized reading comprehension assessment was administered at both stages. This tool assessed comprehension across three levels: (1) Literal comprehension, which included identifying main ideas and specific details; (2) Inferential comprehension, which involved drawing logical conclusions and interpreting implied meanings; and (3) Evaluative comprehension, which focused on analyzing the text and making informed judgments.

3. Results and Discussions

Descriptive Statistics

	Pre_Lit	Pre_Infer	Pre_Critic	Total Pre
Mean	1.700	3.650	0.5000	5.850
Std. Deviation	0.6569	1.785	0.6070	2.390

Table 1. Reading comprehension level of the students based on the pretest scores

Table 1 shows the reading comprehension levels of the students based on their pretest scores in three areas: literal, inferential, and critical comprehension. The average score for literal comprehension is 1.70, with a standard deviation of 0.66. This means that most students scored similarly at a low level in this area. Scores ranged from a minimum of 1.00 to a maximum of 3.00. This suggests that students have a limited ability to recall or recognize information stated directly in texts. Among the three areas, inferential comprehension had the highest average score of 3.65, while critical comprehension had the lowest average score of 0.50, indicating a minimal ability for evaluative thinking. The overall average score across all areas is 5.85 out of a possible 15. This reflects generally low performance in reading comprehension before any intervention.

Reading Comprehension Level of Elementary Pupils – Posttest

Table 1 displays the reading comprehension levels of students based on their pretest scores in three areas: literal, inferential, and critical comprehension. The average score for literal comprehension is 1.70, with a standard deviation of 0.66. This shows that most students scored similarly at a low level in this area. Scores ranged from a minimum of 1.00 to a maximum of 3.00. This suggests that students have a limited ability to recall or recognize information stated directly in texts. Among the three areas, inferential comprehension had the highest average score of 3.65, while critical comprehension had the lowest average score of 0.50, indicating minimal skill in evaluative thinking. The overall average score across all areas is 5.85 out of a possible 15, reflecting generally low performance in reading comprehension before any intervention.

Table 2 presents the reading comprehension level of the pupils based on the posttest scores.

	Post_Lit	Post_Infer	Post_Critic	Total Post
Mean	1.350	6.650	0.4500	8.450
Std. Deviation	0.9333	2.477	0.6863	3.000

Table 2. Reading comprehension level of the pupils based on the posttest scores

Table 2 shows the reading comprehension levels of the pupils based on their posttest scores after using the Guided Reading Strategy. The highest mean score was in inferential comprehension (mean = 6.65). This indicates a significant improvement in students' ability to interpret and draw conclusions from texts. Literal comprehension had a lower mean of 1.35, with scores ranging from 0 to 3. This suggests only slight progress in identifying information that is clearly stated. Critical comprehension had the lowest score among the three areas, with a mean of 0.45, showing minimal development in evaluative thinking. The total posttest mean score rose to 8.45, indicating overall gains in reading comprehension. However, improvement varied across the different comprehension areas.

Significant Difference Between Pretest and Posttest Scores in Literal Comprehension

This section shows the results of the statistical analysis done to see if there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the pupils regarding literal comprehension. A paired samples t-test compared the two sets of scores before and after using the Guided Reading Strategy. The test aimed to check if the changes in pupils' ability to recall and recognize information stated directly in texts were statistically significant.

Literal Comprehension

This section shows the results of the paired samples t-test. This test checked if there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the pupils regarding literal comprehension. The analysis looks at how effective the Guided Reading Strategy is in helping students recall information that is clearly stated.

			t	df	p
Pre_Lit	-	Post_Lit	1.437	19	0.167

Note. Student's t-test.

T = 1.437
P value = 0.167
DR: There is no significant difference in achievements of pretest and posttest.
Interpretation: Learners did not learn anything during the experimental period.

Table 3. Paired Samples T-Test on Literal comnprehension

Table 3 shows that the paired samples t-test resulted in a t-value of 1.437 with 19 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.167. Because the p-value is greater than 0.05, the results indicate no statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in literal comprehension. This suggests that the intervention did not have a measurable effect on the learners' ability to understand literal content. It implies that no substantial learning took place in this specific area during the experimental period.

Inferential

This section shows the results of the paired samples t-test. This test was done to see if there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the pupils regarding inferential comprehension. The analysis looks at how the Guided Reading Strategy affects students' ability to interpret and draw logical conclusions from texts.

T = -4.485
P value = <.001
DR: There is a significant difference in mean scores between prete3st and posttest.
Interpretation: Learners learned inferential comprehension during the experimental period.

Paired Samples T-Test

			t	df	p
Pre_Infer	-	Post_Infer	-4.485	19	< .001

Note. Student's t-test.

Table 4. Paired Samples T-Test on Inferential

Table 4 shows that the paired samples t-test produced a t-value of -4.485 with 19 degrees of freedom and a p-value of less than .001. Since the p-value is much lower than the 0.05 significance level, the result indicates a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in inferential comprehension. This suggests that the learners showed noteworthy improvement in their inferential reading skills. It indicates that the Guided Reading Strategy was effective in improving their ability to understand implied meanings during the experimental period.

Critical Comprehension

This section shows the result of the paired samples t-test done to find out if there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the pupils regarding critical comprehension. This analysis investigates whether the Guided Reading Strategy affected learners' ability to evaluate, judge, and form reasoned opinions about texts.

			t	df	p
Pre_Critic	-	Post_Critic	0.271	19	0.789

Note. Student's t-test.

T = 0.271

P value = 0.789

DR: Learners did not learned critical comprehension during the experimental period

Table 5. Paired Samples T-Test on Critical Comprehension

As shown in Table 5, the paired samples t-test produced a t-value of 0.271 with 19 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.789. Since the p-value is much higher than the 0.05 significance level, this result indicates that there is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in critical comprehension. This suggests that the learners did not show measurable improvement in their critical reading skills during the experimental period. It implies that the intervention was ineffective in developing their evaluative and analytical abilities.

Overall Reading Comprehension

This section shows the result of the paired samples t-test performed to evaluate the overall improvement in reading comprehension among the pupils. The analysis compared the total scores from the pretest and posttest. This helped determine how effective the Guided Reading Strategy was in all areas: literal, inferential, and critical comprehension.

			t	df	p
Total Pre	-	Total Post	-3.426	19	0.003

Note. Student's t-test.

T = -3.426

P VALUE = 0.003

DR: There is a significant difference in overall reading comprehension between pretest and posttest mean scores.

Table 6. Paired Samples T-Test on Overall Reading Comprehension

As shown in Table 5, the paired samples t-test produced a t-value of -3.426, with 19 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.003. Because the p-value is less than 0.05, the result shows a statistically significant difference between the overall pretest and posttest scores. This indicates that the learners made noticeable improvements in their reading comprehension during the experimental period. It suggests that the Guided Reading Strategy positively affected their reading performance.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study presents these conclusions from the analysis and interpretation of the reading comprehension performance of elementary pupils who took part in the Guided Reading Strategy intervention:

1. The pretest findings showed that students had low reading comprehension skills, especially in literal and critical areas. This indicates a need for organized reading support.
2. The Guided Reading Strategy led to a meaningful improvement in inferential comprehension. This suggests it effectively helps students interpret and connect ideas within a text.
3. No significant improvement was seen in literal and critical comprehension. This suggests that the strategy alone may not sufficiently support basic and evaluative reading skills.

4. The overall reading comprehension of learners showed a significant increase. This demonstrates that the intervention positively affected students' reading performance.

5. The results show that Guided Reading helps develop deeper thinking and inference-making. However, more focused instruction might be necessary to improve literal recall and critical analysis skills.

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