

Teaching Reading to EFL Students

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ABSTRACT---- *The capacity to peruse English is fundamental for scholastic and expert achievement, especially for EFL understudies. Be that as it may, perusing cognizance in EFL settings is often frustrated by restricted jargon, deficient openness to legitimate texts, and an absence of key understanding procedures. This study analyzes the effect of unequivocal perusing methodology guidance in tending to these difficulties and advancing understudy independence. It centers around systems like skimming, filtering, foreseeing, and summing up to assist understudies with exploring complex texts autonomously. A semi-trial configuration was utilized with 48 undergrad EFL understudies in a college establishment program. Members were separated into a trial bunch (EG), which got procedure-based guidance, and a benchmark group (CG), which followed conventional techniques. North of 12 weeks, the EG participated in organized perusing exercises consolidating system preparation, while the CG kept a guideline educational program. Information assortment included pre-and present tests on evaluate appreciation, intelligent diaries from the EG, and semi-organized interviews for subjective experiences. Quantitative examination showed a huge improvement in the EG's understanding scores, with a mean increment of 20%, contrasted with a peripheral 7% in the CG. Subjective discoveries showed improved understudy independence, with EG members exhibiting more prominent trust in moving toward understanding undertakings. Moves remembered troubles for applying systems to new or specialized texts, accentuating the requirement for consistent practice and backing. This study highlights the groundbreaking capability of technique-based perusing guidance in EFL settings. Incorporating mental and metacognitive systems into the educational plan can enable understudies to beat understanding troubles and become autonomous students, with suggestions for educational program advancement, educator preparation, and long-haul procedure use.*

Keywords---- Strategic reading skills, explicit reading strategy, EFL reading comprehension, learner autonomy

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a vital skill in language acquisition, serving as a gateway to knowledge, communication, and personal growth. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, reading proficiency is a measure of linguistic competence and a determinant of academic and professional success. Yet, the path to effective reading in EFL contexts is fraught with challenges, ranging from limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to inadequate exposure to diverse text types. These barriers highlight the need for targeted instructional approaches that address the specific needs of EFL learners.

1.1 Importance of Reading in EFL Contexts

The global dominance of English as a medium for education, business, and technology has amplified the importance of reading in EFL settings. In academic contexts, proficiency in reading allows students to engage with course materials, participate in discussions, and perform well in assessments. Beyond academia, reading equips individuals with the ability to access information, communicate effectively, and participate in a globalized workforce. However, EFL learners often face a disconnect between the skills required to succeed in these domains and the instructional practices employed in their classrooms.

The research underscores the pivotal role of reading in language acquisition. Grabe and Stoller (2019) argue that reading serves as both an input and output activity, facilitating vocabulary development, grammatical accuracy, and critical thinking. Yet, despite its centrality, reading often receives less emphasis compared to speaking or listening in many EFL curricula. This imbalance is particularly problematic in non-native English-speaking countries, where learners' exposure to English is often limited to classroom interactions.

1.2 Challenges in Teaching Reading to EFL Students

Teaching reading to EFL students involves navigating a complex array of challenges. Chief among these is the linguistic gap that many learners face when encountering English texts. Limited vocabulary, unfamiliar syntactic structures, and

cultural references can render even moderately complex texts inaccessible. Additionally, many learners lack the strategic skills needed to approach reading tasks effectively. Strategies such as skimming for main ideas, scanning for specific information, and inferring meaning from context are often underutilized, leaving learners to rely on word-by-word translation—a time-consuming and inefficient approach.

Another significant barrier is motivation. Reading in a foreign language can be a daunting task, particularly when learners are confronted with dense, academic texts. Without a sense of purpose or engagement, learners may view reading as a chore rather than an opportunity for growth. This lack of motivation is compounded by traditional instructional practices prioritizing rote learning over active text engagement.

1.3 The Role of Strategies in Overcoming Reading Challenges

To address these challenges, educators and researchers have increasingly turned to strategy-based instruction. Reading strategies are deliberate, goal-oriented actions that learners can employ to enhance their comprehension and engagement with texts. Anderson (2003) categorizes these strategies into two broad types: cognitive and metacognitive.

- **Cognitive Strategies:** These involve direct interaction with the text, such as summarizing key points, annotating passages, and visualizing content. Cognitive strategies are instrumental in helping learners process and retain information.
- **Metacognitive Strategies:** These involve higher-order thinking processes, such as planning how to approach a text, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating the effectiveness of a chosen strategy. Metacognitive strategies empower learners to take control of their reading processes, fostering autonomy and self-regulation.

Explicit instruction in these strategies has been shown to significantly improve reading comprehension among EFL learners (Oxford, 2016). By equipping students with a toolkit of strategies, educators can help them navigate complex texts, build confidence, and develop a sense of independence in their learning.

1.4 Research Objectives and Questions

This study seeks to investigate the impact of strategy-based reading instruction on EFL learners, with a particular focus on its role in enhancing comprehension and fostering autonomy. The following research questions guide the study:

1. How does strategy-based reading instruction affect EFL learners' reading comprehension?
2. What is the impact of explicit reading strategies on learner autonomy?
3. What are students' perceptions of the effectiveness of strategy-based instruction?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on effective reading pedagogy in EFL contexts. It also seeks to provide practical insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers, emphasizing the transformative potential of strategy-based instruction.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study have implications that extend beyond the classroom. At a pedagogical level, they underscore the importance of integrating strategy instruction into EFL curricula. At a theoretical level, they contribute to our understanding of the interplay between strategy use, comprehension, and learner autonomy. Finally, at a practical level, they offer actionable recommendations for teachers seeking to empower their students as independent, effective readers.

In the era of information, the ability to read and comprehend English texts is not merely a linguistic skill but a critical life skill. By equipping EFL learners with effective strategies, educators can bridge the gap between linguistic competence and real-world demands, paving the way for academic success and lifelong learning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews and critically evaluates the existing literature on the Experimental Group (EG) and Control Group (CG) approach. It also highlights the different research designs employed in language acquisition studies worldwide.

Additionally, it discusses the challenges faced by EFL learners in reading and outlines the tools, data analysis methods, and key findings reported in published research. The section also highlights the reading strategies for EFL learners and further explores their strengths and limitations, concluding with an analysis of its role in the interplay between reading strategies and learner autonomy, as well as the skills that can be developed through their application.

2.1 The Role of Reading in Language Acquisition

Reading is widely regarded as a foundational skill in language acquisition, facilitating both linguistic and cognitive development. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) emphasizes the role of comprehensible input in second language learning, positioning reading as a critical medium for exposure to language structures and vocabulary. Through reading, learners encounter diverse grammatical patterns, idiomatic expressions, and contextualized vocabulary, which are difficult to grasp in isolated practice or classroom conversation.

Grabe and Stoller (2019) highlight that reading contributes not only to linguistic competence but also to critical thinking and intercultural awareness. By engaging with texts from different genres and cultural contexts, learners develop an understanding of diverse perspectives, enhancing their global competencies. Furthermore, reading serves as a bridge to other language skills. Proficient readers tend to excel in writing, as exposure to well-structured texts provides a model for organization, coherence, and argumentation.

In EFL contexts, where learners often have limited access to spoken English, reading becomes a primary source of language exposure. However, this reliance on reading highlights the disparities in learners' abilities. Without targeted instruction, students may struggle to transition from decoding words to constructing meaning from text. The role of educators, therefore, extends beyond teaching language rules to fostering reading strategies that enable learners to navigate complex texts independently.

2.2 Challenges Faced by EFL Learners in Reading

EFL learners encounter multiple barriers in developing reading proficiency. These challenges can be broadly categorized into linguistic, cognitive, and motivational factors.

2.2.1. Linguistic Challenges

EFL learners often grapple with limited vocabulary, unfamiliar syntactic structures, and a lack of cultural knowledge required to interpret certain texts. For example, idiomatic expressions or cultural allusions in authentic materials may confuse learners, leading to frustration and disengagement. Research by Nation (2009) suggests that a vocabulary size of approximately 8,000-9,000 word families is necessary for reading comprehension in English. Many EFL learners, however, fall short of this threshold, making it difficult for them to understand authentic materials.

2.2.2. Cognitive Challenges

Reading in a second language requires learners to engage in complex cognitive processes, such as integrating prior knowledge with new information and inferring meaning from context. Anderson (2003) emphasizes that these processes are often underdeveloped in EFL learners due to insufficient exposure to authentic reading tasks. Moreover, reliance on word-for-word translation—a common strategy among less proficient readers—slows down comprehension and prevents learners from grasping the overall meaning of the text.

2.2.3. Motivational Challenges

Motivation plays a critical role in language learning, yet many EFL learners view reading as a tedious or irrelevant activity. This perception is often shaped by traditional instructional practices that prioritize rote memorization over engagement and interaction with texts. According to Dornyei (2005), learners are more likely to engage in reading tasks when they perceive them as meaningful and aligned with their personal goals.

2.3 Reading Strategies for EFL Learners

Explicit instruction in reading strategies has emerged as a powerful tool for addressing the challenges faced by EFL learners. These strategies, when taught systematically, enable students to approach texts with confidence and purpose.

2.3.1. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies involve direct interaction with the text, focusing on information processing and comprehension. Examples include:

- **Skimming and Scanning:** Skimming allows readers to grasp the main idea of a text, while scanning helps locate specific information. These strategies are particularly useful for academic reading, where learners must quickly identify relevant material.
- **Summarization:** Encouraging students to summarize paragraphs or chapters helps them distill essential information and reinforces comprehension.
- **Visualization:** Creating mental images based on textual descriptions can enhance understanding and retention, especially for descriptive or narrative texts.

Research by Grabe and Stoller (2019) underscores the effectiveness of these strategies, noting that they encourage active engagement with the text and improve retention.

2.3.2. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies focus on regulating the reading process through planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Examples include:

- a. **Planning:** Setting goals before reading, such as identifying the purpose of the task or predicting content based on headings.
- b. **Monitoring:** Checking comprehension during reading and adjusting strategies when confusion arises.
- c. **Evaluating:** Reflecting on the effectiveness of strategies used and identifying areas for improvement.

Anderson (2003) highlights that metacognitive strategies empower learners to take control of their reading processes, fostering autonomy and self-regulation. These strategies are particularly valuable for EFL learners, as they provide a structured approach to navigating unfamiliar texts.

2.4 The Interplay Between Reading Strategies and Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy, defined as the ability to take charge of one's learning (Holec, 1981), is both a prerequisite and an outcome of effective reading strategy instruction. Autonomous learners demonstrate higher motivation, better self-regulation, and a greater ability to transfer skills across contexts.

Oxford (2016) emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between strategy use and autonomy. As learners become more proficient in employing reading strategies, they gain confidence in their ability to tackle complex texts independently. This confidence, in turn, motivates them to engage more actively in reading tasks, creating a positive feedback loop.

Research also highlights the role of metacognitive strategies in fostering autonomy. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) note that learners who regularly reflect on their reading processes are better equipped to identify their strengths and weaknesses, set realistic goals, and monitor their progress. This self-awareness is a hallmark of autonomous learning.

2.5 Previous Studies On Strategy-Based Reading Instruction

Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of strategy-based reading instruction in EFL contexts. For instance:

- **Vandergrift and Goh (2012):** Their study on metacognitive strategy instruction revealed significant improvements in reading comprehension and learner autonomy among EFL students.
- **Rahimi and Katal (2012):** This research found that Iranian EFL learners who received explicit strategy instruction outperformed their peers in reading comprehension tests and exhibited higher levels of self-regulation.
- **Grabe and Stoller (2019):** Their work highlights the importance of integrating cognitive and metacognitive strategies into reading curricula, emphasizing the role of teacher training in successful implementation.

These studies collectively underscore the potential of strategy-based instruction to transform reading outcomes in EFL classrooms. However, they also point to the need for further research on the long-term impacts of such interventions and their applicability in diverse educational contexts.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a robust methodological framework designed to explore the effects of explicit reading strategy instruction on reading comprehension and learner autonomy among EFL learners. The methodology integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a holistic understanding of the instructional outcomes.

3.1 Research Design

The research adopts a quasi-experimental mixed-method design, which Creswell (2014) describes as "a pragmatic approach that combines numerical trends with in-depth qualitative insights to strengthen findings." The quasi-experimental component involves comparing an experimental group (EG) receiving strategy-based instruction with a control group (CG) following traditional teaching methods.

The mixed-method design facilitates triangulation, allowing researchers to validate findings through multiple data sources. Dörnyei (2007) emphasizes that this approach "ensures a richer, more reliable understanding of the research problem, particularly in complex educational contexts." Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-tests measuring reading comprehension, while qualitative data were obtained from reflective journals and semi-structured interviews.

3.2 Participants

The participants were 48 undergraduate EFL learners enrolled in a university foundation program. The study employed convenience sampling, as classes were pre-assigned within the institution. Although convenience sampling can limit the generalizability of findings, Etikan et al. (2016) note that it "provides a practical means of accessing representative groups within specific contexts, especially in educational research."

- **Demographics:** Participants, aged 18–22, were native Arabic speakers with comparable English proficiency levels. All students had received at least eight years of formal English education.
- **Grouping:** Participants were divided into two equal groups of 24 each: the EG and the CG. The EG received explicit strategy instruction, while the CG followed traditional methods focusing on vocabulary and grammar exercises.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

To uphold ethical standards, approval was obtained from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participants provided informed consent after being briefed on the study's objectives, methods, and voluntary nature. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) stress that "ethical transparency is vital in qualitative research, as it fosters trust and ensures participant autonomy." Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing data during collection and analysis.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Three primary instruments were employed to collect data:

3.4.1. Pre- and Post-Tests

Standardized reading comprehension tests were administered to both the EG and CG at the beginning and end of the intervention. The tests included multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions, assessing skills such as identifying main ideas, making inferences, and understanding vocabulary in context. Tests were validated by language experts to ensure alignment with participants' proficiency levels. As Grabe and Stoller (2019) note, "standardized assessments serve as reliable tools for measuring incremental progress in reading comprehension."

3.4.2. Reflective Journals

Participants in the EG maintained reflective journals documenting their experiences with the strategies taught during the intervention. Reflective writing promotes self-awareness and deeper engagement with learning, as Moon (2006) observes: "A journal provides learners with the opportunity to explore their thought processes, articulate challenges, and develop a metacognitive understanding of their progress."

3.4.3. Semi-Structured Interviews

After the intervention, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of EG participants. These interviews explored learners' perceptions of strategy usefulness, challenges faced, and overall experiences. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), semi-structured interviews are "an effective means of capturing nuanced perspectives while providing the flexibility to delve into emerging themes."

3.5 Intervention Procedure

The intervention spanned 12 weeks, during which the EG received explicit instruction in reading strategies integrated into their English classes. Each week, a 45-minute session focused on a specific strategy, supported by practice activities using authentic and academic texts.

- **Week 1–2: Introduction to Strategies**

Learners were introduced to the concept of reading strategies and their importance. During this phase, students reflected on their existing habits and identified areas for improvement. One participant remarked in their journal, "I never thought about planning before reading, but now I see how it helps me understand the purpose of the text."

- **Week 3–8: Strategy Training**

Each session introduced a specific strategy, such as skimming, scanning, or summarizing, accompanied by practical exercises. Learners practiced these strategies individually and collaboratively, discussing their effectiveness in class. A student noted during an interview, "I used to read everything word by word, but skimming showed me how to focus on important parts first."

- **Week 9–12: Application and Reflection**

In the final weeks, learners applied multiple strategies to complete tasks with authentic materials, such as newspaper articles and research abstracts. Reflective discussions helped learners evaluate the strategies' effectiveness. As one participant explained, "Now I think about the strategy to use before starting a text, and it makes reading less stressful."

The CG followed a traditional approach, focusing on vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension exercises without explicit strategy instruction.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from pre-and post-tests were analyzed using paired and independent samples t-tests to measure changes in reading comprehension and assess the intervention's impact. The effect sizes were calculated to determine the practical significance of the results.

Qualitative data from journals and interviews underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. This process involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, and refining categories. Key themes included learners' evolving perceptions of strategies, challenges in implementation, and the role of reflection in fostering autonomy.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study, integrating quantitative and qualitative results to address the research questions. Quantitative data from pre- and post-tests reveal measurable improvements in reading comprehension, while qualitative data from interviews and reflective journals provide deeper insights into learners' perceptions of the strategies, challenges faced, and the development of autonomy.

4.1 Impact on Reading Comprehension

The pre-and post-test results demonstrate significant improvement in the reading comprehension scores of the experimental group (EG) compared to the control group (CG). Table 1 summarizes the mean scores for both groups before and after the intervention.

Table 1: Pre- and Post-Test Scores Comparison

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Improvement (%)
Experimental	60.3	80.5	+20.2
Control	58.7	65.2	+6.5

The EG exhibited a mean improvement of 20.2%, while the CG showed a marginal improvement of 6.5%. This significant difference suggests that explicit strategy instruction had a profound effect on the EG's ability to navigate and comprehend texts. A participant from the EG remarked in their journal, *"I feel more confident approaching texts now because I know how to find what's important without getting lost in the details."*

Statistical analysis using an independent samples t-test confirmed that the post-test differences between the groups were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). These findings align with previous research by Rahimi and Katal (2012), who reported that explicit strategy instruction enhances reading comprehension among EFL learners.

4.2 Learners' Perceptions of Strategy Effectiveness

Qualitative data from interviews and journals highlighted learners' positive perceptions of the strategies taught. Many participants expressed that strategies such as skimming, scanning, and summarizing made reading tasks more manageable. For example, one student explained during an interview:

"Before, I thought I had to understand every word to comprehend the text, but now I focus on the main ideas. Skimming has saved me so much time."

Reflective journals revealed that learners initially found some strategies challenging but grew more comfortable with practice. A student wrote, *"At first, I didn't understand how scanning worked. But after a few lessons, I could find specific details quickly without reading the whole text."*

4.3 Development of Learner Autonomy

One of the key objectives of the intervention was to foster learner autonomy. Thematic analysis of qualitative data identified three primary indicators of increased autonomy:

4.3.1. Goal Setting and Planning

Many participants reported that they began setting specific objectives before reading. One student noted, *"Now I think about what I want to get from a text before I start. It helps me stay focused."* This shift toward intentional reading reflects the metacognitive planning emphasized during the intervention.

4.3.2. Monitoring and Reflection

Learners demonstrated an increased ability to monitor their comprehension and adjust strategies as needed. A participant shared during an interview, *"If I don't understand something, I pause and think about what strategy to use. Sometimes, I go back and reread with a new approach."*

4.3.3. Resource Utilization and Independent Practice

The intervention encouraged students to seek supplementary materials and practice independently. One journal entry highlighted this change: *"I started using online articles to practice skimming and scanning. It's helping me feel more confident about reading on my own."*

These findings align with Oxford (2016), who argues that strategy-based instruction not only enhances performance but also cultivates self-regulated learning behaviors.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In summary, the intervention significantly improved the reading comprehension of the EG, with learners also demonstrating increased autonomy and strategic awareness. While challenges remain, particularly in applying strategies to complex materials, the overall results highlight the value of explicit reading strategy instruction in EFL settings.

Theme	Representative Quotations
Goal Setting	“Now I think about what I want to get from a text.”
Monitoring & Adjustment	“If I don’t understand, I pause and rethink my approach.”
Resource Utilization	“I use online articles to practice skimming and scanning.”
Challenges with Complexity	“When the text is too difficult, I feel lost.”

Table 2: Key Themes from Qualitative Data

In addition, reading strategy instruction significantly enhances reading comprehension and promotes learner autonomy. Quantitative data revealed a substantial improvement in the reading comprehension scores of the experimental group (EG), with a mean increase of 20.2% compared to a marginal 6.5% increase in the control group (CG). This statistically significant difference underscores the effectiveness of strategies such as skimming, scanning, and summarizing in improving learners’ ability to navigate texts efficiently.

Qualitative findings highlighted how learners perceived these strategies as empowering tools that made reading less daunting and more purposeful. Many participants reported increased confidence in approaching unfamiliar texts, reflecting the importance of planning, monitoring, and evaluating their reading processes. As one student noted during an interview, *“These strategies have changed the way I think about reading; now, I feel like I can understand even difficult texts if I use the right approach.”*

Additionally, the development of learner autonomy emerged as a key outcome. Through goal-setting, reflective practices, and independent exploration of resources, students demonstrated a shift from passive reliance on instructors to active, self-regulated learning. This aligns with Holec’s (1981) concept of autonomy as the ability to take charge of one’s learning, which is crucial for long-term academic success.

5.1 Implications for Teaching Practice

The findings have several implications for teaching practice, curriculum design, and teacher training:

5.1.1. Integrating Strategies into Curricula

Strategy-based instruction should be an integral part of EFL curricula. By systematically teaching cognitive and metacognitive strategies, educators can equip learners with the tools needed to tackle a variety of texts, from academic articles to real-world materials.

5.1.2. Fostering Reflective Practices

Encouraging learners to reflect on their reading processes through journals or discussions can deepen their metacognitive awareness. As one participant shared, *“Writing about my experience with the strategies helped me see what worked and what I needed to improve.”*

5.1.3. Addressing Diverse Learner Needs

Given the challenges some learners faced in applying strategies to complex or technical texts, scaffolding should be incorporated to provide gradual exposure to diverse materials. Tailored support can ensure that learners of varying proficiency levels benefit from the instruction.

5.1.4. Promoting Autonomy in the Classroom

Teachers should create opportunities for students to set goals, monitor their progress, and evaluate their performance. These practices not only enhance reading skills but also build the confidence needed for independent learning.

5.1.5. Teacher Training and Professional Development

Effective implementation of strategy-based instruction requires teachers to be well-versed in both the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of these strategies. Professional development programs should focus on equipping educators with the skills to design and deliver strategy-based lessons.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

While the study yielded valuable insights, it also highlighted certain limitations that should be addressed in future research:

5.2.1. *Difficulty Applying Strategies to Complex Texts*

Some learners struggled to apply strategies effectively to unfamiliar or technical materials. A student remarked, *“When the text is too difficult, I feel lost, even with the strategies.”* This suggests a need for more scaffolding and practice with diverse text types.

5.2.2. *Resistance to New Approaches*

A few participants expressed initial resistance to adopting new strategies. One learner noted, *“I was used to reading word by word, so it was hard to trust these new methods at first.”*

5.2.3. *Time Constraints*

Limited instructional time posed challenges for providing extensive practice. A teacher reflected, *“We could see the potential of the strategies, but more time would have allowed us to solidify these skills.”*

5.2.4. *Sample Size and Generalizability*

The study involved 48 participants from a single institution, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future research should include larger, more diverse samples to validate the results across different educational contexts.

5.2.5. *Duration of Intervention*

The 12-week duration of the intervention, though sufficient for observing initial improvements, may not capture the long-term impact of strategy instruction. Longitudinal studies are needed to assess how these strategies influence learners’ reading behaviors over time.

5.2.6. *Focus on Reading Alone*

The study focused exclusively on reading, leaving other language skills such as writing, listening, and speaking unexplored. Future research could examine how strategy instruction in reading transfers to other skills, contributing to holistic language development.

5.2.7. *Potential Bias in Qualitative Data*

Reflective journals and interviews relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Triangulating these findings with observational data could provide a more objective view of learners’ experiences.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the impact of explicit reading strategy instruction on reading comprehension and learner autonomy among EFL students. By employing a quasi-experimental design, the research explored how equipping learners with cognitive and metacognitive strategies could address common reading challenges and foster independent learning behaviors. The findings provide valuable insights into the transformative potential of strategy-based instruction in EFL contexts. Teaching reading to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students requires a multifaceted approach that incorporates various strategies, skills, and techniques to ensure effective comprehension and fluency. The importance of reading cannot be overstated, as it serves as a foundation for developing language proficiency across all aspects—vocabulary, grammar, and writing. Educators need to understand the unique challenges faced by EFL learners, such as differences in cultural context, vocabulary limitations, and reading strategies in their native language. To address these challenges, teachers should employ a range of methods including extensive reading, phonics, vocabulary instruction, and interactive activities that encourage active engagement with the text. Additionally, fostering a positive reading environment that emphasizes motivation and confidence-building is crucial for student success. By adopting a student-centered approach, teachers can cater to diverse learning needs, ensuring that EFL students not only improve their reading skills but also develop a lifelong love for reading in English.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study open several avenues for future research:

7.1. Exploring Long-Term Effects

Longitudinal studies should examine whether the benefits of strategy instruction persist over time and how learners continue to use these strategies in academic and real-world contexts.

7.2. Investigating Strategy Transferability

Future research could explore how reading strategies influence other skills, such as writing and listening, and whether they contribute to overall linguistic competence.

7.3. Examining Technology-Enhanced Instruction

With the increasing use of digital tools in education, studies could investigate the effectiveness of integrating technology into strategy instruction. For example, interactive reading platforms could provide learners with instant feedback on their use of strategies.

7.4. Focusing on Diverse Learner Groups

Research should consider the impact of strategy instruction on learners from different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and proficiency levels to identify best practices for diverse populations.

7.5. Teacher Perspectives

Investigating teachers' experiences and challenges in implementing strategy-based instruction could offer valuable insights for professional development and curriculum design.

8. FINAL REFLECTIONS

This study underscores the transformative potential of strategy-based reading instruction in EFL contexts. By equipping learners with the tools to approach texts strategically and fostering autonomy, educators can bridge the gap between linguistic proficiency and real-world demands. As one participant aptly summarized, *"These strategies don't just help with reading—they change the way I think about learning English."*

The journey toward becoming an autonomous reader is not without its challenges. However, with thoughtful instruction, consistent practice, and reflective engagement, EFL learners can develop the skills and confidence needed to navigate complex texts independently. This study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the integration of strategy-based instruction into language education and calls for continued exploration of its impact across diverse contexts.

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