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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFL Students' Voices on Collaborative Strategic Reading: A Qualitative Study of Perception and Motivation in Reading Class

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Abstract: Reading plays a critical role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, serving not only as a core linguistic skill but also as a gateway to academic success. This study explores EFL students' perceptions of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) and examines its influence on their motivation to engage in reading activities. Using a qualitative descriptive design, the data were collected from fifth-semester students enrolled in the Critical Reading course at Universitas Negeri Makassar through questionnaires and interviews. The findings revealed that students generally perceived CSR positively, recognizing its benefits in improving comprehension, clarifying complex texts, and promoting active participation. The CSR stages of preview, click & clunk, get the gist, and wrap up were largely seen as clear and practical, though some initial confusion was noted. Moreover, CSR fostered students' engagement and enjoyment by creating an interactive and collaborative learning environment. Importantly, the strategy significantly boosted students' reading motivation, both intrinsically and extrinsically, by making reading more structured, enjoyable, and socially rewarding. Further research could explore its long-term effects on academic achievement and its adaptability across different language proficiency levels.

Keywords: Collaborative Strategic Reading, EFL Students' Perception, EFL Students' Motivation, EFL Reading Class.

1. Introduction

Reading is widely recognized as one of the most fundamental learning processes, particularly when acquiring a new language (Floris & Divina, 2009; Akabuike & Asika, 2012; Tien, 2015; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Among the four core language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—reading holds a distinctive position due to its direct link to academic success and access to knowledge. In many EFL contexts, reading is not only a means of language acquisition but also a gateway to broader educational content, as a substantial portion of global knowledge, especially in scientific and academic fields, is documented in written English (Chandra, 2021). As a result, reading skills serve as a prerequisite for academic literacy, as it enables learners to navigate textbooks, scholarly articles, manuals, and digital resources.

In academic settings, the ability to comprehend English texts is foundational for students to access global sources of knowledge, stay updated with scientific developments, and actively engage in scholarly discussions (Lalicic & Dubravac, 2021). Moreover, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) emphasized reading as a pivotal pillar in academic learning. Thus, learners must possess



adequate reading comprehension skills. It is not enough to decode words; students must be able to understand, interpret, analyze, and evaluate information within a text. Effective reading comprehension involves a combination of linguistic knowledge, background knowledge, and cognitive strategies. Without these skills, learners may be able to read individual words but fail to grasp the overall meaning, which limits their ability to extract information, learn independently, and engage critically with texts.

However, many EFL students continue to face challenges in reading comprehension. One of the main issues in EFL reading classes is the lack of active student engagement. Various studies reveal that student engagement plays a crucial role in enhancing reading comprehension in EFL classrooms. Studies show that when learners actively participate through strategies like group discussions, questioning, and collaborative reading, their reading comprehension improve significantly (Linung, 2023; Wahyurianto & Sylvia, 2024). In contrast, passive learning environments and lack of motivation often lead to surface-level understanding and lower reading performance (Klauda & Guthrie, 2015; Permatasari & Wienanda, 2023).

Reading activities are often conducted in an individual and passive manner, where students are instructed to read texts, answer questions, and complete tasks without being equipped with meaningful strategies to support their comprehension. This conventional approach frequently results in students struggling to understand reading materials while gradually losing interest and motivation. Consequently, there is an urgent need for instructional strategies that emphasize not only the outcomes but also the learning processes—strategies that empower students cognitively, affectively, and socially.

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) has emerged as one promising instructional strategy to address these challenges. CSR is an approach that integrates four key reading strategies—*Preview*, *Click and Clunk*, *Get the Gist*, and *Wrap Up*—into collaborative group activities. Klingner and Vaughn (1998) mentioned the CSR is an excellent technique for teaching reading comprehension to students, building their vocabulary, and also working together cooperatively. This strategy aims to help students comprehend texts step-by-step while promoting active engagement through peer discussion and teamwork. Additionally, CSR fosters students' metacognitive awareness, as they are encouraged to reflect on their reading processes, not merely to find the right answers (Unsiyah, et al., 2024).

Research on Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) has largely focused on its effectiveness in improving reading comprehension for EFL students (Alqarni, 2015; Anggeraini, et al., 2018; Susanti, et al., 2020). While these studies underscore the cognitive benefits of CSR, there remains a noticeable gap in the literature regarding students' perceptions of the strategy and its influence on their motivation, particularly within the context of higher education in EFL settings. Students' perceptions of learning strategies are important to investigate because positive perceptions can foster motivation and engagement, while negative ones may hinder the learning process. Moreover, motivation is a key determinant in foreign language learning success. Motivated students are more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes, perseverance in completing learning tasks, and openness to new learning strategies. Given this context, the present study seeks to explore EFL students' perceptions on the use of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in reading classes; and to examine how CSR influences EFL students' motivation to engage in their reading activities.

Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of understanding and implementing polysemy awareness in collocational speaking learning for learners of English as a foreign language. By utilizing podcasts as an authentic and contextual learning medium, this study seeks to provide new, relevant, and applicable contributions to supporting the development of EFL students' speaking skills in today's digital era.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Perception

Perception in an educational context refers to how learners interpret, understand, and evaluate their learning experiences. According to Robbins and Judge (2013), perception is not merely about what is observed, but how individuals organize and interpret those observations to give meaning. In the classroom, students' perceptions can influence their attitude toward the subject matter, the teacher, and the learning strategies used. A student who perceives a reading strategy as helpful, engaging, and supportive is more likely to participate actively and perform better. This is because positive perceptions enhance cognitive readiness and emotional engagement, creating a more fertile environment for learning. Conversely, if learners perceive a method as confusing or irrelevant, they may become disengaged which may hinder their academic performance.

2.2. Motivation

Motivation in language learning is a pivotal factor influencing how much effort a student puts into acquiring and using the target language. According to Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory, motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Students who are intrinsically motivated often read for enjoyment, curiosity, or the desire to learn something new. Those with extrinsic motivation may read to get good grades, fulfill course requirements, or meet parental expectations. Both forms of motivation play vital roles in shaping reading habits and outcomes. However, intrinsic motivation is often more sustainable in the long term because it promotes deeper engagement and persistence, even in the face of difficulty.

2.3. Collaborative Strategic Reading

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is a structured approach designed to enhance reading comprehension through cooperative learning and strategy instruction. Originally developed by Klingner and Vaughn (1998), CSR consisted of four main components: Preview, Click & Clunk, Get the Gist, and Wrap Up. These steps guide students through predicting content, clarifying unfamiliar words or ideas, summarizing main ideas, and reflecting on what they have learned. What makes CSR particularly effective is its balance between direct instruction and student autonomy. It equips learners with specific tools to approach texts strategically while also encouraging them to work together, share insights, and learn from each other. This cooperative structure makes the learning process more interactive and less intimidating, especially for students who may struggle with traditional, individual reading tasks.

3. Research Method

This research employed descriptive method with qualitative approach. As stated by Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2005), descriptive research seeks to determine and systematically describe the nature of existing conditions, events, or relationships, focusing on the way things are, without manipulating the variables. In this context, this research aimed to explore the EFL students' perceptions on the use of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in reading classes; as well as to examine how CSR influences their motivation to engage in reading activities. The subjects of this research are the fifth semester students of Business English and Communication Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar, who currently enroll in Critical Reading course.

The instruments used in this study were questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaire was designed to gather students' self-reported responses regarding their perceptions and motivational responses to CSR. According to Gay & Mills (2016), a questionnaire is a written collection of self-report questions to be answered by selected group of participants. Meanwhile, interview was employed to gain deeper insights and clarify issues that emerged from the participant, which aligns well with the qualitative objective of this study. In terms

of data analysis, the researchers adopted the analysis from Gay & Mills (2016). The process began with reading/memoing, where all questionnaire and interview responses were read carefully while taking analytical memos. The next step is describing, in which comprehensive and detailed narratives were developed to portray students' perceptions of CSR and its influence on their motivation. The last step is classifying, where the data were organized into categories and subcategories that reflected both students' perceptions of CSR and the specific ways in which CSR contributed to or hindered their motivation to engage in reading activities.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Students' Perception on Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in Reading Classes

(1). *The Advantage of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR)*

Based on the research results, it is found that CSR strategy is advantageous for the students. The students agree that CSR strategy is relevant and useful in English language learning. Besides, the students also agree CSR strategy could help them understanding the reading text better. As stated by a student, "Overall, I think CSR strategy is quite effective in helping me understanding various English texts". Another student also points this strategy is effective for improving reading comprehension. Student 2 stated, "CSR is an effective strategy for improving my reading comprehension, especially in collaborative learning context".

These results are in accord with previous study by Fan (2009), his study demonstrated that CSR strategy was more effective than conventional teacher-centered reading instruction, particularly in enhancing students' performance on comprehension tasks related to identifying main ideas and locating supporting details. Moreover, a study by Zagoto (2016) revealed that CSR strategy could produce better reading comprehension of students rather than discussion strategy. Thus, it can be suggested that CSR strategy not only serves as a practical instructional strategy but also contributes to the development of students' strategic reading skills.

(2). *Clarity and Ease of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) Stages*

The result from the questionnaire revealed that the majority of students agree that the stages involved in CSR, namely *preview*, *click & clunk*, *get the gist*, and *wrap up* are easy to understand and to apply in reading activities. This indicates that the stages in CSR strategy are accessible and applicable for EFL learners. The clarity of each stages helps reduce confusion and give students a simple way to understand various difficult texts. However, a number of students reported that they found it difficult to apply particular procedure of CSR, such as click and clunk and get the gist. As stated by student 3, "One of the difficulties I got is identifying the 'clunk' or difficult word/concept, particularly when there's no friends could explain it clearly. Another obstacle is 'get the gist', it is when there are different opinions among the group members when identifying the main idea". In addition, 3 students reported their difficulties in implementing CSR strategy only happened when the first time they applied this strategy. This happened since the students were unfamiliar with the name of the stages. Student 6 pointed out, "As time goes by, I start to understand and get used to each stages of this strategy".

These findings are similar to the results of the study by Agustina (2016), where the students were quite confused and had difficulty applying the stage of "Click and Clunk" due to the lack of knowledge in vocabularies. The results indicated that even the majority students have recognized each stages of the CSR strategy, but a number of students still did not acknowledge them. However, along with the time and the intense exposure of CSR strategy, the students were getting used to apply each stages of CSR strategy.

(3). *Engagement and Enjoyment of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR)*

Based on the result from the questionnaire, majority of students agree that they enjoyed and were enthusiastic applying CSR strategy in their reading activities. This is because CSR strategy made the reading learning fun. Student 6 stated, "Generally, I think CSR is quite helpful

in understanding English texts. This strategy allows us to work together, increases critical thinking, and makes our reading activities more interactive and fun". Similarly, student 8 commented, *"I get enthusiastic to read since I could share understanding with other group members, so this strategy makes me enjoy the reading class"*.

This result indicates that the majority of students expressed enjoyment and enthusiasm in applying CSR strategy during their reading activities. This positive response is largely attributed to the engaging and enjoyable nature of CSR strategy, which makes reading instruction into a more dynamic and interactive experience. This finding is in accordance with a study by Husniati (2021), in her study, she found out that CSR strategy improves students' reading comprehension and makes the students more enthusiastic in learning process. These results suggest that CSR strategy not only helps students understand reading materials better, but also makes them more motivated and engaged during reading lessons.

(4). *Collaboration in Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR)*

The result from the questionnaire showed that the students agree that CSR strategy could make them participate actively in reading class since the strategy helps them to learn together and collaborate with their friends in a group. As student 5 stated, *"CSR is a good strategy as it helps us to understand the texts while working together with our friends"*. This result suggests that CSR strategy does not solely serve as a reading strategy, but also as a strategy to encourage students to participate actively in the classroom and to build good social relationship among the students. This is because CSR strategy promotes active participation of students to involve in a small group discussion. By sharing the knowledge and understanding each other, students are able to create a better social relationship with their friends. This finding is in line with the result of the study conducted by Novita (2012), she revealed that CSR strategy gave benefits to the learning process such as motivating the students, improving social interaction in the classroom, and creating a positive learning environment.

4.2. The Influence of CSR Strategy on Students' Motivation in Reading Activities

The results from the questionnaire revealed that Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) strategy has a positive effect on students' motivation in reading activities. A majority of students reported that CSR makes them more interested in reading materials. As student 2 mentioned, *"CSR strategy can increase my motivation in reading English texts as this strategy makes the reading process more directed and not confusing"*. This result suggests that the way CSR breaks reading into smaller steps—such as *preview, click & clunk, get the gist, and wrap-up*—helps students stay engaged and better understand what they read.

The significant influence of CSR strategy towards students' reading motivation is in accord with the study by Gani et al. (2016), proving that CSR can increase students' motivation in reading. The study found out that CSR strategy can effectively increase students' motivation in English learning. This is because the procedures in CSR encourage students to seriously understand the texts given and discuss it with other friends in the group. The collaboration among the students resulted on positive relationships and enjoyment in their reading activities, and this enjoyment motivates the students to read more English texts. Additionally, Agustina (2016) proved that CSR is the most effective strategy in teaching reading comprehension since there was significant influence of CSR strategy towards students' reading comprehension as found out in her study.

Moreover, a majority of students also agreed that they felt happy and enthusiastic when doing reading activities using CSR. As student 8 commented, *"I get enthusiastic to read since I could share understanding with other group members, so this strategy makes me enjoy the reading class"*. This indicates that CSR not only helps with understanding but also makes reading activities more enjoyable. Feeling positive during the learning process is important since it helps students to keep motivated and keep trying to read, even when the texts are difficult. Related to this finding, a study by Morris et al. (2021) found out the association between the early school enjoyment and later academic achievement. The findings revealed that the children who

enjoyed school were more likely to get better grades than those who did not enjoy school. This is because when the students enjoy school more, they tend to work harder and engage more in their learning, and this will help them to achieve more academically. From these results, it can be suggested that CSR strategy could make the students enjoy the reading course and motivate them to read more texts. This motivation will likely help the students to get better reading achievement.

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) strategy is perceived positively by students and plays a significant role in enhancing their motivation to engage in reading activities. In relation to the first research question, the students' perceptions towards CSR were generally favorable. They recognized CSR as a helpful, relevant, and easy-to-follow strategy that improves their comprehension of English texts. The stages of CSR namely preview, click & clunk, get the gist, and wrap up were seen as clear and accessible, although some initial difficulties were noted. Moreover, CSR fostered enjoyment and enthusiasm in reading, as well as encouraged active collaboration and social interaction among students, which further enriched the learning environment. These aspects led students to view reading as a more meaningful and less isolating task.

Addressing to the second question, CSR strategy was also found to have a positive impact on students' motivation in reading. The strategy increased students' interest, confidence, and enjoyment during reading sessions, which are critical components of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The opportunity to work with peers and break down reading into manageable steps contributed to a more interactive and engaging learning experience. Many students expressed a desire to continue using CSR in the future, indicating that the strategy not only supports their immediate reading goals but also encourages a sustained interest in improving their English reading skills. Overall, CSR emerges as a pedagogically sound and student-centered strategy that supports both the cognitive and affective dimensions of reading instruction.

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