Austronesian: Journal of Language Science & Literature
P-ISSN: 2963-1548 E-ISSN 2961-9947
Journal Homepage:
https://www.ojs.wahanapublikasi.com/index.php/austronesian



Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Short Stories: A Classroom Action Research at SMA Negeri 5 Kupang

Merlinda Mambung[1]*, Ni Putu Juliani Lestari Dewi[2], Yandri Susuek Ndun[3]

[1-3] Department of English Education, Universitas Persatuan Guru 1945 NTT, Kota Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur 85116, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Received:
22 June 2026

Accepted:
06 September 2026

Published:
01 December 2026

Keywords:

Classroom Action Research, EFL, Reading Comprehension, Short Stories, Teaching Media

ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension remains a challenge for many EFL students due to limited vocabulary, unfamiliarity with text structures, and difficulties in applying reading strategies. This study aimed to examine the use of short stories to improve students' reading comprehension and identify instructional factors associated with their learning progress. A Classroom Action Research (CAR) design was conducted with 36 eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Kupang during the 2025/2026 academic year. The research was implemented in two cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through reading comprehension tests, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and gain scores, while qualitative data were examined through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the students' mean score increased from 58.91 in the pre-test to 63.86 after Cycle I and 83.67 after Cycle II, representing an overall gain of 24.76 points. All 36 students obtained higher scores in the final assessment than in the pre-test. Following Cycle II, 55.6% of students achieved the Good category and 44.4% reached the Very Good category. Classroom observations also indicated more active student participation during the second cycle. Culturally relevant story themes, group discussions, moral dilemmas, and varied reading materials were identified as instructional elements associated with students' engagement and comprehension development. These findings suggest that short stories can serve as a useful medium for supporting EFL reading comprehension when integrated with appropriate scaffolding and structured classroom activities.

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s)
Published by CV Wahana Publikasi.
This article is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 License

* Corresponding Author: merlindamambung09@gmail.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.59011/austronesian.5.3.2026.875-886

1. Introduction

English has become a dominant international lingua franca and plays an essential role in education, business, economics, and cultural communication. English language learning involves the development of four fundamental skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Qamili, 2023). In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language and constitutes an important subject at the secondary school level. Developing these skills requires meaningful learning activities and appropriate instructional materials that address learners' communicative and academic needs (Brown & Lee, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Among these skills, reading comprehension is particularly important because it enables students to access information, acquire knowledge, and understand written texts. Reading is a complex process involving linguistic knowledge, cognitive abilities, background knowledge, and strategic processing (Grabe & Stoller, 2020). Previous research has identified vocabulary knowledge, reading strategies, and higher-order cognitive skills as essential contributors to successful reading comprehension (Masrai et al., 2022; Vettori et al., 2024; Cruz Neri et al., 2024).

Despite its importance, reading comprehension remains challenging for many EFL learners. These difficulties may negatively affect students' confidence, motivation, and engagement in reading activities (Li & Gan, 2022; Heydarnejad et al., 2022). Reading motivation and self-efficacy are closely associated with students' reading achievement, while effective reading strategies can contribute to better comprehension outcomes (Shaona, 2025; Satori, 2025). Li and Gan (2022) further identified reading motivation, self-regulated reading strategies, and vocabulary knowledge as important predictors of English reading comprehension. Similarly, Vettori et al. (2024), through a systematic review of L2 reading comprehension, emphasized the contribution of linguistic, cognitive, and higher-order skills to successful comprehension. These findings indicate that improving reading comprehension requires instructional approaches that address not only students' linguistic and cognitive abilities but also their motivation and active engagement.

Appropriate instructional materials play an important role in addressing these challenges. Meaningful, authentic, and proficiency-appropriate materials can stimulate students' interest and support reading comprehension (Brown & Lee, 2015; Grabe & Stoller, 2020). Van der Sande et al. (2023), through a meta-analysis of 39 intervention studies, demonstrated that interventions designed to foster reading motivation positively influenced both reading motivation and reading comprehension, particularly when they stimulated learners' interests. Similarly, extensive reading has been associated with improvements in reading comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, motivation, and overall language proficiency (Sangers et al., 2025). Students' motivation is also influenced by their reading experiences and the amount of exposure to English texts (Suk, 2024). These findings highlight the importance of selecting engaging reading materials and implementing instructional activities that encourage sustained participation.

One potential instructional medium is short stories. Their relatively concise narratives allow students to engage with meaningful content while exploring vocabulary, grammatical structures, main ideas, characters, and narrative events. Short stories also encourage students to make inferences, interpret different perspectives, and connect textual information with personal experiences. Ramachers and Willems (2024), who investigated short-story reading among secondary school students learning German as a foreign language, found that learners' foreign-language proficiency influenced their absorption in and appreciation of literary texts. This finding suggests that the pedagogical value of short stories is closely related to text

accessibility and learners' linguistic competence. Consequently, their implementation requires appropriate text selection, instructional scaffolding, and supportive classroom activities. Collaborative learning and scaffolding-based instruction have also been demonstrated to improve EFL learners' reading comprehension and motivation while reducing reading anxiety (Ibrahim et al., 2023).

Although previous studies have provided substantial evidence regarding the importance of reading motivation, reading strategies, extensive reading, and literary texts, several aspects require further investigation. Sangers et al. (2025) demonstrated that extensive reading produces positive effects across multiple language-learning outcomes, while Satori (2025) emphasized the contribution of reading motivation and strategy use to L2 reading comprehension. Nevertheless, relatively limited research has examined the implementation of short stories as instructional media through a systematic Classroom Action Research (CAR) design in Indonesian senior high school contexts. In particular, further investigation is needed to understand how students' reading comprehension develops across successive classroom cycles and what instructional factors contribute to the effectiveness of short stories. These factors may include culturally relevant themes, collaborative discussions, moral dilemmas, appropriate scaffolding, and variations in reading materials.

Addressing this research gap is important because teachers need accessible and context-sensitive instructional materials that improve reading comprehension while encouraging students to engage actively with English texts. Short stories offer opportunities to combine contextualized language learning, meaningful narratives, and collaborative interpretation. Their potential is particularly relevant to classrooms where students experience difficulties understanding conventional English reading materials. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of short stories as instructional media for improving the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Kupang through a Classroom Action Research design. Specifically, it examines (1) the improvement in students' reading comprehension following the implementation of short stories and (2) the instructional factors influencing their effectiveness as a learning medium. The findings are expected to provide practical insights into the integration of literary materials and supportive classroom activities in EFL reading instruction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is an active and multidimensional cognitive process involving the recognition of linguistic information, activation of prior knowledge, inferential reasoning, and construction of meaning from written texts. The Active View of Reading emphasizes the interaction of language comprehension, word recognition, self-regulation, and bridging processes in successful reading (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Similarly, Vettori et al. (2024) highlight the importance of linguistic, cognitive, and higher-order skills in L2 reading comprehension. Effective comprehension also requires strategic reading practices, including identifying main ideas, making inferences, and monitoring understanding (Grabe & Stoller, 2020). Reading motivation, vocabulary knowledge, and self-regulated reading strategies further contribute to students' comprehension performance (Li & Gan, 2022; Satori, 2025). Moreover, extensive reading has demonstrated positive effects on comprehension, vocabulary development, fluency, and overall language proficiency (Sangers et al., 2025). Therefore, reading comprehension involves the integration of linguistic competence, cognitive processing, reading strategies, and motivational engagement.

2.2 Short Stories as Instructional Media

Short stories are concise literary texts that provide meaningful opportunities for EFL learners to develop vocabulary, understand narrative structures, identify main ideas, make inferences, and interpret characters and themes. Their manageable length makes them suitable for classroom activities that combine individual reading, collaborative discussions, and contextualized language learning. However, their effectiveness depends on text difficulty, learners' language proficiency, and appropriate instructional support. Ramachers and Willems (2024) demonstrated that foreign-language proficiency influences students' absorption in and appreciation of literary texts. Furthermore, extensive reading and motivation-oriented interventions can improve reading comprehension when supported by meaningful text selection and engaging learning activities (Sangers et al., 2025; van der Sande et al., 2023). In classroom practice, short stories can be integrated with vocabulary exercises, comprehension questions, character analysis, moral dilemmas, and group discussions. These activities should incorporate systematic scaffolding and opportunities for collaborative interpretation to support students with different reading abilities.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily grounded in Constructivism, which emphasizes that learners actively construct knowledge through interactions with texts, teachers, peers, and their existing experiences (Brooks & Brooks, 2022). Three complementary perspectives support this foundation. First, Schema Theory explains how activating prior knowledge facilitates the interpretation and comprehension of new textual information, particularly when stories contain familiar and culturally meaningful themes (Vettori et al., 2024). Second, Transactional Reading Theory views comprehension as a dynamic interaction between readers and texts, in which meaning develops through personal experiences and individual interpretation. Third, Self-Determination Theory explains the motivational dimension of learning through three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In reading instruction, these needs can be supported through meaningful text selection, achievable comprehension activities, and collaborative discussions. Previous research has confirmed that reading motivation and interest-oriented interventions contribute positively to reading comprehension (Li & Gan, 2022; van der Sande et al., 2023).

Collectively, these theoretical perspectives explain how short stories can facilitate reading comprehension through active meaning construction, activation of prior knowledge, interaction with textual content, and sustained learning motivation. They provide the conceptual foundation for implementing short stories as instructional media in EFL classrooms.

4. Method

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, a systematic, reflective, and collaborative approach to improving classroom practice (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). CAR was selected because it allows the researcher to directly observe, intervene, and refine instructional strategies within the authentic classroom context. The research was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of four phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection, following the Kemmis and McTaggart spiral model.

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 5 Kupang during the 2025/2026 academic year. The subjects were 36 students of class XI-K, selected through purposive sampling based on their varying reading ability levels (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Miles et al., 2019). This class

was specifically selected because it demonstrated variations in reading abilities relevant to testing the effectiveness of short stories.

Data were collected through multiple instruments: (1) pre-tests and post-tests to measure reading comprehension scores at each cycle stage; (2) classroom observations using structured checklists to document student engagement and learning dynamics; and (3) semi-structured interviews with students and the English teacher to explore perceptions and challenges (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Pre-tests established baseline competency levels, while post-tests measured learning outcomes after each intervention cycle.

Quantitative data were analyzed using mean score calculations, gain score analysis, and percentage frequency distributions to determine the magnitude and category of improvement. Qualitative data were analyzed through the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019) three-stage model: data reduction (organizing and simplifying raw data), data presentation (displaying data in accessible formats), and conclusion drawing (interpreting findings to answer research questions). Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings ensured the validity and reliability of the results.

5. Results

5.1 Pre-Observation Findings

The preliminary classroom observation was conducted to identify students' initial difficulties in reading comprehension before implementing short stories as instructional media. The observation involved eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Kupang. The findings revealed several challenges that affected students' ability to comprehend English reading materials.

Most students experienced difficulties understanding lengthy and complex English texts, primarily because of limited vocabulary knowledge and unfamiliarity with narrative structures. Furthermore, students demonstrated limited mastery of fundamental reading strategies, particularly skimming and scanning, which restricted their ability to identify main ideas and locate specific information efficiently. Classroom participation was also relatively low, as only a small number of confident students or those interested in particular topics actively participated in reading activities.

These preliminary findings indicated that students required more engaging and accessible reading materials supported by structured instructional activities. Accordingly, short stories were introduced as an alternative instructional medium to provide manageable reading texts, contextualized vocabulary exposure, and opportunities for meaningful interpretation and classroom interaction.

5.2 Cycle I: Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection

Cycle I was conducted through four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. During the planning stage, the researcher prepared lesson plans, selected short stories appropriate to students' reading proficiency levels, and developed reading activities focusing on vocabulary, main ideas, supporting details, and narrative comprehension. The action stage involved implementing short stories through three instructional phases: pre-reading, which introduced story topics and relevant vocabulary; whilst-reading, which encouraged students to identify information and practice scanning strategies; and post-reading, which involved discussions about characters, story content, and moral values.

Classroom observations indicated increased student participation, as more students began asking and answering questions related to the reading materials. However, difficulties

remained, particularly in inferential comprehension and interpreting implied meanings. The assessment results showed that the students' mean score increased from 58.91 in the pre-test to 63.86 in the post-test, representing an improvement of 4.95 points. All 36 students demonstrated higher scores following the intervention, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Students in Cycle I

No	Student	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
1	AH	60	68
2	AW	55	60
3	AB	65	69
4	AM	50	57
5	AI	62	65
6	BB	58	60
7	CB	60	64
8	DL	55	61
9	DS	63	67
10	DD	52	58
11	GP	60	65
12	HH	57	63
13	HM	64	67
14	IW	50	64
15	IT	61	65
16	IY	59	69
17	JP	63	66
18	JA	56	60
19	JN	65	67
20	JB	54	60
21	MR	60	68
22	MW	58	63
23	MR	66	69
24	MW	51	55
25	MA	62	65
26	MB	59	64
27	MS	64	68
28	MC	55	59
29	MA	67	69
30	MS	53	57
31	OK	61	65
32	PT	58	62
33	RN	63	67
34	TD	56	64
35	VO	65	69
36	YS	54	60

Source: Primary Research Data (2026)

The reflection stage indicated that short stories successfully improved students' reading engagement and comprehension. Nevertheless, the results suggested that additional instructional support was necessary, particularly for inferential comprehension. Therefore, Cycle II was designed to incorporate more culturally relevant stories, moral dilemmas, and collaborative discussions to strengthen students' comprehension and motivation.

5.3 Cycle II: Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection

Cycle II was implemented based on the reflection findings from Cycle I, with particular attention to improving students' inferential comprehension and sustaining their reading motivation. During the planning stage, the researcher selected more complex short stories featuring culturally relevant themes and moral dilemmas. The lesson plans also incorporated more intensive scaffolding and collaborative learning activities. During the action stage, students participated in small-group discussions to identify main ideas, interpret characters' emotions, examine moral choices, and relate story content to their personal experiences. Various short stories were introduced to provide diverse reading experiences and prevent learning fatigue.

Classroom observations indicated substantial improvements in students' engagement and participation. Students became more actively involved in group discussions and demonstrated greater confidence in interpreting implicit meanings, evaluating characters' decisions, and identifying moral messages. The use of culturally relevant narratives also helped students connect textual information with their background knowledge and everyday

experiences. Furthermore, variations in story themes and classroom activities appeared to sustain students' interest throughout the learning process.

Following the intervention, a post-test was administered to evaluate students' reading comprehension. The results demonstrated considerable improvement, with the class mean score increasing to 83.67, compared with 63.86 in Cycle I. All 36 students achieved scores above the minimum mastery criterion of 70. The individual post-test scores are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Post-test Scores of Students in Cycle II

No	Students	Post-test Cycle II Score
1	AH	85
2	AW	82
3	AB	90
4	AM	80
5	AI	88
6	BB	84
7	CB	85
8	DL	78
9	DS	85
10	DD	79
11	GP	86
12	HH	80
13	HM	84
14	IW	76
15	IT	80
16	IY	80
17	JP	83
18	JA	82
19	JN	89
20	JB	75
21	MR	86
22	MW	84
23	MR	93
24	MW	79
25	MA	80
26	MB	85
27	MS	90
28	MC	81
29	MA	92
30	MS	78
31	OK	80
32	PT	84
33	RN	89
34	TD	82
35	VO	91
36	YS	81

Source: Primary Research Data (2026)

The reflection stage confirmed that the instructional modifications introduced in Cycle II contributed to improved reading comprehension and classroom engagement. The combination of culturally relevant stories, collaborative discussions, moral dilemmas, and varied reading materials helped students develop both literal and inferential comprehension. The improvement in students' post-test performance also indicated that the instructional objectives had been achieved. Consequently, the researcher concluded that the implementation of short stories, supported by systematic scaffolding and interactive learning activities, was effective in improving students' EFL reading comprehension.

5.4 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to examine the development of students' reading comprehension across the three assessment stages: pre-test, post-test Cycle I, and post-test Cycle II. The analysis included the number of participants, total scores, mean scores, and the highest and lowest scores obtained at each stage. The results provide an overview of students' learning progress following the implementation of short stories as instructional media.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Student Scores

Component	Pre-test	Post-test Cycle I	Post-test Cycle II
Number of Students (N)	36	36	36
Total Score	2,121	2,299	2,926
Mean Score	58.91	63.86	83.67
Highest Score	67	69	93
Lowest Score	50	55	75

Source: Primary Research Data (2026)

As presented in Table 3, students' reading comprehension demonstrated a consistent improvement throughout the two intervention cycles. The class mean score increased from 58.91 in the pre-test to 63.86 after Cycle I, representing an improvement of 4.95 points. Following the instructional modifications in Cycle II, the mean score increased substantially to 83.67, representing an additional improvement of 19.81 points. Overall, the mean score increased by 24.76 points from the pre-test to the final assessment.

The highest score also increased from 67 in the pre-test to 69 after Cycle I and 93 after Cycle II. Similarly, the lowest score improved from 50 to 55 and subsequently to 75. Notably, all students achieved scores above the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 70 after Cycle II. These results indicate that the implementation of short stories, supported by structured instructional activities and collaborative learning, contributed to improvements in reading comprehension across all participating students.

5.5 Gain Score Analysis

Gain score analysis was conducted to determine the extent of improvement in students' reading comprehension following the implementation of short stories across two intervention cycles. The analysis compared students' mean scores at the pre-test, post-test Cycle I, and post-test Cycle II. The results indicated a progressive improvement in students' reading performance throughout the intervention.

The mean score increased from 58.91 in the pre-test to 63.86 after Cycle I, representing an initial gain of 4.95 points. Following the instructional improvements implemented in Cycle II, the mean score increased further to 83.67, producing an additional gain of 19.81 points compared with Cycle I. Overall, the improvement from the pre-test to the final post-test reached 24.76 points, equivalent to approximately 42.03% of the initial mean score. Furthermore, all 36 students demonstrated improved individual scores between the pre-test and the final post-test, with no students experiencing a decrease or stagnation in their performance.

These findings demonstrate that the implementation of short stories contributed to progressive improvements in students' reading comprehension. The greater improvement observed in Cycle II suggests that the instructional modifications, particularly the incorporation of culturally relevant narratives, collaborative discussions, moral dilemmas, and varied reading materials, may have strengthened the effectiveness of the intervention.

5.6 Score Distribution and Competency Categories

To examine changes in students' reading achievement more comprehensively, their test scores were classified into four competency categories: Poor, Fair, Good, and Very Good. The

distribution across the three assessment stages provides further evidence of students' progress following the implementation of short stories. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Score Distribution and Competency Categories Across Testing Stages

Stage	Score Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Pre-test	70-84	Good	0	0%
	60-69	Fair	16	44.4%
	<60	Poor	20	55.6%
Post-test I	70-84	Good	0	0%
	60-69	Fair	27	75%
	<60	Poor	9	25%
Post-test II	85-100	Very Good	16	44.4%
	70-84	Good	20	55.6%
	<70	Fair/Poor	0	0%

Source: Primary Research Data (2026)

As presented in Table 4, the distribution of students' competency levels changed considerably across the three assessment stages. In the pre-test, 20 students (55.6%) were classified in the Poor category, while 16 students (44.4%) were in the Fair category. None of the students achieved the Good category, indicating that their initial reading comprehension performance was generally below the expected mastery level.

Following Cycle I, the number of students in the Poor category decreased from 20 (55.6%) to 9 (25.0%), while the Fair category increased from 16 (44.4%) to 27 (75.0%). Although this shift indicated an improvement in students' reading performance, none had reached the Good category at this stage.

A more substantial improvement occurred after Cycle II. The results showed that 16 students (44.4%) achieved the Very Good category, while the remaining 20 students (55.6%) reached the Good category. Notably, no students remained in the Fair or Poor categories. This distribution indicates that all participants achieved the minimum mastery criterion of 70 following the second intervention cycle.

6. Discussion

The findings demonstrate a progressive improvement in students' reading comprehension following the implementation of short-story-based instruction. The mean score increased from 58.91 in the pre-test to 63.86 after Cycle I and 83.67 after Cycle II, with all 36 students obtaining higher scores in the final assessment. This improvement is consistent with Loucky (2006), who emphasized the importance of engaging instructional materials and appropriate reading strategies. Similarly, Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2011) reported positive outcomes from using short stories in EFL reading instruction, while Pardede (2011, 2021) highlighted their potential as meaningful materials for language learning.

The greater improvement in Cycle II may be associated with the instructional adjustments made after Cycle I. Stories containing themes familiar to students provided opportunities to connect textual information with their prior knowledge. This interpretation is supported by Sopian et al. (2025), whose findings highlight the contribution of background knowledge to understanding texts. Furthermore, group discussions and moral dilemmas encouraged students to exchange interpretations and examine characters' decisions. Such activities are consistent with Abdulaal et al. (2024), who emphasized the role of peer interaction in

developing comprehension and metacognitive awareness.

The use of varied short stories during Cycle II also appeared to maintain students' participation in classroom activities. This observation is relevant to Bintz (2025), who highlighted the importance of varied reading materials in sustaining learners' engagement. Merga and Tegegne (2025) likewise emphasized the contribution of reading choices and access to diverse texts to reading engagement. Nevertheless, since this study did not measure motivation using a separate standardized instrument, the observed participation should not be interpreted as direct evidence of a measurable increase in reading motivation.

The findings suggest that short stories can support EFL reading instruction when accompanied by appropriate text selection, structured reading activities, and collaborative discussion. Teachers may integrate short stories through pre-reading, whilst-reading, and post-reading activities, selecting texts that correspond to students' language proficiency and experiences. However, these findings are limited to 36 students in one school and should not be generalized without further investigation. Future research involving larger samples and different school contexts is needed to examine the applicability of short-story-based instruction more broadly.

7. Conclusion

This study found an improvement in the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Kupang following the implementation of short-story-based instruction. The mean score increased from 58.91 in the pre-test to 63.86 after Cycle I and 83.67 after Cycle II, representing an overall gain of 24.76 points. All 36 students obtained higher scores in the final assessment, with 55.6% achieving the Good category and 44.4% reaching the Very Good category. The classroom observations also indicated more active student participation during Cycle II. Culturally relevant stories, group discussions, moral dilemmas, and varied reading materials were among the instructional elements associated with students' engagement and comprehension development. These findings suggest that short stories can be a useful medium for supporting EFL reading instruction when accompanied by appropriate text selection, scaffolding, and structured learning activities. However, because this study was conducted with one class in a single school and without a control group, the findings should be interpreted within the specific research context. Further studies involving more diverse participants and school settings are needed to examine the applicability of these findings.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Merlinda Mambung contributed to Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, and Writing – Original Draft. **Ni Putu Juliani Lestari Dewi** contributed to Validation, Writing – Review & Editing, and Visualization. **Yandri Susuek Ndun** contributed to Supervision and Project Administration. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Statement of the Use of AI

The authors used an AI-assisted tool to support grammar checking and language editing. The authors reviewed and revised the suggested changes and take full responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

References

Abdulaal, M. A., Shaalan, I. E.-N. A. W., Alenazi, M. H., Alharbi, W. M., & Abuslema, N. F. M. A. (2024). A sociocultural perspective on the impact of instructor versus peer scaffolding upon lexical digesting and reading perception. SAGE Open, 14(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241257915

Al-Mansour, N. S., & Al-Shorman, R. A. (2011). The effect of teacher's storytelling aloud on the reading comprehension of Saudi elementary stage students. Journal of King Saud University – Languages and Translation, 23(2), 69–76. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jksult.2011.04.001

Bintz, W. P. (2025). Using picturebooks to promote student inquiry, inferential thinking, and reading comprehension in a 9th grade ELA classroom. Michigan Reading Journal, 57(3), Article 7. https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/mrj/vol57/iss3/7

Brooks, J. G., & Brooks, M. G. (1999). In search of understanding: The case for constructivist classrooms (Rev. ed.). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Brown, H. D., & Lee, H. (2015). Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy (4th ed.). Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Cruz Neri, N., Bernholt, S., Härtig, H., Schmitz, A., & Retelsdorf, J. (2024). Cognitive and motivational characteristics as predictors of students' expository versus narrative text comprehension. European Journal of Psychology of Education, 39, 885–905. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-023-00717-1

Duke, N. K., & Cartwright, K. B. (2021). The science of reading progresses: Communicating advances beyond the simple view of reading. Reading Research Quarterly, 56(S1), S25–S44. https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.411

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2020). Teaching and researching reading (3rd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315726274

Heydarnejad, T., Tagavipour, F., Patra, I., & Farid Khafaga, A. (2022). The impacts of performance-based assessment on reading comprehension achievement, academic motivation, foreign language anxiety, and students' self-efficacy. Language Testing in Asia, 12, Article 51. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-022-00202-4

Ibrahim, K. A.-A., Cuba Carbajal, N., Chenet Zuta, M. E., & Bayat, S. (2023). Collaborative learning, scaffolding-based instruction, and self-assessment: Impacts on intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension, motivation, and anxiety. Language Testing in Asia, 13, Article 16. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-023-00229-1

Li, H., & Gan, Z. (2022). Reading motivation, self-regulated reading strategies and English vocabulary knowledge: Which most predicted students' English reading comprehension? Frontiers in Psychology, 13, Article 1041870. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1041870

Loucky, J. P. (2006). Maximizing vocabulary development by systematically using a depth of lexical processing taxonomy, CALL resources, and effective strategies. CALICO Journal, 23(2), 363–399. https://doi.org/10.1558/cj.v23i2.362-399

Masrai, A., El-Dakhs, D. A. S., & Yahya, N. (2022). What predicts academic achievement in

EMI courses? Focus on vocabulary knowledge and self-perceptions of L2 skills. SAGE Open, 12(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221101044

Merga, Y., & Tegegne, W. (2025). Effects of short story instruction on students' reading comprehension, vocabulary skills development and reading motivation: The case of second year English major students. Journal of Science and Sustainable Development, 13(2), 95–105. https://doi.org/10.20372/au.jssd.13.2.2025.0651

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2019). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Pardede, P. (2011). Using short stories to teach language skills. Journal of English Teaching, 1(1), 14–27. https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v1i1.49

Pardede, P. (2021). A review of current conceptual research on short stories use in EFL classrooms. Journal of English Teaching, 7(1), 31–42. https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v7i1.2595

Qamili, S. (2023). Teaching English as a foreign language via four language skills. Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction, 13(3), 422–429. https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.13.03.43

Ramachers, S., & Willems, R. (2024). Lezen in de vreemde taal; Net zo plezierig als in de moedertaal? Levende Talen Magazine, 111(5), 16–22. https://lt-tijdschriften.nl/ojs/index.php/ltm/article/view/2408

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). Approaches and methods in language teaching (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009024532

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 61, Article 101860. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860

Sangers, N. L., van der Sande, L., Welie, C., Dobber, M., & van Steensel, R. (2025). Learning a language through reading: A meta-analysis of studies on the effects of extensive reading on second and foreign language learning. Educational Psychology Review, 37, Article 96. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-025-10068-6

Satori, M. (2026). The effects of reading motivation and reading strategy use on L2 reading comprehension. Reading Psychology, 47(1), 136–159. https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2025.2551552

Shaona, L. (2025). The role of reading motivation and self-efficacy in enhancing EFL students' reading achievement. Discover Education, 4, Article 452. https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-025-00933-5

Sopian, S., Pujianto, E., Purwaningsih, L., & Hanafi, I. (2025). Exploring the impact of local folklore on students' reading comprehension skills: A mixed method study. Jambi-English Language Teaching Journal, 9(2), 63–77. https://doi.org/10.22437/jelt.v9i2.46665

Suk, N. (2024). Motivation for L2 reading and its relationship with reading amount in a Korean EFL university setting. Modern English Education, 25, 45–57. https://doi.org/10.18095/meeso.2024.25.1.45

van der Sande, L., van Steensel, R., Fikrat-Wevers, S., & Arends, L. (2023). Effectiveness of interventions that foster reading motivation: A meta-analysis. Educational Psychology Review, 35, Article 21. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09719-3

Vettori, G., Casado Ledesma, L., Tesone, S., & Tarchi, C. (2024). Key language, cognitive and higher-order skills for L2 reading comprehension of expository texts in English as foreign language students: A systematic review. Reading and Writing, 37, 2481–2519. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-023-10479-3