

COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC READING IN VOCATIONAL ENGLISH CLASSROOMS: INSIGHTS FROM LECTURERS AND STUDENTS

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Abstract

Reading activities in vocational English classrooms often require students to comprehend texts related to academic study and future professional practice. In such contexts, learners frequently encounter difficulties in understanding written English, particularly when instruction relies on teacher-centred approaches. This research explored the classroom use of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in English instruction at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, with particular attention to how the strategy was implemented and how it was experienced by both lecturers and students. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, involving English lecturers and fifth-semester students who participated in collaborative reading activities. Data were obtained through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of instructional documents, then examined through thematic interpretation. The results indicate that CSR was applied through structured reading stages that encouraged interaction and shared responsibility among students. Lecturers guided the learning process by facilitating discussion rather than providing direct explanations, while students became more actively involved in negotiating meaning, clarifying vocabulary, and reflecting on text content. Students reported greater confidence and engagement during reading sessions, particularly when working collaboratively with peers. The study concludes that CSR supports a more participatory and supportive reading environment in vocational EFL classrooms and can be considered a practical instructional approach for improving students' reading experiences in similar educational settings.

Keywords: Collaborative Strategic Reading, EFL Classroom, Reading Comprehension, Vocational English

1. Introduction

In vocational higher education, English reading activities are closely connected to students' academic demands and future professional needs. Students are often required to interpret texts related to tourism, hospitality, and service-oriented contexts, which frequently contain unfamiliar vocabulary and complex ideas. Despite this demand, reading instruction in many vocational classrooms remains limited to individual tasks that offer minimal interaction, resulting in low engagement and superficial comprehension among learners.

In the context of Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, similar challenges were observed in English reading classes. Students tended to rely heavily on lecturers' explanations and showed hesitation when required to interpret texts independently. Reading activities were often perceived as demanding and monotonous, particularly when students encountered unfamiliar terms or unclear information. These conditions indicated the need for an instructional approach that could support students in processing texts collaboratively rather than individually.

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) was introduced as an alternative approach to address these challenges. Instead of positioning reading as a solitary activity, CSR encourages students to work together through structured stages that promote discussion, clarification, and shared understanding. This approach allows learners to negotiate meaning, exchange perspectives, and support one another during the reading process.

Therefore, this study focuses on the implementation of CSR in English reading instruction at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic. It seeks to explore how CSR was applied in the classroom and how both lecturers and students responded to its use. By examining classroom practices and learning experiences, this research aims to provide contextual insights into the role of collaborative reading strategies in vocational EFL settings.

2. Literature Review

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is a reading instruction approach that integrates cooperative learning principles with explicit reading comprehension strategies. Originally developed by Klingner, Vaughn, and Schumm (1998), CSR was designed to support learners who experience difficulties in understanding texts by engaging them in structured group work. The framework consists of four key strategies: Preview, Click and Clunk, Get the Gist, and Wrap-Up, which guide students systematically before, during, and after reading. Vaughn et al. (2011) emphasize that CSR not only enhances comprehension but also encourages active participation, shared responsibility, and meaningful interaction among students, making it particularly suitable for EFL classrooms.

A number of studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of CSR in improving students' reading comprehension and engagement. Gani et al. (2016) found that university students taught through CSR achieved significantly higher reading comprehension scores compared to those taught using conventional

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methods. Similarly, Susanti et al. (2020) reported that CSR provided structured support that helped students overcome reading difficulties through collaborative discussion and strategy use. Anggeraini et al. (2018) also confirmed that CSR was more effective than traditional reading instruction in developing students' comprehension skills, particularly in identifying main ideas and summarizing texts. These findings suggest that CSR supports both cognitive processing and collaborative learning in EFL contexts.

However, previous research has also revealed inconsistent findings regarding the impact of CSR on reading achievement. Tamah (2015), for instance, reported that although CSR contributed positively to classroom interaction, its effect on students' reading achievement was relatively small in the Indonesian context. This inconsistency indicates that the effectiveness of CSR may be influenced by contextual factors such as educational level, instructional implementation, and learner characteristics. Furthermore, Bermillo and Merto (2022) highlighted that CSR not only affects comprehension outcomes but also enhances students' motivation and learning attitudes, suggesting that its benefits extend beyond measurable test scores.

Despite the growing number of studies on CSR, most existing research has predominantly employed quantitative or quasi-experimental designs, focusing mainly on learning outcomes rather than instructional processes. Limited attention has been given to lecturers' perceptions, classroom practices, and students' responses to CSR, particularly in vocational higher education contexts. As noted in the existing literature, vocational EFL learners face distinct challenges related to discipline-specific reading demands and limited exposure to English texts. Therefore, qualitative exploration is needed to understand how CSR is implemented in real classroom settings and how both lecturers and students experience its use. Addressing this gap, the present study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to examine Collaborative Strategic Reading in teaching English at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic.

3. Research Method

This research applied a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the implementation of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in English instruction at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic. The study was conducted in a natural classroom context to gain an in-depth understanding of how CSR was practiced by lecturers and experienced by students during reading activities. A qualitative descriptive approach was considered appropriate because it allows the

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researcher to describe instructional processes, classroom interactions, and learning experiences as they naturally occur, without experimental intervention.

The participants of the study were English lecturers and fifth-semester students at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic who were directly involved in CSR-based learning. The participants were selected purposively to ensure their relevance to the focus of the study. The lecturers had prior experience applying CSR strategies in their English classes, while the students had actively participated in collaborative reading sessions. This participant selection enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive data from both instructional and learner perspectives within a vocational EFL setting.

Data were gathered through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations were carried out to examine how CSR strategies, namely: Preview, Click and Clunk, Get the Gist, and Wrap-Up were implemented during reading lessons, as well as to observe student engagement and group interaction. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore lecturers' views on CSR implementation and students' learning experiences during collaborative reading activities. In addition, instructional documents such as lesson plans and teaching materials were reviewed to support and corroborate the data obtained from observations and interviews.

The research was conducted in a systematic and chronological manner. After obtaining institutional permission, the researcher coordinated with lecturers to determine the observation schedule. Classroom observations were then conducted during English reading sessions, and detailed field notes were recorded. Following the observations, interviews were conducted with lecturers and selected students to gain deeper insights into their experiences with CSR. Relevant instructional documents were subsequently collected. As this study focused on qualitative inquiry, no formal testing was administered; data acquisition emphasized rich, descriptive information derived from multiple data sources.

The data analysis process involved several stages. First, all data from observations, interviews, and documents were transcribed and organized. The data were then coded and categorized to identify key themes related to CSR implementation, instructional practices, and students' responses. The categorized data were examined to identify patterns and relationships across sources. Finally, conclusions were drawn through careful interpretation and verification to ensure

that the findings accurately represented the research context and participants' experiences.

4. Results

The findings of this study reveal that Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) was implemented consistently during English reading instruction at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic. Classroom observations indicated that lecturers followed the main stages of CSR, beginning with activating students' background knowledge through the preview activity, followed by guided reading using collaborative discussion. During the reading process, students worked in small groups to identify unfamiliar vocabulary, clarify meanings, and monitor their comprehension. The wrap-up stage was used to reinforce understanding through summarization and reflective discussion. These activities demonstrated that CSR was applied as a structured yet flexible instructional approach in the classroom.

In terms of instructional practices, lecturers played an important role in facilitating CSR activities. Observational data showed that lecturers provided clear instructions, modelled reading strategies when necessary, and guided group discussions without dominating the learning process. Rather than delivering information directly, lecturers encouraged students to negotiate meaning, ask questions, and support each other during reading tasks. This approach created an interactive learning environment where students were actively involved in constructing understanding through collaboration. Document analysis further confirmed that CSR procedures were aligned with lesson planning and instructional objectives.

Students' responses to the use of CSR were predominantly positive. Interview data indicated that students felt more confident participating in reading activities when working collaboratively with their peers. Many students reported that group discussion helped them understand texts more easily, particularly when dealing with difficult vocabulary or complex ideas. CSR also encouraged students to share opinions and learn from one another, which reduced anxiety and increased engagement during reading sessions. Although some students initially experienced difficulty adapting to collaborative roles, they gradually became more comfortable as CSR was implemented regularly.

Overall, the results suggest that CSR contributed to a more engaging and supportive reading learning environment in the vocational EFL classroom. The collaborative nature of the strategy facilitated active participation, improved comprehension processes, and fostered positive learning experiences among students. From the lecturers' perspective, CSR was viewed as a practical and effective approach for teaching reading in a vocational context, as it supported both language development and collaborative skills relevant to students' academic and professional needs.

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5. Discussion

The present findings suggest that the application of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) influenced the way reading activities were conducted in the vocational EFL classroom. Rather than functioning as a routine academic task, reading became a shared learning activity in which students were required to interact, negotiate meaning, and reflect on text content together. The structured stages of CSR provided students with a clear pathway for engaging with reading materials, which helped them approach texts more purposefully and with greater awareness of comprehension processes.

Another important aspect emerging from the findings relates to how instructional roles were enacted during CSR-based lessons. The lecturers' involvement was characterized by guidance and monitoring rather than direct explanation. By allowing students to work through texts collaboratively, lecturers created learning conditions in which students assumed greater responsibility for understanding content. This instructional stance appears particularly suitable for vocational education, where learners are expected to develop autonomy, cooperation, and problem-solving skills alongside language proficiency.

From the students' perspective, collaborative reading activities appeared to reduce barriers commonly associated with English reading tasks. Working with peers enabled students to address comprehension difficulties collectively, especially when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary or unclear ideas. The opportunity to exchange interpretations within small groups contributed to a more supportive learning atmosphere, which encouraged participation and reduced hesitation during reading sessions. Although some students initially required time to adapt to collaborative roles, continued exposure helped them engage more confidently in the learning process.

Overall, the discussion of these findings indicates that CSR functioned as more than a reading strategy in this vocational context. It served as an instructional approach that supported interaction, comprehension development, and active engagement with texts. In the setting of Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, CSR aligned well with the learning needs of vocational students by integrating language learning with collaborative practices. These insights suggest that CSR may offer a meaningful alternative for English lecturers seeking to improve reading instruction in vocational higher education environments.

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