

Examining the use of Affective and Social Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension in Pakistan

Ishfaque Ali Kalhoro¹, Mimi Nahariah Azwani Mohamed^{2*} 

¹Centre for General studies and Co-Curricular, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, 86400 Parit Raja, Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia.

Email: ishfaquealikalhoro@gmail.com

²Centre for Language Studies, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, 86400 Parit Raja, Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia.

Email: azwani@uthm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Developing ESL learners' reading comprehension skills presents a significant challenge for English language teachers in Pakistan. This study aimed to examine the complexity of teaching reading comprehension skills by exploring the extent to which affective and social strategies are implemented. These strategies align with Dewey's (1930) concept of learning by doing, emphasising that learning occurs through social interaction and engagement. This study also examined the challenges faced by the respondents that impact on their preference in teaching strategies. Using a descriptive, survey-based method, quantitative data were gathered from 200 randomly selected secondary school teachers through an adapted structured questionnaire and analysed using SPSS. The findings reported a low preference for affective strategies while there is a moderate use of social strategies. The respondents relied on text-translation methods, focusing on syllabus completion. This indicates a misalignment between the respondents' teaching practices and the concept of learning by doing, hindering the development of reading comprehension skills. The findings suggest that the reliance on such methods are the impacts of the challenges in teaching reading comprehension skills such as time constraints and class size. This study highlights the need for a shift from exam-oriented learning to a learning environment that supports the employment of affective and social strategies. Various stakeholders such as policy makers, curriculum developers and education departments need to work together to develop proper mechanisms that can support such learning environment, reinforcing the need for experiential, engaging, and socially grounded education.

CORRESPONDING

AUTHOR (*):

Mimi Nahariah Azwani
Mohamed
(azwani@uthm.edu.my)

KEYWORDS:

Reading comprehension
Teaching strategies
Learning by doing
Student-centred learning

CITATION:

Ishfaque Ali Kalhoro, & Mimi Nahariah Azwani Mohamed. (2025). Examining the use of Affective and Social Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension in Pakistan. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 10(7), e003466. <https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v10i7.3466>

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by enhancing the understanding of how English reading comprehension is taught to ESL learners in Pakistan, particularly in the under-researched context of Larkana District, Sindh. It sheds light into the teaching practices preferred at secondary school level in a

rural district and highlights the complexity in providing a learning environment that supports experiential learning which is crucial in the development of reading comprehension skills. These insights can guide policymakers in designing targeted interventions and support teacher training initiatives that promote effective reading instruction across Pakistan.

1. Introduction

English is taught as a compulsory subject in schools in Pakistan with the aim to strengthen the English language proficiency, emphasising the development of reading skills (Muazzam et al., 2021). In this modern era, good reading skills are required due to the fact that most reading materials are in English (Nurjanah & Pratama, 2020). The importance of developing reading skills among ESL learners have been highlighted in the English language curriculum in Pakistan (Abro et al., 2021). Despite the necessity of the language, the issue of lack of English language competencies among ESL learners in Pakistan continues to increase (Nomaan, 2022). The dominance of Urdu as the national language in Pakistan significantly complicates the development of English reading skills among ESL learners.

In the context of teaching and learning, English is gazetted as the medium of instructions in schools (Channa et al., 2021). Nonetheless, the dominance of Urdu has caused English to be sidelined in many Pakistani public schools, impacting both the pedagogical approaches and the linguistic environment, creating challenges for English language acquisition (Masood et al., 2020). There is also evidence that the teaching practices do not support the development of reading comprehension skills (Ahmad & Nisa, 2019). As a result, ESL learners still struggle in learning English, particularly in the aspect of reading comprehension skills (Abro et al., 2021). This raises questions about the strategies that Pakistani teachers use to develop reading comprehension skills.

Reading comprehension skills can be developed through cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). In order for language learning to be more interactive, teachers need to provide a learning environment that encourages social interactions and collaborations among learners (Sun et al., 2021), which is in line with Dewey's (1975) learning by doing. In other words, teachers should give more emphasis on affective and social strategies. In the context of developing reading comprehension skills of secondary school learners in Sindh, Pakistan, there is a need to investigate the extent to which affective and social strategies are utilised when teaching reading comprehension to ESL learners in Pakistan. The findings help provide an overview of the teachers' preferences and understand the issues related to reading comprehension skills among ESL learners in secondary schools.

1.1. Research Objectives

This study examined the teaching strategies employed by English language teachers in developing ESL learners' reading comprehension skills at secondary schools in Pakistan. The study examined:

- i. the extent to which English teachers focused on affective and social strategies, in line with Dewey's (1930) theory of learning by doing that posits learning occurs when there is engagement and social interaction, and

- ii. the challenges faced by the English teachers when teaching reading comprehension.

2. Literature Review

Studies such as [Nordin et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Sandhakumarin and Tan \(2023\)](#) have highlighted the importance of utilising appropriate teaching strategies in language teaching. This is also the case when teaching reading comprehension effectively. Thus, teachers need to have the knowledge and understanding about utilising appropriate teaching strategies to support the development of reading comprehension skills. There are studies that have reported the use of ineffective strategies that affects the development of reading comprehension skills. For instance, [Teevno and Raisani \(2017\)](#) conducted a study to investigate the strategies used by teachers to teach reading. The study found that the teachers used text translation-based strategy, leading to unsatisfactory reading comprehension performance. Another common practice is the use of grammar translation method with limited use of the target language ([Shah et al.,2022](#)) and memorisation as ways to prepare learners for examination ([Amir et al.,2020](#)). [Shafique et al. \(2022\)](#) found that teachers tend to focus on the language instead of the development of reading comprehension skills. In their study, the researchers found that teachers tend to teach reading texts out of context. These teachers selected texts from textbooks to illustrate a certain grammatical point rather than to engage learners in reading habits that are meaningful and purposeful. In addition, it was also reported that teachers preferred to use dictation strategy to teach reading to the secondary school learners ([Rajput et al., 2020](#)). The strategies discussed in all the above studies do not represent either affective or social strategies in teaching reading comprehension.

[O'Malley and Chamot \(1990\)](#) developed the language learning strategies taxonomy. The strategies included in this taxonomy are cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social. According to [O'Malley and Chamot \(1990\)](#) cognitive strategies involve learning activities that promote learners to interact with the materials, use the materials and perform a task using specific technique while metacognitive strategies promote learners' involvement in the learning process, requiring learners to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning. Social and affective strategies provide opportunities for learners to interact with each other and assist learning ([O'Malley & Chamot, 1990](#)). The use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies promotes individual learning while social and affective strategies emphasise group learning, promoting team working.

The use of affective and social strategies is crucial in developing reading comprehension skills. These strategies encourage peer support and promote problem solving skills, enhancing engagement and confidence in reading ([Ali & Razali, 2019](#); [Kan et al., 2024](#)). In their study, [Fadila et al. \(2024\)](#) reported that affective and social strategies such as group discussions and role-playing promoted interactive learning, increasing ESL learners' learning motivation. [Farid et al. \(2020\)](#) found that socio-affective practices, such as reciprocal teaching, peer tutoring, and collaborative reading, engaged learners socially and emotionally, promoting mutual respect, and cooperation. In addition, [Nguyen and Nguyen \(2024\)](#) also reported that the use of socio-affective strategies improved their participants' self-perceptions and emotional attitudes, leading towards the development of reading comprehension skills among ESL learners.

[Dewey \(1930; 1975\)](#) proposes the theory of learning by doing that emphasises the idea that knowledge is best acquired through direct, meaningful interaction with the learning

material and social collaboration. This highlights the importance of learners' active engagement, social interaction and linking learning to real life situations to make learning meaningful and effective. In developing reading comprehension skills, ESL learners not only need to simply read a text, but they also need to be engaged in discussions and problem solving activities, promoting social interactions. In addition, Dewey (1930; 1975) also emphasises the importance of reflection to provide opportunities for the learners to think critically about what they have read, linking the content of the text with their own experiences.

The need for engaging learning environment is crucial to promote the development of reading comprehension skills. With the decrease in ESL learners' performance in reading comprehension skills, there is a need to examine the teaching strategies that teachers in Pakistan use to develop these skills through the lens of Dewey's (1930) theory and O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) taxonomy of language learning strategies. This study is part of a larger study that adopts a mixed-method approach to investigating the experience and the challenges faced by the Pakistani English language teachers in developing ESL learners' reading comprehension skills. This study discusses the findings generated from the quantitative data.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative approach to data collection. The data was collected through a questionnaire adapted from Teevno and Raisani (2017). This questionnaire provided a representation of the teachers' practices and opinions, apart from showing reliable results, with good consistency and accuracy in measuring what it was designed to assess. Some modifications were made to address the specific needs of the present study. These modifications primarily consisted of item rephrasing, refinement and the addition of relevant items within specific variables to align with the context and setting of this study.

The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section consisted of demographic information of respondents. The second section was sub-divided into four categories of teaching strategies (Cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies) and the third section comprised items on challenges. There were 50 items on strategies and challenges in the questionnaire. This paper, however, reports the findings related to the respondents' background and teaching strategies related to affective and social strategies. The challenges included in the questionnaire are the challenges highlighted in the literature (Hezam et al., 2022; Hakim & Tanuatmadja, 2022; Hassan & Dweik, 2021). In determining the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted and the reliability of the questionnaire was tested in SPSS to calculate the Alpha Cronbach coefficient ($\alpha = .70$). It was found that the score was above the Alpha Cronbach ($\alpha = .80$) and therefore the questionnaire was suitable to be used. The data collected through the questionnaire was analysed using SPSS to produce descriptive statistics which included percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations.

Pakistan is divided into four provinces which are Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balouchistan, and Sindh and each province is divided into districts. Sindh province has a total of 30 districts and one of them is Larkana. This study was situated in Larkana, a prominent district in the Sindh province of Pakistan. The population of this study includes English language teachers at government schools in the Larkana District of Sindh.

Prior to the data collection process, the researchers obtained ethical clearance from the Office of the District Education Officer, Larkana Pakistan. The respondents for this study were recruited randomly. A total of 20 sets of questionnaires were distributed to each government school in Larkana District. A consent statement 'By completing and returning this questionnaire, you acknowledge that you have read the information provided and voluntarily consent to participate in this research' was provided at the beginning of the questionnaire to inform participants about the study and their voluntary participation. Only 253 sets together with the consent form were returned. Upon checking the responses, 53 sets were incomplete and therefore were excluded from this study. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics involving percentages, frequency, mean, and standard deviation to examine the characteristics of demographic variables.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Respondents' Profile

In terms of academic qualification, not many of them specialised in English language. This can be seen in [Table 1](#).

Table 1: Academic Qualification of the respondents

Academic qualification	Frequency	Percent
BA/BSc	146	73.0
MA/MSc other than English MA English	35	17.5
Total	19	9.5
	200	100

According to [Table 1](#), 146 (73%) respondents hold a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or /Bachelor of Science (BSc), while 35(17.5%) hold Master of Arts (MA)/ or Master of Science (MSc) in disciplines other than English. Only19(9.5%) of them have Master of Arts (MA) in English. In other words, only 9.5% of the total respondents can be considered as proficient in English and are qualified to teach English. This raises questions about the extent to which their academic qualifications can affect the development of ESL learners' English language abilities, particularly in terms of reading comprehension skills.

In Pakistan, teachers need to have professional qualification before they can teach in schools ([Tahira et al., 2020](#)). These include Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), Master of Education (M.Ed.), Primary Teaching Certificate (P.T.C), Certificate of Teaching (C.T). or Associate Degree in Education (ADE.). [Table 2](#) shows the professional qualification that the respondents have.

Table 2: Professional Qualification of the Respondents

Professional Qualification	Frequency	Percent
PTC/C.T	44	22
ADE	8	4
B.Ed	130	65
M.Ed	18	9
Total	200	100

According to [Table 2](#), out of the total, 44 (22%) respondents have Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) /Professional education, 8(4%) have Associate degree in Education (ADE), 130(65%) possess Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), and 18 (9%) hold Master of Education (M.Ed.). Based on the findings, it could be concluded that all the respondents are qualified to teach as they have pedagogical knowledge. In relation to the findings in [Table 1](#) which shows that the background of the majority of the respondents is not English, questions arise as to whether these respondents have the pedagogical knowledge to teach English as a second language, especially in terms of developing reading comprehension skills.

Specialised training is crucial especially to those who do not have the academic qualification to teach reading comprehension skills ([Yapp et al., 2023](#)). In the context of this study, such training seems to be missing. [Table 3](#) shows the number of respondents who have attended specialised training to teach English.

Table 3: The Number of Respondents who have Attended Specialised

Training	Frequency	Percent
Yes	0	0
No	200	100
Total	200	100

Based on [Table 3](#), it can be seen that none of the respondents have attended any specialised training to teach English. This suggests that although they have the pedagogical knowledge ([Table 3](#)) and 9.5% of them are proficient in English ([Table 2](#)), they do not have the expertise in teaching English. This lack of training is particularly concerning in the context of teaching English reading skills, an area that requires specialised strategies and techniques to be effective. The absence of training emphasises a critical gap in the professional development of teachers in Pakistan, which likely contributes to the challenges they face in fostering English reading proficiency among students. Research conducted by [Tahira et al. \(2020\)](#) has shown that in Pakistan, teachers are often not provided with adequate training in specific areas, particularly in teaching reading skills. These studies indicate that without proper training, teachers struggle to implement effective reading instruction strategies, leading to suboptimal Learner outcomes.

The lack of training affects their ability to address diverse students' needs, utilise appropriate reading materials, and employ evidence-based instructional methods. In another study, [Aziz et al. \(2024\)](#) found that teachers without specialised training in reading instruction often rely on less effective methods such as rote memorization rather than developing critical reading skills such as comprehension, inference, and analysis. The findings from [Tahira et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Aziz et al. \(2024\)](#) have highlighted the role of specialised training in assisting teachers in employing strategies that can help develop ESL learners' reading comprehension skills effectively.

In Pakistan, teachers are expected to continuously attend professional development courses. [Table 4](#) shows the number of respondents who have attended professional development courses.

Based on [Table 4](#), it can be seen that 139 (69.5%) respondents have participated in the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) course offered by the government, while 61 (30.5%) have not attended any professional development courses. The finding in the table

indicates that a majority of respondents have received continuous professional development training. Nonetheless, questions arise in terms of whether these course help teachers to effectively employ strategies that can develop ESL learners' reading comprehensions skills. There are a number of studies such as [Bosch et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Suharyadi et al. \(2019\)](#) that show that teachers still struggle in developing reading skills despite attending these professional development courses. Both studies raise the issue that the professional development courses can be ineffective when these course lack of focus on ways to employ suitable teaching strategies to teach reading skills. In the context of this study, questions arise as to whether the respondents who have attended these courses are able to utilise the knowledge to develop ESL learners' reading comprehension skills.

Table 4: Respondents who have attended professional development (CPD) courses

CPD courses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	139	69
No	61	30
Total	200	100

4.2. The Implementation of Affective and Social Strategies

This section discusses the extent to which social and affective strategies are used in teaching reading comprehension. [Abbas et al. \(2019\)](#) scale is used to represent the respondents' opinions as shown in [Table 5](#).

Table 5: The scale for respondents' perceptions

Mean Score	Level of Agreement
Less than 1.8	Very Low
1.9 to 2.6	Low
2.7 to 3.4	Moderate
3.5 to 4.2	High
4.2 and above	Very High

In the context of this study, the level of agreement refers to the respondents' level of preferences in the strategies used when teaching reading comprehension.

4.2.1. Social Strategies for Teaching Comprehension Skills

Social teaching strategies are instructional methods that emphasise learning through social interaction and collaboration with peers. These strategies include group activities, discussions, and cooperative learning to enhance Learner engagement and understanding ([Oxford, 2003](#)).

According to [Dewey \(1930\)](#), social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. These categories help educators design activities that foster progressively deeper levels of social interaction and cognitive engagement. By working together, ESL learners can gain different perspectives and enhance their comprehension. Social teaching strategies foster a supportive learning environment that promotes active engagement and deeper understanding of reading material. [Table 6](#) displays the results of utilising social strategies in teaching reading comprehension among ESL learners.

Table 6: The use of Social Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension

No	Items	Mean	SD	Level of Preference
2.	I group learners to assign them tasks (comprehension exercise, infer any specific information) during silent reading.	2.65	1.40	Low
5.	I organise pair or small group reading sessions to promote collaborative learning	2.98	1.45	Moderate
6.	I conduct role-playing activities based on reading material for Learners to enhance their understanding	2.97	1.45	Moderate
3.	I mostly cultivate book reading culture among Learners to cultivate love for reading	2.61	1.32	Low
4.	I suggest learners to read English stories in groups	3.03	1.46	Moderate
1.	I provide learners with equal chances of reading in the classroom	2.69	1.43	Low
Overall Results		2.82	1.42	Moderate

Based on the results in [Table 6](#), it can be observed that the social strategies receive moderate level of preferences. Item 5 (I organise pair or small group reading sessions to promote collaborative learning) and Item 6 (I conduct role-playing activities based on reading material to enhance learners' understanding) are the most preferred among the strategies in the social strategy category (with the score Mean = 2.98, SD = 1.45 and M= 2.97, SD = 1.45, respectively). The strategy indicated in item 5 facilitates peer interaction, discussion, and shared understanding of reading materials, supporting ESL learners' social and cognitive development. The strategy indicated in item 6 not only reinforces comprehension but also fosters creativity and deeper engagement with texts through experiential learning ([Dewey,1930](#)). In the context of this study, although these strategies are preferred by many of the respondents, questions arise in terms of why these strategies are not emphasised despite its important roles in improving ESL learners' reading comprehension skills.

The least preferred strategy is Item 2 (I group the learners and assign them tasks during silent reading with the score Mean = 2.65, SD = 1.40). This finding indicates a potential underutilization of group-based learning approaches that could enhance collaborative skills and deepen understanding through peer interaction. [Dewey \(1930\)](#) posits that for learning to be engaging, the process should promote social interaction and collaboration. This can create a supportive reading environment which increases motivation and positive attitude, leading to the development of reading skills. With the lack of instructions that support collaborative learning and promote social interaction, the opportunity to improve ESL learners' reading comprehension skills may disappear. Although the findings in [Table 6](#) show moderate preferences for practices that support social interaction and collaborative learning (Items 4, 5 and 6), the implementation of these practices is inconsistent (Items 2 and 3 which receive low preferences). This finding aligns with [Elashhab's \(2018\)](#) research, which found a lack of focus on using collaborative learning strategies to improve ESL learners' reading skills.

The overall mean score of 2.82 (SD = 1.42) across these social teaching strategies suggests a moderate level of agreement among educators. While some practices demonstrate higher consensus, particularly those involving group work and collaborative learning, there remains room for improvement in fostering a more inclusive and supportive

reading environment. The reason for this could be due to the respondents' lack of pedagogical knowledge. The study by [Mohammed and Amponsah \(2018\)](#) highlighted the impacts of teachers' insufficient pedagogical knowledge on reading instruction strategies in Ghana. As a result, their ESL learners demonstrated low reading abilities. In the context of this study, the respondents' profile show that they lack training and professional development related to teaching specific skills such as reading comprehension skills. This could influence their preferences in implementing collaborative learning approach.

4.2.2. Affective Strategies for Teaching Comprehension Skills

Affective teaching strategies focus on learners' emotions, attitudes, and values to create a supportive and motivating learning environment. These strategies aim to enhance learners' emotional well-being, motivation, and engagement ([Oxford, 2003](#)). These strategies are in line with [Dewey's \(1930\)](#) theory of learning by doing that emphasises learners' engagement and social interaction. By promoting a positive emotional climate and fostering a love for reading, affective teaching strategies aim to enhance ESL learners' overall engagement and enjoyment of reading activities. [Table 7](#) shows the findings on the respondents' preferences in using affective teaching strategies to improve ESL learners' reading comprehension skills.

Table 7: The use of Affective Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension

No	Items	Mean	SD	Level of Preferences
3.	I guide learners to connect their personal experiences to what they are reading in class.	2.48	1.15	Low
4.	I guide learners to visualize the content as they read	2.55	1.13	Low
6.	I set clear goals for reading activities to enhance learners' sense of purpose	2.57	1.12	Low
1.	I conduct read aloud activities to develop learners' interest	2.93	1.41	Moderate
5.	I provide a safe environment where learners feel comfortable while reading text in class	2.52	1.12	Low
2,	I give positive feedback to develop learners' confidence in their reading abilities	2.56	1.12	Low
	Overall Results	2.60	1.17	Low

Based on [Table 7](#), the overall result for affective strategy is low ($M=2.60$, $SD=1.17$) compared to other categories. There are 6 items in the affective strategies category. Of all the items, Item 3 (I guide learners to connect their personal experiences to what they are reading in class.) receives the lowest level of preference with the score $M=2.48$, $SD=1.15$. The strategy indicated in this item requires a teacher to help Learners think about their own life experiences and how they relate to the story or topic they are reading in class. This helps them understand the text better and feel more connected to it because they can relate what they read to their own feelings, memories, and real-life situations. When learners see how the story or topic connects to their own lives, it makes the reading feel more meaningful and relevant, which can improve their interest and motivation. It also helps them remember the information more easily and apply it to different situations in the future ([Amjadi & Talebi, 2024](#)).

[Dewey \(1930\)](#) has highlighted the role of experience in the learning process. In other words, learners need to be able to see the connection between what they learn in the

classroom with reality (Sorohiti et al., 2024). In the context of this study, it can be concluded that the respondents do not perceive the importance of linking knowledge acquired in the classroom with the real world. This raises questions about the factors that influence the respondents' lack of preferences for this item. ESL learners' active participation in their learning, particularly in developing their reading skills, can be influenced by their emotions and attitudes (Amjadi & Talebi, 2024). This raises the need for teachers to also implement affective strategies so that they can promote ESL learners' engagement and active participation.

Another strategy which is being neglected is indicated in Item 4 (I guide learners to visualize the content as they read (Mean = 2.55, SD = 1.13). According to Damiri et al. (2022), although their participants acknowledged the importance of visualization in improving learners' reading comprehension skills, these participants employ this strategy inconsistently. Instead, they focus more on the meanings of difficult words and oral expressions. The participants in Zaman and Asghar's (2019) study also ignored the visualization strategies, hindering the development of their learners' reading abilities. Dewey (1930) emphasises the importance of learner engagement and active participation in the learning process. In order for ESL learners to be engaged and actively participating in their learning, teachers need to create a learning environment that makes learners comfortable and motivated. In addition, teachers also need to create meaningful learning for learning to be effective. However, the findings show that the respondents do not focus on creating a safe environment with $M=2.52$, $SD=1.12$ (item 5), neither do they guide the ESL learners to connect their personal experiences to what they read (item 3) with a mean score of 2.48 ($SD = 1.15$).

The lack of preferences for these strategies suggests that the respondents perceive that ESL learners' emotions and attitude are unimportant in the learning process. This finding is similar to the study conducted by Moustafa and Naima (2022) who found that learners' personal experience was not considered when teaching reading. the majority of the respondents place less emphasis on ESL learners' emotions and attitude, suggesting that the affective aspect is not crucial in the learning process.

The overall mean score for affective teaching strategies is 2.60 with the $SD = 1.17$), indicating a low level of preference among the respondents. The limited emphasis on the affective teaching strategies suggests a potential gap in providing constructive reinforcement that could enhance ESL learners' self-esteem and willingness to engage actively in reading activities. The strategies within this category are crucial in promoting deeper comprehension and emotional investment in learning. In addition, creating a supportive classroom atmosphere is essential for fostering a sense of security and confidence among ESL learners, which is conducive to effective learning and participation.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Hassan and Dweik (2021), who reported that teachers do not employ affective teaching strategies, resulting in anxiety and frustration as significant challenges in developing reading abilities in Jordan. These emotional factors were substantial barriers to ESL learners' progress in reading comprehension. These findings can also be found in Kamil and Perrodin (2023) who reported that teachers avoid using affective strategies, leading to high levels of foreign language reading anxiety among EFL learners at a state university in Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia. The study by Hassan and Dweik (2021) and Kamil and Perrodin (2023) highlight the critical need for the incorporation of affective teaching strategies to

mitigate emotional barriers and enhance ESL learners' reading comprehension and overall language proficiency.

4.3. Challenges in Implementing Affective and Social Strategies

Studies such as [Hezam et al. \(2022\)](#), [Hakim and Tanuatmadja \(2022\)](#) and [Hassan and Dweik \(2021\)](#) have shown that teachers teaching preferences can be influenced by the challenges that they face. In the context of this study, the teaching preferences of the respondents could be influenced by the challenges that they faced, affecting their preference in using affective and social strategies to teach reading comprehension. This can be observed in [Table 8](#).

Table 8: Challenges in Implementing Affective and Social Strategies

No.	Challenges: Classroom Management	Mean	SD	Level of Agreement
1.	I spend more time maintaining the discipline of the learners in the classes.	4.22	.69	Very High
2.	I face difficulty in developing students' reading skills due to lack of subject specialists.	4.20	.88	Very High
3.	I have limited time to develop students' reading abilities in the classroom.	3.33	1.33	High
4.	There is a lack of supporting teaching materials to teach reading skills.	3.81	.79	High
No.	Challenges: Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge	Mean	SD	Level of Agreement
5.	I lack the knowledge about teaching strategies to teach reading skills.	3.56	1.21	High
5.	I lack Skill-based Trainings	3.60	1.21	High
6.	I lack teaching skills.	3.35	1.07	Moderate
Overall results		3.66	1.073	High

The items for obtaining data for challenges faced by the respondents are categorised into three categories which are classroom management, teachers' pedagogical knowledge, and learner characteristics. This study reported the findings for classroom management and teachers' pedagogical knowledge. Based on the [Table 8](#), classroom management is viewed as the most challenging category in teaching reading comprehension skills in the context of ESL learners. The majority of the respondents indicated that they spent more time maintaining the students' discipline in the classroom (Mean=4.22, SD= .69), causing them to have limited time to focus on developing reading comprehension skills (Mean=3.33, SD=1.33).

The issue of maintaining students' discipline is commonly associated with overcrowded classes. [Phala and Hugo \(2022\)](#) who conducted a study in South Africa reported that overcrowded classrooms led to ineffective teaching and learning, which, in the case of this study, hindered the development of ESL learners' reading abilities. These findings highlight the need for education stakeholders to address these issues and provide support to teachers and schools to create an environment that fosters a reading culture and enables effective teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. Apart from that, time constraint in the classroom is a significant issue that impedes the development of ESL learners' reading abilities. This is consistent with previous research conducted by [Elashhab \(2018\)](#), who also highlighted limited time as a hurdle in developing ESL

learners' reading skills. Additionally, another study conducted in Nepal by [Ranjit \(2022\)](#) supports the current findings that limited lesson hours are a significant challenge in teaching reading skills to ESL learners.

The lack of subject specialists (Mean=4.20, SD= .88) and supporting teaching materials (Mean=3.81, SD= .79) also hindered the participants from developing ESL learners' reading comprehension skills. The results highlight the need for support that helps teachers in managing their teaching and learning so that they can focus on developing ESL learners' reading comprehension skills. Studies conducted by [Shakil \(2020\)](#) and [Masood et al. \(2020\)](#) also reported similar findings. These findings emphasise the importance of providing adequate support and resources to address the language- related challenges faced by both teachers and ESL learners in order to effectively develop ESL learners' reading abilities.

In implementing the affective and social strategies to teach reading comprehension, teachers need to have knowledge and understanding about how to conduct the relevant activities. Without proper guidance, these strategies may not result in the intended outcome. This can be found in a study by [Othman et al. \(2022\)](#) where the participants were assigned a group project. The social interaction only occurred at the beginning of the collaboration where they discussed what needed to be done to complete the project. Once the delegation of work was done, these participants completed their parts individually and social interaction was absent. This suggests that the implementation of affective and social strategies is complex and requires carefully designed activities to ensure the effectiveness of these strategies. Without sufficient pedagogical knowledge and skill-based training, the effectiveness of these strategies can be affected, impacting on the development of reading comprehension skills.

The limited knowledge about strategies to teach reading can lead to ineffective learning, affecting the development of reading comprehension skills ([Nguyen, 2022](#); [Nurkamto et al., 2021](#)). In the context of the current study, it was found that the respondents lacked knowledge about strategies to teach reading comprehension skills (Mean=3.56, SD=1.21). This lack of knowledge can affect the respondents' preference in teaching strategies, causing them to avoid using methods related to affective and social strategies. The lack of knowledge about strategies to teach reading comprehension skills could be due to their lack of skill-based training (mean=3.60, SD=1.21). The research findings suggested that the lack of skill-based training for teachers and the unavailability of supporting materials are significant factors that contribute to the obstacles faced by teachers in teaching reading skills. This is consistent with a study conducted by [Amir et al. \(2020\)](#), which also found that the lack of skill-based training for teachers is a significant hurdle in developing ESL learners' reading skills. Another study by [Mohsin \(2018\)](#) reported that the unavailability of supporting materials was a significant hurdle in teaching reading skills to ESL learners.

The findings discussed in this section have highlighted the need for education stakeholders to provide targeted professional development opportunities for teachers and ensure the availability of adequate supporting materials to support effective teaching and learning of reading skills. In addition, the findings also raise the complexity of implementing affective and social teaching strategies which can cause teachers to lose interest and resort to using convenient methods such as translation when teaching reading comprehension skills. Further investigation is required to unpack this complexity.

5. Conclusion

This research has highlighted several key findings. Firstly, among all the strategies, the translation method is the most preferred strategy. One of the factors that influence this preference could be due to the respondents' academic qualification. Based on the respondents' profile, the academic qualification of the respondents is not in the field of English or English language teaching. Another factor could be due to the dominance of Urdu where ESL learners preferred to use their mother tongue when communicating. Secondly, in terms of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, the findings show that the lower-thinking order strategies are preferred while the social and affective strategies are underutilised. This could be due to the lack of pedagogical knowledge and specialised training. Thirdly, the findings suggest that the theory of learning by doing is not widely practised. Dewey (1975) indicates that meaningful learning can be achieved through learners' active engagement and social interaction. In the context of developing reading comprehension skills, learners need to be able to interact with the materials and link to real life situations.

The use of social and affective strategies promotes social collaboration and active interaction. However, this study has reported that the social and affective teaching strategies were underutilised. The factors that could lead to this situation could be the limited time and large class size. As a result, the strategies preferred lead to passive learning rather than developing critical thinking which is crucial in the development of reading comprehension skills. The respondents' low agreement on the application of these strategies for developing students' reading skills can be linked to the substantial challenges they face, such as large class sizes, discipline issues, and insufficient interaction time with students. These challenges hinder the effective implementation of teaching strategies, thus impacting the overall quality of reading instruction.

The high level of agreement on the challenges discussed above highlights the urgent need for effective teaching strategies, professional development, and support. These findings can serve as a basis for educational policy makers and institutions to develop proper mechanisms for specific training workshops for effective strategies to enhance reading skills in secondary education. It is important to address these challenges and provide support to teachers and ESL learners to improve reading skills and promote ESL learner learning outcomes. In short, these findings align with previous research (Mohsin, 2018; Noreen & Asif, 2019; Shakil, 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Ranjit, 2022), which similarly emphasise the multifaceted nature of challenges in developing ESL learners' reading comprehension skills. This consistency indicates the ongoing relevance and importance of addressing these challenges to enhance educational outcomes in this critical area.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The researchers have obtained approval to collect data from teachers in Larkana from the Office of the District Education Officer, Larkana Pakistan. In addition, the researchers used the research ethics provided by the Research Ethics Committee of Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM). All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee.

Acknowledgement

This paper is part of a PhD Dissertation. The authors would like to express their appreciation to all the respondents of this study and UTHM for the technical facilities to complete this study.

Funding

This study does not receive any funding.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

References

- Aziz, M. A., Azizullah, A., & Baloch, S. (2024). Emerging trends and issues in English language teaching: A Bibliometric Analysis. *Journal of Asian Development Studies*, 13(1), 1004-1016.
- Abbas, Q., Hussain, S., & Rasool, S. (2019). Digital literacy effect on the academic performance of students at higher education level in Pakistan. *Global Social Sciences Review*, 4(1), 154-165.
- Abro, A., Soomro, G. R., Teevno, R. A., & Shoro, M. B. (2021). An Investigation of the teaching techniques, assessment strategies and ESL learners' attitude towards reading English and their Impact on learners' performance in Pakistan. *Sukkur IBA Journal of Educational Sciences and Technologies*, 1(1), 1-15.
- Ahmad, U., & Nisa, N. (2019). English language learning anxiety: A case study of secondary government school's ESL learner of District Larkana, Sindh. *International Journal of Academic Pedagogical Research (IJAPR)*, 3(1).
- Ali, A. M., & Razali, A. B. (2019). A Review of studies on cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies in teaching reading comprehension for ESL/EFL learners. *English Language Teaching*, 12(6), 94-11.
- Amir, S., Sharf, N., & Khan, R. A. (2020). Pakistan's education system: An analysis of education policies and drawbacks. *Electronic Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2, 244-248.
- Amjadi, A., & Talebi, S. H. (2024). Extending the efficacy of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in teaching reading strategies: A socio-cultural emotional perspective. *Language Teaching Research*, 28(2), 714-748.
- Bosch, A., Ilie, M. D., & Rusu, A. (2024). The impact of professional development programs of teachers on the reading skills of primary school students: A meta-analytic study. *Revista de Pedagogie*. <https://doi.org/10.26755/revped/2024.1/55>
- Channa, L. A., Manan, S. A., & David, M. K. (2021). Global aspirations versus local resources: planning a sustainable English teaching policy in Pakistan. *Asian Englishes*, 23(3), 294-312.
- Damiri, A., Hastomo, T., & Sari, Y. A. (2022). Visualization strategy: An effective strategy to teach reading to middle school students. *Seltics Journal: Scope of English Language Teaching Literature and Linguistics*, 1-8.
- Dewey, J. (1930). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Macmillan.

- Dewey, J. (1975). *Experience and education*. Macmillan.
- Elashhab, G. (2018). *Investigating second language English teachers' reading instruction and their attitudes towards teaching English reading in a fifth and seventh grade Libyan setting* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of York.
- Fadila, L., Dalimunthe, S. A., & Siagian, N. (2024). Strategies to improve English reading comprehension. *Fonologi Jurnal Ilmuan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris*, 2(3), 16–25. <https://doi.org/10.61132/fonologi.v2i3.774>
- Farid, A., Ishtiaq, M., & Hussain, M. S. (2020). A review of effective reading strategies to teach text comprehension to adult English language learners. *Global Language Review*, 5(3), 77-88.
- Hakim, I. A., & Tanuatmadja, A. P. (2022). Dealing with common challenges in improving reading comprehension skills for Indonesian secondary school students. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 5(2), 255-264.
- Hassan, I. J., & Dweik, B. S. (2021). Factors and challenges in English reading comprehension among young Arab EFL Learners. *Academic Research International*, 12, 18-30.
- Hezam, T. A., Ali, J. K. M., Imtiaz, S., Saifi, M. A., & Islam, M. R. (2022). Challenges and problems of reading comprehension experienced by EFL learners. *Journal of English Studies in Arabia Felix*, 1(2), 11-21.
- Kamil, I., & Perrodin, D. D. (2023). Foreign language reading anxiety: Exploring the experiences of EFL ESL learners at a state university in Padang, Indonesia. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 6(1), 1-13.
- Kan, T., Noordin, N., & Ismail, L. (2024). Implementation of metacognitive reading strategies to improve English reading ability: A systematic review. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 23(7), 368-389.
- Khan, Z., Khan, M. I., & Shah, M. H. (2021). Causes of poor performance in English at secondary school level in Pakistan. *University of Chitral Journal of Linguistics & Literature*, 5(1), 293-310.
- Masood, M. H., Shafi, S., Rahim, M. Y., & Darwesh, M. A. (2020). Interference of L1 (Urdu) in L2 (English) in Pakistan: Teaching English as a second language. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 9(5), 110-118.
- Mohammed, I., & Amponsah, O. (2018). Predominant factors contributing to low reading abilities of pupils at Elsie Lund Basic School in the Tamale Metropolis, Ghana. *African Educational Research Journal*, 6(4), 273-278.
- Mohsin, Z. I. (2018). *Teachers' beliefs about teaching reading to English as a foreign language (EFL) ESL learners in Saudi higher education*. Ministry of Higher Education, Saudia.
- Moustafa, A., & Naima. G. (2022). An Affective Approach to Teaching Literature: I Feel Therefore I am. *Arab World English Journal*, 13(2) 253-266. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no2.17>
- Muazzam, H. A., Muhammad, Y., & Naseer, H. (2021). English language teachers' attitudes towards instructional policy in public secondary schools: An interview study. *Global Educational Studies Review*, VI, 6, 24-35.
- Nguyen, T. L. P., & Nguyen, V. N. (2024). Effects of strategy-based instruction on Vietnamese EFL college students' reading comprehension: A mixed method approach. *International Journal of Language Instruction*, 3(1), 43-65.
- Nguyen, T. L. P. (2022). Teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension. *International Journal of Language Instruction*, 1(1), 19-28.
- Nomaan, S. (2022). Language pedagogy: An evaluation of oral communication skill materials in secondary school ELT books in Pakistan. In N. Ali Raza, & C. Coombe

- (Eds.), *English Language Teaching in Pakistan* (pp. 345-367). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-7826-4_21
- Nordin, N. H. B., Jamil, K. A. B. M., Zainol, N. Z. B., Kamaruddin, A. S. B., & Ismail, N. F. B. (2024). ESL novice teachers' beliefs and practices on the teaching of reading strategies. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 9(9).
- Noreen, S., & Asif, M. (2019). Implementing pedagogical leadership for professional development of teachers in public school at elementary level in Pakistan. *European Academic Research*, 7(6), 3281-3292
- Nurjanah, R. L., & Pratama, M. R. A. (2020). Self-regulated learning strategy instructions in reading comprehension skill learning during outbreak era. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 5(2), 191- 201.
- Nurkamto, J., Drajadi, N. A., Ngadiso, N., & Karlina, Y. (2021). Teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching reading at Islamic secondary schools in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(3).
- O'Malley, J. M. & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Othman, N. A., Mohamed, M. N. A., Powzi, N. F. A., & Jamari, S. (2022). A case study of English language learning strategies used by engineering students in Malaysia. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 7(1), 261-269.
- Oxford, R. L. (2003). Language learning styles and strategies: An overview. *GALA*, 1–25. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/25444682>
- Phala, T. A., & Hugo, A. (2022). Difficulties in teaching grade 3 learners with reading problems in full-service schools in South Africa. *African Journal of Disability (Online)*, 11, 1-9.
- Rajput, N. H., Chandio, M. Y., Bhutto, R. N., & Kanhio, Z. H. (2020). Headteachers' Perspectives about the English Language Teaching at Lower Secondary Level in Shaheed Benazirabad, Pakistan. *Sindh Journal of Educational Research*, 5(1), 30–45.
- Ranjit, R. (2022). Classroom Challenges of Secondary Level English Teachers at Remote Government Schools in Nepal. *JELITA: Journal of Education, Language Innovation, and Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 10-25.
- Sandhakumarin, Y., & Tan, K. H. (2023). ESL teachers' views on the implementation of CEFR in reading skill. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 8(4).
- Shafique, A., Amjad, A., Khurshid, N., & Zubair, H. B. (2022). Analyzing the contemporary developments and challenges in teaching English language in Pakistani schools. *Ascarya: Journal of Islamic Science, Culture, and Social Studies*, 2(1), 65-69.
- Shah, S. H. R., Kadir, Z. A., & Naveed, S. (2022). Factors affecting English reading skills at collegiate level In Pakistan. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(11), 1863-1876.
- Shakil, M. (2020). Factors Affecting ESL learners' low Competence in Reading English at Primary level in Pakistan. *International Journal of Education*, 8(3), 19-26.
- Sorohiti, M., Nugraha, H. N. R., & Rahmawati, F. (2024). Teacher awareness, identification of learning difficulties, and effective teaching strategies for English grammar mastery. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 10(1), 45–54.
- Suharyadi, S., Gunadi, H., Sulistyono, S., & Rachmajanti, S. (2019). Continuous professional development: Teachers' voices. *J-ELLiT (Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching)*, 3(2), 34-44. <https://doi.org/10.17977/UM046V3I2P34-44>
- Sun, Y., Wang, J., Dong, Y., Zheng, H., Yang, J., Zhao, Y., & Dong, W. (2021). The Relationship Between Reading Strategy and Reading Comprehension: A Meta- Analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12(4), 233-245.

- Tahira, M., Hassan, A., Malik, A., & Yousuf, M. I. (2020). *Teacher education in Pakistan: Issues and problems* [ERIC Document No. ED608314]. ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED608314.pdf>
- Teevno, R. A., & Raisani, R. B. (2017). English reading strategies and their impact on students' performance in reading comprehension. *Journal of Education & Social Sciences*, 5(2), 152-166.
- Yapp, D., de Graaff, R., & van den Bergh, H. (2023). Effects of reading strategy instruction in English as a second language on students' academic reading comprehension. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(6), 1456-1479.
- Zaman, S., & Asghar, S. (2019). Evaluation of teaching reading strategies used by early grade teachers. *Journal of Early Childhood Care & Education*, 3(1), 15-28.