
Reading Beyond Words: Exploring Classroom Practices for Developing English Reading Skills in Pakistani Universities

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Abstract

Reading is one of the fundamental language skills that supports academic success, critical thinking, vocabulary growth, and independent learning in higher education. In Pakistani universities, however, reading instruction often receives less pedagogical attention than grammar and examination-oriented learning, which limits students' ability to read critically, comprehend authentic texts, and apply effective reading strategies. The present study aims to explore classroom practices for developing English reading skills in Pakistani universities and to examine how instructional strategies, classroom interaction, technology, and institutional conditions shape students' reading development. This study adopted a qualitative multiple case study design grounded in constructivist learning principles. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis from four public universities in Pakistan. The participants included 12 English language teachers and 24 undergraduate students selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis with the assistance of NVivo 14. The findings revealed four major themes: reading instruction remains largely teacher-centered, interactive classroom practices enhance reading comprehension, technology supports authentic reading experiences, and institutional factors strongly influence reading pedagogy. Teachers commonly used textbook-based comprehension exercises, but more effective reading development was observed when students engaged in pre-reading prediction, collaborative discussion, vocabulary support, skimming and scanning tasks, and post-reading reflection. Digital tools such as online articles, mobile applications, interactive texts, and multimedia resources were found to increase student interest and improve access to authentic reading materials. However, limited resources, large class sizes, exam-focused curricula, and insufficient teacher training restricted the consistent implementation of learner-centered reading instruction. The study concludes that reading proficiency is strengthened when classroom practices are interactive, strategy-based, and supported by purposeful technology use. It recommends greater emphasis on reading pedagogy in university English courses, professional

development for teachers, improved access to digital reading resources, and curriculum reform that values reading comprehension as a core academic skill.

Keywords: *English Reading Skills; Reading Instruction; Classroom Practices; Higher Education; Pakistani Universities; Qualitative Multiple Case Study; Reading Strategies; Learner-Centered Teaching; Technology-Enhanced Learning; Reading Comprehension; English Language Teaching; Reflexive Thematic Analysis*

Introduction

Reading is a fundamental language skill and an essential part of second-language learning, academic achievement, and intellectual development. It enables learners to understand written information, interpret meaning, expand their vocabulary, recognize grammatical patterns, and engage with ideas presented in different academic and social contexts (Grabe, 2009; Koda, 2005). At the university level, English reading proficiency is particularly important because students are expected to understand textbooks, research articles, lecture materials, examination questions, online resources, and other academic texts. Effective reading also supports critical thinking, independent learning, written communication, and overall academic performance (Alderson, 2000; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Despite its importance, reading instruction in many English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms continues to focus mainly on translating texts, explaining difficult vocabulary, and answering comprehension questions. Such practices may help students understand the immediate content of a passage, but they do not always develop the strategies required for effective and independent reading (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Nation, 2009). Many university students experience difficulties in identifying the main idea, understanding unfamiliar vocabulary through context, making inferences, recognizing the organization of a text, distinguishing important information from supporting details, and evaluating an author's argument. These difficulties can negatively affect their classroom participation, examination performance, and ability to engage with academic materials (Alderson, 2000; Grabe, 2009). In recent years, language teaching has increasingly moved towards learner-centered approaches that encourage students to participate actively in the learning process (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This development has also influenced reading pedagogy. Reading is no longer viewed simply as the process of pronouncing written words or translating sentences; rather, it is understood as an active process of constructing meaning (Grabe, 2009; Rosenblatt, 1978). While reading, learners connect the information in a text with their previous knowledge, predict meaning, identify relationships between ideas, monitor their comprehension, and use appropriate strategies to overcome difficulties (Afflerbach et al., 2008; Koda, 2005). Therefore, effective reading instruction should provide students with opportunities to interact with texts, discuss interpretations, ask questions, reflect on their understanding, and gradually develop independent reading habits. Research-based classroom practices can contribute significantly to the development of English reading skills. These practices may include pre-reading activities that activate students' background knowledge, prediction exercises, vocabulary preparation, skimming and scanning tasks, close reading, inference-making, note-taking, graphic organizers, peer discussion, and post-reading reflection (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). When students are taught how to approach different types of texts and how to select suitable reading strategies, they become more confident and purposeful readers. Reading strategies help learners approach texts according to their purpose, monitor their comprehension, and respond appropriately when they encounter difficulties (Afflerbach et al., 2008). The teacher's role is not limited to explaining the text; instead, the teacher acts as a facilitator who guides students, provides appropriate support, models reading strategies, and gradually encourages them to take

responsibility for their own learning (Nation, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978). Digital technology has also created new opportunities for reading instruction. Students can now access electronic books, online newspapers, academic articles, digital libraries, educational websites, mobile applications, interactive texts, and learning management systems (Godwin-Jones, 2011; Stockwell, 2010). These resources can expose learners to a wider range of authentic texts and allow them to read according to their own pace and interests. Digital reading materials may also include glossaries, hyperlinks, audio support, translation tools, highlighting functions, quizzes, and interactive exercises that can assist students in understanding difficult content. Mobile devices may further support language learning by providing flexible access to reading materials beyond the classroom (Sung et al., 2015). However, the availability of technology alone does not guarantee the development of reading proficiency. Its effectiveness depends on the careful selection of materials, the design of meaningful reading activities, and the teacher's ability to integrate digital resources with appropriate pedagogical strategies (Godwin-Jones, 2011; Stockwell, 2010). In the Pakistani higher education context, English plays an important role in academic study, professional communication, and access to international knowledge. Nevertheless, many undergraduate students continue to face challenges in reading and understanding English texts. English language instruction in many universities remains influenced by grammar-based teaching, textbook-centered lessons, translation practices, and examination-oriented assessment (Ahmed et al., 2024; Farooqi et al., 2024). As a result, students may have limited opportunities to practice strategic reading, interpret authentic academic texts, or develop the confidence required for independent reading. Large classes, limited instructional time, inadequate library facilities, restricted access to digital resources, and differences in students' educational backgrounds may further affect the quality of reading instruction (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Although several studies in Pakistan have examined English language teaching, vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, technology integration, and language learning, limited qualitative attention has been given to the classroom practices through which reading skills are developed in university settings. Much of the existing research has relied on questionnaires, achievement tests, or learners' general perceptions. Such approaches provide useful information, but they may not fully explain what occurs during reading lessons, how teachers introduce and teach reading strategies, how students respond to classroom activities, or how institutional conditions influence reading pedagogy. There is therefore a need for qualitative research that examines reading instruction from multiple perspectives and within authentic university contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Understanding classroom practices is important because the development of reading skills depends on more than the use of textbooks or the provision of reading passages. It is influenced by teachers' pedagogical decisions, students' participation, classroom interaction, the nature of learning materials, assessment requirements, and the wider institutional environment (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). A constructivist perspective is particularly useful for examining reading instruction because it views learning as an active process in which students construct knowledge through interaction with texts, teachers, peers, and their existing experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). From this perspective, students develop reading competence when they are encouraged to interpret information, exchange ideas, solve comprehension problems, and reflect on their learning. Guided by constructivist principles, the present study adopts a qualitative multiple case study design to explore classroom practices for developing English reading skills in Pakistani universities (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2018). The study examines how reading lessons are planned and implemented, which instructional strategies are used by English language teachers, how students experience reading activities, how digital and printed resources are incorporated into instruction, and which institutional factors support or restrict reading development. By investigating these issues across different university contexts,

the study seeks to provide a detailed understanding of reading pedagogy in Pakistani higher education. The study aims to make three important contributions. First, it provides qualitative evidence concerning the teaching and learning of English reading skills in Pakistani universities, an area that requires further context-specific investigation. Second, it examines reading instruction through a constructivist framework by focusing on learner participation, teacher scaffolding, classroom interaction, and the active construction of meaning (Vygotsky, 1978). Third, it offers practical implications for curriculum designers, teacher educators, university administrators, and English language teachers by identifying classroom practices that can strengthen students' reading comprehension and promote greater learner independence. The study uses a qualitative multiple case study approach because this design allows the researcher to examine reading instruction in its natural educational context. Interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis can provide complementary perspectives on what teachers intend to teach, what students experience, and what actually occurs during reading lessons. The use of thematic analysis further enables the researcher to identify recurring patterns in participants' accounts and classroom practices (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Saldaña, 2021). Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to the improvement of English reading instruction in higher education. It argues that students are more likely to become effective readers when reading lessons move beyond translation and answer-based exercises and include strategy instruction, collaborative learning, authentic texts, purposeful technology use, and opportunities for reflection (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Nation, 2009). A better understanding of current classroom practices and their limitations may help universities develop more supportive, interactive, and learner-centered environments for improving undergraduate students' English reading skills.

Literature Review

Reading Skills in English Language Learning

Reading is one of the central skills in second-language learning because it provides learners with access to vocabulary, grammatical structures, academic knowledge, and different forms of written communication. Through reading, students develop their ability to understand information, identify relationships between ideas, interpret meaning, and respond critically to written texts. At the undergraduate level, reading proficiency is essential for understanding textbooks, research articles, lecture notes, examination questions, assignments, and online academic resources. Reading is not a passive process of recognizing individual words. It is an active and complex process through which readers construct meaning by combining information from the text with their prior knowledge, language knowledge, and reading purpose. Skilled readers are able to predict content, identify the main idea, recognize supporting details, infer meaning, monitor comprehension, and evaluate the information presented in a text. In contrast, less proficient readers may depend heavily on word-for-word translation and may experience difficulty understanding a text when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary or complex sentence structures. Second-language reading requires the interaction of several types of knowledge. Learners need knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, text organization, and the cultural context in which a text is produced. They must also understand how different genres operate. For example, a research article, a newspaper report, a narrative passage, and an argumentative essay may require different reading approaches. Therefore, effective reading instruction should not focus only on the final answers to comprehension questions; it should also help students understand how to approach, interpret, and evaluate different types of written texts. Reading strategies play an important role in the development of reading comprehension. These strategies include previewing a text, predicting its content, skimming for general meaning, scanning for specific information, guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words from context, identifying key points,

making inferences, summarizing, and monitoring comprehension. Students who are aware of these strategies are more likely to become independent readers because they can select appropriate techniques according to the purpose and difficulty of a reading task.

Classroom Practices for Developing Reading Skills

Classroom instruction has a significant influence on students' reading development. Effective reading lessons generally include three connected stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. These stages provide learners with preparation before reading, guidance during reading, and opportunities to reflect on and apply what they have understood after reading. Pre-reading activities prepare students for the text by activating their previous knowledge and introducing the topic. Teachers may use pictures, titles, headings, questions, short discussions, key vocabulary, or prediction exercises to help students develop expectations about the text. These activities reduce students' anxiety and create a meaningful connection between the reading material and their existing knowledge. While-reading activities guide students as they interact with the text. Such activities may include identifying the main idea, locating specific information, matching headings with paragraphs, completing charts, recognizing cohesive devices, making inferences, and distinguishing facts from opinions. Teachers may also encourage students to underline important information, make notes, ask questions, and monitor their understanding while reading. These practices help students read with a clear purpose rather than merely moving through the text word by word. Post-reading activities allow students to consolidate and extend their understanding. These activities may include summarizing the text, discussing the author's purpose, answering open-ended questions, comparing ideas, participating in group discussions, writing a response, or connecting the text to real-life experiences. Post-reading tasks are particularly valuable because they encourage learners to think critically and use the information they have obtained from the text. Learner-centered reading instruction emphasizes active participation and collaboration. Pair work, group discussions, peer teaching, jigsaw reading, problem-solving activities, and collaborative summaries can make reading lessons more interactive. Through these activities, students can explain their interpretations, compare answers, clarify misunderstandings, and learn from the perspectives of their classmates. The teacher acts as a facilitator by modelling reading strategies, asking guiding questions, providing feedback, and offering support when necessary. However, reading instruction is also shaped by contextual factors. Curriculum requirements, examination patterns, class size, available teaching materials, teachers' beliefs, students' proficiency levels, and the amount of instructional time can influence how reading is taught. In examination-oriented contexts, teachers may focus mainly on correct answers, translation, and completing textbook exercises. As a result, students may receive limited instruction in critical reading, strategic reading, and independent comprehension.

Technology and Reading Instruction

The growth of digital technology has expanded the range of resources available for English reading instruction. In addition to printed textbooks, students can access electronic books, online newspapers, digital libraries, blogs, academic articles, educational websites, learning management systems, and mobile reading applications. These resources provide learners with exposure to different genres, topics, writing styles, and levels of language complexity.

Digital reading materials can support students in several ways. Online texts may include hyperlinks, glossaries, translation functions, pronunciation support, images, videos, highlighting tools, and interactive comprehension exercises. These features can help learners understand unfamiliar words, follow the organization of a text, and review difficult information. Digital platforms also allow students to read at their own pace and revisit material whenever necessary.

Mobile devices can make reading practice more flexible and accessible. Students may read short articles, news reports, digital stories, and academic materials outside the classroom. This creates opportunities for continuous language exposure and self-directed learning. Mobile applications can also provide vocabulary activities, reading quizzes, progress tracking, and personalized learning tasks. In this way, technology can extend reading instruction beyond the limited time available in the classroom. Nevertheless, technology does not automatically improve reading proficiency. The value of digital resources depends on how they are selected and used by teachers and learners. Simply asking students to read an online passage may not develop their comprehension unless the activity includes a clear purpose, suitable strategies, and meaningful follow-up tasks. Teachers must ensure that digital texts are appropriate for students' language level, relevant to the learning objectives, and accessible to students with different levels of technological ability. Digital reading also creates certain challenges. Students may become distracted by social media or unrelated online content, depend excessively on translation tools, or read quickly without processing meaning. Limited internet access, insufficient digital facilities, electricity problems, and unequal access to smartphones or computers may also restrict the use of technology in some Pakistani universities. Therefore, technology should be integrated carefully and should complement rather than replace effective classroom teaching.

A Constructivist Perspective on Reading Instruction

Constructivism provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding how students develop reading skills. According to constructivist principles, learners do not simply receive knowledge from the teacher; they actively construct meaning through interaction with texts, people, ideas, and experiences. Reading instruction based on this perspective encourages learners to connect new information with their prior knowledge and to participate actively in the interpretation of written material. Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective further emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning. Students can develop their reading ability through collaboration with teachers and peers. During group reading, pair discussions, and peer-supported tasks, learners explain their ideas, ask questions, negotiate meaning, and clarify difficult information. More knowledgeable teachers or peers can provide scaffolding that helps students complete reading tasks they may not be able to manage independently. Teacher scaffolding is especially important for learners who have limited English proficiency. A teacher may first model how to identify a main idea, demonstrate how to infer the meaning of an unfamiliar word, or explain how to organize information from a text. As students gain confidence, the teacher gradually reduces support and encourages them to apply the strategies independently. This process can help learners move from dependence on the teacher towards greater reading autonomy. A constructivist reading classroom is therefore active, collaborative, and reflective. Students are encouraged to share interpretations, justify their answers, compare perspectives, and evaluate information. Reading becomes a process of inquiry rather than a simple exercise in finding correct answers. Such an approach can improve not only comprehension but also learner confidence, critical thinking, motivation, and independent learning.

Reading Instruction in Pakistani Universities

English has an important position in Pakistani higher education because it is widely used in academic textbooks, research publications, examinations, professional communication, and digital resources. Undergraduate students are expected to read and understand English materials across different disciplines. However, many students enter university with limited reading proficiency and inadequate experience of reading extended or authentic English texts. In many Pakistani university classrooms, English reading instruction remains focused on grammar

explanation, translation, reading aloud, and textbook comprehension questions. These practices may help students understand selected passages, but they do not always encourage them to use reading strategies or engage critically with texts. Students may therefore become dependent on teachers, dictionaries, translations, or memorized answers instead of developing independent reading habits. Several factors contribute to these difficulties. Students may have different levels of English proficiency because of differences in their previous schooling and access to English-language materials. Large classes can make it difficult for teachers to provide individual feedback or organize collaborative reading activities. Limited library collections, insufficient digital facilities, restricted internet access, and a shortage of suitable reading materials may further reduce students' exposure to English texts. Assessment practices also influence reading instruction. When examinations emphasize short-answer questions, memorization, translation, or the reproduction of information, teachers may give less attention to critical reading and strategy instruction. In addition, limited classroom time may encourage teachers to complete textbook units quickly instead of giving students sufficient opportunities to discuss, interpret, and evaluate texts. Although research in Pakistan has examined English language teaching, reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, technology integration, and student perceptions, there is still a need for more qualitative research into how reading is taught in actual university classrooms. It is important to understand the strategies teachers use, the ways students participate in reading activities, the role of digital resources, and the institutional conditions that influence reading pedagogy.

Research Gap

Previous research has provided valuable information about English language learning in Pakistan, but several gaps remain in relation to the development of reading skills at the university level. First, there is limited qualitative evidence showing how English reading lessons are planned and implemented in Pakistani universities. Second, many studies focus either on teachers' practices or students' experiences instead of examining both perspectives together. Third, insufficient attention has been given to the relationship between reading strategies, classroom interaction, digital resources, and institutional conditions. A further gap concerns the difference between the planned curriculum and actual classroom practice. Course outlines may identify reading comprehension as an important learning outcome, but classroom instruction may continue to rely on translation, teacher explanation, and textbook exercises. Investigating this difference can provide a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by teachers and students. To address these gaps, the present study adopts a qualitative multiple case study approach to explore classroom practices for developing English reading skills in Pakistani universities. The study combines semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis to produce a detailed account of reading instruction across different university settings. The findings are expected to contribute to curriculum development, teacher education, classroom pedagogy, and the effective integration of digital resources into English reading instruction.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative multiple case study design to explore classroom practices for developing English reading skills in Pakistani universities. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to understand how reading is taught, how undergraduate students experience reading lessons, and how institutional conditions influence reading instruction. The study did not attempt to measure reading proficiency through numerical scores. Instead, it focused on participants' experiences, classroom interactions, instructional strategies, teaching materials, and the ways in which reading activities were organized in authentic university

settings. The multiple case study design enabled the researcher to examine reading pedagogy across different institutions and to identify both common patterns and context-specific practices. The study was guided by constructivist principles, which view learning as an active process in which students construct knowledge through interaction with texts, teachers, peers, and their previous experiences. From this perspective, reading development is influenced not only by the reading material itself but also by classroom participation, teacher scaffolding, collaborative learning, and opportunities for reflection.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in four public universities in Pakistan that offer undergraduate English language courses. The selected universities represented different institutional contexts while following broadly similar English language curricula. These settings were chosen because they provided opportunities to examine the teaching and learning of English reading skills among undergraduate students. Studying more than one university made it possible to compare classroom practices, teaching resources, students' experiences, and institutional challenges across different settings. The selected institutions differed in terms of class size, availability of digital facilities, access to reading materials, and the extent to which technology was incorporated into English language instruction.

Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who had direct experience with undergraduate English reading instruction. The study included 12 English language teachers and 24 undergraduate students from the four selected universities.

The teachers were selected according to the following criteria:

- They had at least two years of experience teaching English at the university level.
- They were currently teaching undergraduate English language courses.
- They were involved in teaching reading-related activities.
- They were willing to participate in interviews and classroom observations.

The student participants were selected because they had completed at least one English language course that included reading activities. Students from the second, third, and fourth years were included to obtain perspectives from learners with different levels of university experience. The sample size was considered appropriate for a qualitative multiple case study because the participants possessed direct experience of the phenomenon under investigation and the study used multiple sources of data. Data collection continued until the researcher had obtained sufficient information to explain the recurring patterns in reading instruction.

Table 1

Participant Group	Number	Characteristics
English Language Teachers	12	2–18 years of university teaching experience
Undergraduate Students	24	Second- to fourth-year students
Universities	4	Public universities in Pakistan

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom observations, and document analysis. The use of three data sources helped the researcher develop a comprehensive understanding of reading instruction and allowed the findings to be compared through methodological triangulation.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both English language teachers and undergraduate students. The teacher interviews focused on lesson planning, reading strategies, classroom activities, teaching materials, assessment practices, use of technology, and challenges in teaching reading. The student interviews explored their experiences of reading lessons, preferred classroom activities, difficulties in understanding English texts, use of reading strategies, access to digital reading materials, and perceptions of teacher support. Open-ended questions were used to allow participants to describe their experiences in their own words. Follow-up questions were asked whenever clarification or additional information was required.

Classroom Observations

Non-participant classroom observations were conducted during regular English language lessons. The observations focused on the ways in which reading lessons were introduced, developed, and concluded.

Particular attention was given to the following aspects:

- Pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities.
- Teacher explanations and demonstrations of reading strategies.
- Students' individual, pair, and group participation.
- Use of textbooks, printed materials, and authentic texts.
- Use of mobile phones, online platforms, and digital reading resources.
- Teacher–student and student–student interaction.
- Vocabulary instruction and comprehension support.
- Feedback, questioning, and assessment practices.
- Students' engagement and response to reading activities.

Field notes were prepared during and immediately after each observation. These notes recorded classroom events, interactions, instructional procedures, student participation, and contextual factors that could influence reading instruction.

Document Analysis

Relevant instructional documents were analyzed to understand how reading skills were represented in the curriculum and how they were assessed. The documents included course outlines, lesson plans, textbooks, reading passages, worksheets, classroom tasks, assignments, examination papers, and assessment activities. Document analysis helped the researcher determine whether the stated learning outcomes were reflected in actual classroom activities. It also provided evidence concerning the types of texts used, the reading strategies emphasized, the role of vocabulary, and the extent to which critical and independent reading were included in the course content.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis based on the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke. Interview transcripts, classroom observation notes, and relevant

instructional documents were organized and coded systematically. NVivo 14 was used to support data management, coding, and the organization of emerging categories. The analysis followed several stages. First, the researcher repeatedly read the interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents to become familiar with the data. Second, initial codes were generated from meaningful statements, classroom events, instructional practices, and recurring ideas. These codes included terms such as *translation-based instruction*, *prediction*, *skimming*, *scanning*, *group discussion*, *vocabulary support*, *digital reading*, and *examination pressure*. Third, similar codes were grouped into broader categories. For example, codes related to prediction, prior knowledge, and topic discussion were combined under reading preparation. Codes related to peer discussion, collaborative interpretation, and group tasks were organized under interactive reading practices. Finally, the categories were reviewed and developed into themes that represented broader patterns across the participating universities. The themes were compared across interviews, observations, and documents. This comparison helped the researcher identify areas of agreement and difference between what teachers reported, what students experienced, and what was observed in classrooms. An audit trail was maintained to document coding decisions, theme development, and analytical reflections. The final themes were interpreted through a constructivist perspective to explain how classroom practices supported or restricted the development of English reading skills.

Table 2

Illustrative Coding Matrix

Raw Data	Initial Code	Focused Code	Category	Theme
"The teacher asked us to guess the topic from the title before reading."	Prediction	Pre-reading Strategy	Reading Preparation	Strategy-Based Reading Instruction
"We read the passage in groups and discussed the difficult parts."	Peer Discussion	Collaborative Reading	Classroom Interaction	Interactive Reading Practices
"Online articles help us read different types of English texts."	Digital Texts	Technology Integration	Learning Resources	Technology-Supported Reading
"We usually translate every sentence before answering the questions."	Translation	Teacher-Centered Practice	Instructional Approach	Traditional Reading Instruction
"The examination focuses on short answers from the textbook."	Exam Pressure	Assessment Influence	Institutional Conditions	Contextual Constraints

Trustworthiness

Several strategies were used to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Methodological triangulation was achieved by collecting data through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Information obtained from one source was compared with evidence from the other sources to identify consistencies and differences. Member checking was conducted by sharing summaries of the emerging findings with selected participants. Participants were invited to comment on whether the interpretations accurately reflected their experiences of reading instruction. Their feedback was considered during the refinement of the themes. An audit trail was also maintained throughout the research process. It included records of data collection, coding decisions, theme development, researcher reflections, and changes made during the analysis. Peer debriefing with experienced qualitative researchers was used to discuss the coding process and improve the clarity and credibility of the interpretations. The researcher also maintained reflexive notes to consider how personal assumptions and expectations might

influence the interpretation of the data. Attention was given to representing both positive and challenging aspects of reading instruction rather than presenting only one-sided findings.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant university research ethics committee before data collection began. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent before taking part in interviews or classroom observations. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, their right to refuse to answer any question, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing negative consequences. They were also informed that the data would be used only for academic and research purposes. To protect participants' identities, pseudonyms and participant codes were used throughout the study. Teachers were identified as T1–T12, while students were identified as S1–S24. The names of the participating universities were also omitted or replaced with general labels where necessary. All interview recordings, transcripts, observation notes, and documents were stored securely. Access to the data was restricted to the researcher, and identifying information was removed during transcription and analysis. Classroom observations were conducted only after obtaining permission from the relevant teachers and institutional authorities

Findings

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and instructional documents produced four interconnected themes related to the development of English reading skills in Pakistani universities. These themes describe the instructional approaches used by teachers, the experiences of undergraduate students, the role of classroom interaction and technology, and the institutional factors that influence reading pedagogy. The findings presented below are written as a structured academic draft. Any participant quotations should be replaced with the participants exact words from the recorded interviews and transcripts rather than being created or reconstructed.

Reading Instruction Remains Predominantly Teacher-Centered

The findings indicate that reading instruction in the participating universities remains largely teacher-centered. Classroom observations showed that many reading lessons followed a relatively fixed pattern: the teacher introduced a passage, explained difficult vocabulary or grammar, asked students to read silently or aloud, and then discussed the answers to comprehension questions.

In several classrooms, students had limited opportunities to select reading strategies, discuss interpretations, or engage critically with the text. The main focus was often placed on understanding the literal meaning of the passage and completing textbook exercises. Translation and teacher explanation were frequently used when students encountered unfamiliar vocabulary or difficult sentences.

Teachers reported that limited classroom time, large numbers of students, and examination requirements influenced their decisions to rely on textbook-based activities. Students also described reading lessons as mainly focused on completing passages and finding correct answers. This pattern suggests that reading is often treated as a product-oriented activity in which comprehension is checked after reading rather than as a process that requires planning, monitoring, interpretation, and reflection. Document analysis supported these observations. Course outlines and assessment materials included reading comprehension as an important learning outcome; however, many activities emphasized short-answer questions, vocabulary meanings, grammatical explanations, and information directly stated in the text. There was comparatively less evidence of systematic instruction in prediction, inference, critical evaluation,

summarizing, or independent reading strategies. These findings indicate that although teachers recognize the importance of reading, classroom practice does not always provide students with sufficient opportunities to become strategic and independent readers.

Strategy-Based and Interactive Practices Support Reading Development

Although teacher-centered instruction was common, several teachers used interactive and strategy-based activities to engage students in the reading process. These activities included predicting the content of a passage from its title, discussing the topic before reading, identifying the main idea, scanning for specific information, guessing vocabulary from context, summarizing paragraphs, and discussing the author's purpose. Classroom observations showed that students participated more actively when reading tasks required them to work in pairs or groups. Collaborative reading allowed students to compare interpretations, explain difficult sections, ask questions, and negotiate meaning with their classmates. Students appeared more willing to express their opinions when they first discussed the text with peers rather than responding individually in front of the entire class. Pré-reading activities were particularly useful in preparing students for the text. When teachers introduced the topic through questions, pictures, short discussions, or background information, students were better able to connect the reading material with their existing knowledge. During-reading activities helped students focus on specific purposes, while post-reading discussions encouraged them to reflect on the information and express their own responses. Teachers also reported that strategy-based instruction helped students become more confident when dealing with unfamiliar texts. Instead of translating every word, students were encouraged to identify key information, use contextual clues, and focus on the overall meaning of the passage. The findings suggest that reading development is strengthened when students are actively involved in the construction of meaning. Interactive classroom practices create opportunities for students to develop comprehension, critical thinking, vocabulary knowledge, and confidence in using English.

Technology Expands Access to Reading Materials

Teachers and students recognized the value of technology in supporting English reading instruction. Mobile phones, online articles, electronic books, educational websites, digital libraries, learning management systems, and social media materials were used to provide students with additional reading practice. Students reported that online reading materials made English learning more accessible because they could read texts outside the classroom and revisit difficult content when necessary. Digital resources also exposed them to a wider variety of materials than those available in a single textbook. These included news reports, short stories, academic passages, blogs, informational texts, and online learning resources. Teachers explained that digital reading materials could increase students' interest because they often included current topics and visually attractive formats. Some digital resources also provided vocabulary support, hyperlinks, translation options, comprehension questions, and opportunities for students to search for additional information. However, classroom observations showed that technology was not used consistently across all participating institutions. Some teachers integrated online texts and mobile-based activities into reading lessons, while others relied mainly on printed textbooks. The differences were associated with internet access, availability of digital equipment, institutional support, teacher familiarity with technology, and the amount of time available for lesson preparation.

The findings also indicate that technology alone does not guarantee improved reading comprehension. When digital materials were used without clear objectives or follow-up activities, students sometimes focused on translating individual words rather than understanding the overall

meaning of the text. The most effective use of technology occurred when teachers connected digital resources with pre-reading questions, guided reading tasks, vocabulary activities, group discussion, and post-reading reflection. Therefore, technology functions most effectively as a supporting tool within a well-planned pedagogical framework. It can extend students' exposure to English texts, but it cannot replace teacher guidance, reading strategy instruction, or meaningful classroom interaction.

Institutional Conditions Influence Reading Pedagogy

The final theme concerns the influence of institutional conditions on the teaching and learning of English reading skills. Teachers identified large class sizes, limited instructional time, insufficient reading materials, inadequate library facilities, unreliable internet access, and examination-oriented curricula as major challenges. Large classes made it difficult for teachers to monitor individual students' comprehension or provide detailed feedback. They also restricted the use of activities such as group discussion, individual presentations, peer review, and collaborative interpretation. In some cases, teachers had to complete a prescribed syllabus within a limited period, leaving little time for extended reading practice. Students also reported that they had limited opportunities to read English materials beyond the prescribed textbook. Some students had access to smartphones and online resources, while others faced financial, technological, or connectivity-related limitations. These differences created unequal opportunities for reading practice and digital learning. Assessment practices also influenced classroom instruction. When examinations focused mainly on textbook passages, short-answer questions, vocabulary meanings, or information recall, teachers tended to prioritize these areas. Reading strategies such as inference, critical evaluation, summarizing, and interpretation received comparatively less attention because they were not always directly assessed.

Document analysis showed that reading was included in course objectives, but assessment tasks did not consistently measure a broad range of reading abilities. This difference between curriculum intentions and classroom assessment suggests that institutional priorities and examination requirements strongly influence the type of reading instruction students receive. The findings demonstrate that the improvement of English reading skills depends not only on teachers' efforts but also on the wider educational environment. Supportive policies, appropriate reading materials, accessible digital facilities, manageable class sizes, and assessment reform are necessary to promote more effective and learner-centered reading instruction.

Summary of Findings

Overall, the findings reveal that English reading instruction in the participating universities includes both traditional and learner-centered practices. Teacher explanation, translation, and textbook-based comprehension activities remain common, but some teachers are also using prediction, skimming, scanning, group work, discussion, and technology-supported reading tasks. The findings further show that students become more engaged when reading activities are purposeful, interactive, and connected to relevant topics. Digital resources provide additional access to authentic reading materials, but their effectiveness depends on careful planning and teacher support. Finally, institutional conditions including class size, curriculum demands, assessment practices, available resources, and technological infrastructure play a significant role in shaping reading pedagogy.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore classroom practices for developing English reading skills in Pakistani universities. The findings demonstrate that reading instruction is influenced by the

interaction of teachers' instructional decisions, students' participation, learning resources, technology, assessment practices, and broader institutional conditions. Although traditional practices remain common, the findings also show that strategy-based, interactive, and technology-supported approaches can create more meaningful opportunities for reading development. The findings of the present reading-focused study are also comparable with those of the previous study on English listening instruction. Both studies found that English language teaching remains influenced by teacher-centred practices, examination requirements, limited instructional time, and unequal access to technological resources. Both studies also showed that interactive classroom activities, teacher scaffolding, and purposeful technology use can support language development. However, the reading study highlights issues that are specific to written language, including translation dependence, vocabulary interpretation, skimming, scanning, inference, summarizing, and critical engagement with texts. In contrast, the previous listening study focused more strongly on authentic audio input, pronunciation, spoken comprehension, note-taking, and exposure to different accents and forms of spoken English.)

Reading Instruction Remains Predominantly Teacher-Centred

The findings indicate that reading instruction in the participating universities is still largely organized around teacher explanation, translation, textbook passages, vocabulary instruction, and comprehension questions. Teachers commonly introduced a text, explained difficult vocabulary or grammar, and guided students towards the correct answers. While these practices may help students understand the immediate content of a passage, they provide limited opportunities for learners to develop independent reading strategies (Alderson, 2000; Grabe, 2009). This finding is consistent with the previous listening study, which also found that classroom instruction was frequently organized around teacher explanations and comprehension checking. In the listening classrooms, teachers commonly played an audio recording and then asked students to answer questions. Similarly, in the reading classrooms, students often read a passage and then answered questions after the teacher had explained its vocabulary and meaning. In both cases, the main emphasis was placed on checking comprehension rather than teaching learners how to become strategic and independent language users

The predominance of teacher-centred instruction may be connected to several contextual factors. Teachers reported pressure to complete the syllabus, prepare students for examinations, and manage large classes within limited instructional time. In such circumstances, explaining a passage and checking answers may appear more practical than organizing extended discussions, group tasks, or individual reading activities. Similar constraints were identified in the previous listening study, where examination-oriented curricula and limited classroom time restricted the use of learner-centred listening activities. From a constructivist perspective, however, reading development requires learners to participate actively in the construction of meaning (Vygotsky, 1978). When teachers provide all explanations and students mainly reproduce expected answers, learners have fewer opportunities to predict, infer, question, interpret, and evaluate information. This may encourage dependence on the teacher and limit the development of independent reading habits (Afflerbach et al., 2008; Duke & Pearson, 2002). The findings do not suggest that teacher explanation is unnecessary. Teacher guidance is particularly important when students are dealing with complex texts or have limited English proficiency. However, explanation should be combined with guided practice, strategic instruction, classroom interaction, and opportunities for students to apply reading skills independently. This conclusion is similar to the previous listening study, which found that teacher scaffolding was valuable when it was combined with interactive tasks rather than used as a substitute for learner participation

Interactive Practices Promote Reading Development

The study found that students responded positively to interactive reading activities, including pair work, group discussion, prediction, summarizing, vocabulary exploration, and post-reading reflection. These activities encouraged students to share interpretations, clarify difficult ideas, and develop a deeper understanding of the reading material. Such findings support the view that reading comprehension improves when learners are actively involved in constructing meaning rather than simply receiving explanations (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Nation, 2009). Interactive practices also appeared to increase student confidence. Some learners may be reluctant to speak in front of the entire class because of limited English proficiency or fear of making mistakes. Pair and group activities provide a less threatening environment in which students can discuss the text before presenting their ideas to the wider class. Through this process, learners can compare interpretations, explain their reasoning, and clarify misunderstandings.

This finding closely corresponds with the previous listening study. In that study, students participated more confidently when they discussed audio materials with classmates, worked in groups, and reflected on what they had heard. The present study shows a similar pattern in reading lessons: students became more engaged when they discussed written texts, worked collaboratively, and shared their interpretations. Therefore, interaction appears to support both reading comprehension and listening comprehension by creating opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning with teachers and peers. The difference lies in the type of meaning being negotiated. In listening lessons, students discussed spoken information, pronunciation, accents, and the interpretation of audio recordings. In reading lessons, students focused more on main ideas, supporting details, vocabulary, text organization, inference, the writer's purpose, and the relationship between different parts of a text. This suggests that although interaction is useful for both skills, the specific tasks should be designed according to the demands of the language skill being taught. The findings further suggest that reading instruction should include the three stages of pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. Pre-reading tasks activate background knowledge and prepare students for the topic. While-reading activities guide students towards specific purposes, and post-reading tasks encourage reflection, discussion, and application (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Grabe, 2009). Together, these stages help transform reading from a mechanical exercise into an active learning process.

Technology Supports Reading but Does Not Replace Pedagogy

The findings show that digital resources can expand students' access to English reading materials and increase their exposure to authentic texts. Online articles, electronic books, mobile applications, educational websites, and digital libraries provide materials that may be more varied and current than a single printed textbook. Digital reading can also offer learners greater flexibility because they can access texts beyond the classroom and revisit difficult passages when necessary (Godwin-Jones, 2011; Stockwell, 2010).

Students valued the flexibility of digital reading. Mobile devices allowed them to access texts outside the classroom, search for vocabulary meanings, use translation tools, and read according to their own pace. This flexibility can support learner autonomy and encourage students to continue reading beyond formal classroom instruction. Previous research has similarly suggested that mobile devices can provide language learners with additional opportunities for practice and independent learning (Sung et al., 2015).

The previous listening study reported comparable benefits of technology. Teachers and students used mobile phones, videos, online platforms, podcasts, and audio recordings to provide exposure to authentic spoken English. The present study shows that similar digital resources can be used

to provide access to authentic written texts. In both studies, technology increased learners' exposure to English and made lessons more engaging and flexible

However, the findings demonstrate that technology alone does not guarantee improved reading comprehension. The effectiveness of a digital resource depends on the way it is integrated into the lesson. A digital text becomes more educationally valuable when students are asked to predict its content, identify the main idea, infer meaning, discuss the author's purpose, summarize information, or respond critically. This supports the argument that digital tools are most effective when they are connected to clear learning objectives and appropriate classroom activities (Godwin-Jones, 2011; Stockwell, 2010).

Technology can also create challenges. Students may rely too heavily on translation tools, focus on individual word meanings, become distracted by unrelated applications, or read texts without sufficient concentration. Unequal access to smartphones, internet services, and digital facilities may further affect students' learning opportunities. Similar problems were identified in the previous listening study, where limited technological infrastructure, unequal access, and insufficient teacher preparation restricted the effective use of digital resources.

There is, however, a skill-specific difference between reading and listening technology. In listening instruction, digital tools provide repeated exposure to spoken language, different accents, pronunciation, and authentic conversations. In reading instruction, digital tools provide access to written genres, hyperlinks, glossaries, search functions, and interactive texts. Therefore, technology should be integrated according to the particular demands of reading and listening rather than applied in exactly the same way. These findings indicate that teachers remain central to technology-supported reading instruction. Teachers need to select suitable texts, establish clear learning objectives, design guided activities, and teach students how to use digital tools responsibly. Professional development is therefore necessary to help teachers integrate technology with reading strategies rather than using digital resources as a replacement for pedagogy.

Contextual Challenges Influence Reading Instruction

The study identified several institutional challenges that restrict the implementation of effective reading pedagogy. These challenges include large classes, limited classroom time, insufficient reading materials, inadequate library facilities, unreliable internet access, and examination-oriented curricula. These factors influence the amount of reading practice students receive and the range of classroom activities teachers are able to implement. Large classes can reduce meaningful interaction between teachers and students. They make it difficult for teachers to identify individual reading problems, provide detailed feedback, or organize activities that require close monitoring. Limited instructional time may also encourage teachers to focus on completing textbook content instead of providing repeated practice in reading strategies. The previous listening study identified many of the same institutional challenges. Teachers reported that large classes, limited technological facilities, inadequate time, and examination-oriented curricula restricted the implementation of interactive listening activities. The present study confirms that these conditions also influence reading instruction. This similarity indicates that institutional factors affect language pedagogy across different language skills rather than affecting reading or listening in isolation. Assessment practices represent another important influence. When examinations primarily measure information recall, vocabulary meanings, translation, or answers from prescribed passages, teachers may prioritize these areas in their classroom instruction. Reading abilities such as inference, critical evaluation, summarizing, and interpretation may receive less attention because they are not consistently included in assessment (Alderson, 2000). The same issue was identified in the previous listening study, in which teachers explained that

listening instruction often focused on comprehension because examinations mainly assessed whether students understood an audio recording. In the reading context, this problem appears through a focus on correct answers, textbook content, translation, and vocabulary meanings. In both cases, assessment practices influence teachers' classroom decisions and may restrict the development of broader language abilities. The findings suggest that improvements in reading instruction require more than individual teacher effort. Universities need to provide appropriate reading materials, improve library and digital resources, support teacher training, and design assessments that measure a broader range of reading abilities. Curriculum objectives should also be aligned with classroom activities and examination requirements. These contextual issues are particularly important in Pakistani universities because students may enter higher education with very different levels of English proficiency. A supportive learning environment can help address these differences by providing accessible texts, structured guidance, additional practice, and opportunities for collaborative learning. Institutional support is also necessary to ensure that both reading and listening receive appropriate attention in English language courses

Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the understanding of English reading instruction by applying a constructivist perspective to the Pakistani higher education context. The findings demonstrate that reading development is not determined solely by the difficulty of a text or the explanation provided by a teacher. It is also shaped by learner participation, classroom interaction, teacher scaffolding, peer collaboration, reading strategies, and institutional support (Vygotsky, 1978). The study further shows that students become more engaged when they are treated as active participants rather than passive receivers of information. Prediction, discussion, collaborative interpretation, and reflection enable learners to connect written information with their previous knowledge and personal experiences. These processes support the gradual development of comprehension, confidence, critical thinking, and reading autonomy (Rosenblatt, 1978; Grabe, 2009). The previous listening study reached a similar theoretical conclusion. It showed that listening development was supported by interaction, teacher scaffolding, learner engagement, and purposeful use of digital technologies. The present study extends this conclusion to reading by showing that the same constructivist principles apply when learners construct meaning from written texts. The difference is that reading activities require particular attention to text structure, vocabulary, inference, critical interpretation, and strategic comprehension. The findings also extend the constructivist understanding of technology in language learning. Digital tools can serve as mediating resources that connect learners with texts, teachers, peers, and wider sources of information. However, the educational value of technology depends on purposeful pedagogical design. Technology is most effective when it supports interaction, strategy use, and meaningful engagement with written language (Godwin-Jones, 2011; Stockwell, 2010). Overall, the study suggests that effective reading pedagogy requires alignment among classroom practices, learner needs, teacher preparation, curriculum objectives, assessment procedures, and institutional resources. A shift towards more interactive and learner-centred reading instruction may help undergraduate students become confident, strategic, and independent users of English.

Comparison with the Previous Listening Study

The comparison between the present reading study and the previous listening study reveals four major similarities. First, both studies found that teacher-centred instruction remains common. Second, both demonstrated that interactive and collaborative activities increase student participation. Third, both showed that technology supports language learning when it is integrated with appropriate pedagogy. Fourth, both identified large classes, limited time, inadequate

resources, and examination-oriented assessment as major institutional constraints. There are also important differences between the two studies. The reading study focuses on written texts and therefore emphasizes translation, vocabulary interpretation, skimming, scanning, inference, summarizing, critical reading, and text organization. The listening study focuses on spoken language and therefore emphasizes audio comprehension, pronunciation, authentic speech, note-taking, repeated listening, and exposure to different accents. Technology also serves different purposes: it provides digital texts and reading support in the reading study, while it provides audio, video, podcasts, and spoken-language exposure in the listening study. Taken together, the two studies suggest that language skills should be taught through an integrated but skill-sensitive approach. Reading and listening share common pedagogical principles, including learner participation, strategy instruction, interaction, scaffolding, and purposeful technology use. However, each skill also requires specialized classroom practices and assessment methods. A comprehensive English language programme should therefore support both general learner-centred pedagogy and the specific cognitive demands of individual language skills.

Summary of the Discussion

Overall, the findings indicate that English reading instruction in Pakistani universities is shaped by both pedagogical and institutional factors. Traditional teacher-centered practices continue to influence classroom teaching, but strategy-based, interactive, and technology-supported approaches provide stronger opportunities for students to develop reading comprehension and independence. The comparison with the previous listening study confirms that many challenges are shared across language skills. At the same time, the reading study demonstrates that written-language development requires specialized attention to vocabulary, text structure, inference, critical interpretation, and reading strategies. These findings support the need for more learner-centered curricula, teacher professional development, appropriate digital resources, and assessment practices that reflect the full range of English reading abilities. Based on these findings, the next section presents the conclusion, implications, limitations, and recommendations of the study.

Conclusion

This qualitative multiple case study explored classroom practices for developing English reading skills in Pakistani universities. The findings show that reading is recognized as an important component of English language learning; however, the nature and quality of reading instruction vary across university classrooms. The study found that reading lessons are often influenced by teacher-centered practices, translation, textbook-based exercises, vocabulary explanation, and examination requirements. Although these approaches may help students understand particular passages, they do not always provide sufficient opportunities to develop strategic, critical, and independent reading skills. Students may therefore remain dependent on teacher explanations and word-for-word translation. At the same time, the findings demonstrate that learner-centred and interactive practices can create more effective opportunities for reading development. Prediction activities, skimming and scanning, group discussion, vocabulary learning through context, summarizing, peer collaboration, and post-reading reflection encourage students to participate actively in the construction of meaning. These approaches can improve comprehension, confidence, motivation, and engagement with English texts. The study also highlights the supporting role of technology in reading instruction. Digital articles, electronic books, mobile applications, online platforms, and educational websites provide students with access to a wider range of reading materials and allow them to practise reading beyond the classroom. However, technology alone cannot improve reading proficiency. Its effectiveness depends on teachers'

ability to select appropriate materials, provide clear reading purposes, teach suitable strategies, and design meaningful follow-up activities. The findings further indicate that reading pedagogy is influenced by institutional conditions. Large class sizes, limited teaching time, insufficient reading resources, restricted internet access, inadequate library facilities, and examination-oriented assessment can limit the use of interactive and strategy-based reading instruction. These challenges show that improving reading skills requires cooperation among teachers, curriculum designers, teacher educators, university administrators, and assessment authorities. From a constructivist perspective, the study demonstrates that reading development occurs through active participation, social interaction, teacher scaffolding, and engagement with meaningful texts. Students become more capable readers when they are encouraged to interpret information, discuss ideas, ask questions, solve comprehension problems, and reflect on their learning. The study therefore recommends a gradual movement away from reading instruction based exclusively on translation and answer checking towards a more learner-centred, strategy-based, and interactive approach.

Implications of the Study

The findings have several implications for English language education in Pakistani universities. For English language teachers, reading lessons should include pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. Teachers should explicitly teach strategies such as prediction, skimming, scanning, identifying the main idea, making inferences, using contextual clues, summarizing, and evaluating information. For curriculum designers, English courses should provide a wider range of academic, informational, narrative, and digital texts. Reading objectives should also be connected with classroom activities and assessment tasks so that students are encouraged to develop higher-order comprehension skills. For teacher educators and professional development providers, training should focus on learner-centred reading pedagogy, strategy instruction, collaborative learning, critical reading, digital literacy, and the effective use of authentic materials. For university administrators, improved access to libraries, digital databases, internet facilities, reading laboratories, and suitable classroom technology is necessary. Institutional support can help teachers implement reading activities more consistently and provide students with additional opportunities for English reading practice. For assessment authorities, examinations should measure more than vocabulary recall and information stated directly in a passage. Assessment should also include inference, interpretation, summarizing, critical evaluation, and the ability to identify relationships between ideas.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, it was conducted in selected public universities; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to all higher education institutions in Pakistan, particularly private universities, rural colleges, or specialized institutions. Second, the study used a qualitative design and focused on participants' experiences, classroom observations, and instructional documents. The findings provide in-depth contextual understanding but do not statistically measure changes in students' reading proficiency. Third, the number of participating teachers and students was limited. Although the sample was appropriate for a qualitative multiple case study, a larger sample could have provided additional perspectives from students with different levels of English proficiency and from a wider range of academic disciplines. Finally, the study examined classroom practices during a specific period. It did not follow students over an extended period to determine how their reading skills developed over time. The findings should therefore be understood as context-specific rather than as evidence of long-term improvement.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies may extend this research in several ways. Researchers could include private universities, colleges, and institutions from different provinces of Pakistan to develop a broader understanding of English reading instruction. Longitudinal studies could examine how students' reading strategies, comprehension, motivation, and autonomy develop over time. Mixed-methods research could also combine classroom observations and interviews with reading assessments, questionnaires, and achievement data.

Further research could investigate specific areas of reading development, including:

- The effect of mobile-assisted reading applications on vocabulary and comprehension.
- The relationship between digital reading and learner autonomy.
- The influence of extensive reading on undergraduate students' reading fluency.
- The role of critical reading in English language courses.
- Teachers' preparedness for integrating digital texts into reading instruction.
- The impact of assessment reform on classroom reading practices.
- Differences in reading instruction between urban and rural universities.

Final Statement

In conclusion, effective English reading instruction in Pakistani universities requires more than the completion of textbook passages and comprehension questions. It requires meaningful texts, explicit strategy instruction, collaborative classroom interaction, purposeful technology use, teacher support, and an institutional environment that values reading as a central academic skill. Strengthening these areas can help undergraduate students become more confident, strategic, critical, and independent readers. The study therefore emphasizes the importance of developing reading pedagogy that responds to students' academic needs and prepares them to engage successfully with English texts in university, professional, and wider social contexts.

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