Interaction-Driven Reading Comprehension Development in EFL Classrooms: A Qualitative Study of Collaborative Meaning-Making in Secondary English Education

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Reading comprehension is a core component of EFL learning, yet many secondary classrooms still rely on teacher-centered instruction that limits interaction, engagement, and deeper interpretation of texts. Recent pedagogical perspectives suggest that collaborative classroom interaction can strengthen students' comprehension and critical reading development.

Aims: This study investigates how interaction-driven instructional practices support reading comprehension development in EFL classrooms, with particular attention to collaborative meaning-making during reading activities.

Methods: A qualitative descriptive design was employed. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and analysis of instructional documents. Participants were selected purposively based on their involvement in interactive reading instruction. The data were analyzed using thematic coding and interpretative analysis.

Results: The findings show that collaborative discussion and guided questioning increased student participation and supported deeper interpretation of texts. Students became more confident in expressing ideas and negotiating meaning with peers. Teachers also reported that interactive activities reduced reading anxiety and created a more supportive learning environment. However, differences in vocabulary mastery and learning motivation influenced the level of participation.

Conclusion: Interaction-driven pedagogy plays an important role in improving reading comprehension in EFL classrooms by promoting collaborative meaning-making, reflective engagement, and active participation. The study highlights the value of structured interaction and scaffolded discussion in creating more inclusive, meaningful, and pedagogically effective reading instruction in secondary English education

Keywords: Interaction-Driven Learning, Reading Comprehension, EFL Classrooms, Collaborative Meaning-Making, Secondary English Education.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is widely recognized as a fundamental component of literacy development in English as a Foreign Language learning contexts. In many secondary education settings, students are expected not only to decode written texts but also to construct meaning, interpret ideas, and respond critically to information presented in reading materials (Lesaux et al., 2006). Explain that effective reading comprehension requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, cognitive strategies, and contextual understanding. However, classroom instruction often emphasizes surface-level comprehension rather than deeper interpretative engagement with texts (Van Rijk et al., 2017). Comprehension develops most effectively when learners actively interact with texts and with other readers in meaningful learning environments (Hattan et al., 2024). Nevertheless, many EFL classrooms still adopt teacher-centered reading instruction that limits opportunities for dialogue and collaborative interpretation. Such instructional conditions frequently reduce students' engagement and restrict the development of higher-level comprehension skills. Notes that limited interaction during reading activities may hinder learners' ability to connect textual information with prior knowledge and contextual meaning.

In response to these challenges, contemporary educational discourse increasingly emphasizes the importance of interaction-driven learning environments in literacy education. Classroom interaction enables students to negotiate meaning, articulate interpretations, and refine their understanding through dialogue with peers and teachers. Argue that collaborative talk in classrooms supports knowledge construction and strengthens students' reasoning processes during learning activities (Aalto & Mustonen, 2022). Within reading instruction, interactive discussions and guided questioning can help students explore multiple interpretations of a text and develop deeper comprehension. Highlights that dialogic teaching practices allow learners to engage with ideas collectively and build shared understanding through reflective communication (Rojas-Drummond et al., 2024). Despite the growing recognition of interaction as a key component of literacy development, many EFL classrooms still struggle to integrate structured interaction into reading instruction. Research in EFL contexts continues to report limited opportunities for collaborative interpretation and discussion during reading lessons. This condition indicates a need for further investigation into how interaction-driven pedagogical practices operate in authentic classroom settings.

Understanding how interaction shapes reading comprehension development is particularly important in EFL classrooms where students encounter linguistic and cognitive challenges when interpreting texts. Reading in a foreign language often requires learners to process unfamiliar vocabulary, grammatical structures, and cultural references simultaneously. Successful comprehension depends on both linguistic proficiency and strategic interaction with textual information (Saepudin et al., 2024). Interactive learning environments can provide opportunities for students to clarify misunderstandings and co-construct interpretations through collaborative dialogue. When students engage in shared meaning-making processes, they are more likely to develop confidence in expressing ideas and evaluating textual information. Dialogic interaction also encourages students to reflect on different perspectives and refine their interpretations collectively. Such processes contribute to deeper comprehension and promote critical literacy skills in language learning contexts. Therefore, examining interaction-driven reading instruction becomes essential for understanding how pedagogical practices can support meaningful literacy development in EFL classrooms.

Previous research has highlighted the role of classroom interaction in supporting literacy development and reading comprehension. Research by (Ali et al., 2024) demonstrates that dialogic interaction in classrooms significantly enhances students' engagement and interpretative thinking during reading activities. Similarly, research conducted by (Asti & Rosalinah, 2025) shows that collaborative discussions enable students to explore complex ideas in texts and develop deeper understanding of narrative and informational materials. In EFL contexts, interaction-based learning has been associated with improved comprehension and increased learner participation. Studies by Kim and (Chen et al., 2024) indicate that structured peer discussions can promote analytical thinking and strengthen students' interpretation of texts. Such collaborative learning environments encourage students to question ideas, clarify meaning, and build connections between textual information and prior knowledge. Furthermore, research by (Yang, 2023) suggests that interactive reading tasks improve learners' motivation and confidence in interpreting English texts. These findings collectively highlight the potential of interaction-driven pedagogy to transform reading instruction into a more participatory learning process.

Recent studies have also explored how collaborative meaning-making contributes to literacy development in language learning contexts. According to research by (Khong et al., 2023), classroom dialogue encourages students to articulate interpretations and negotiate meaning with peers. Such interactions help learners internalize comprehension strategies and develop metacognitive awareness during reading activities. Research by (Darmawansah et al., 2024) emphasizes that structured discussion and guided questioning can scaffold students' interpretative reasoning. In EFL classrooms, collaborative meaning-making has been shown to support vocabulary development and contextual understanding of texts. A study by (Al Baekani, 2025) indicates that peer interaction can facilitate deeper comprehension by enabling students to exchange perspectives and clarify complex ideas. Interactive literacy practices also encourage learners to participate more actively in reading tasks. These findings suggest that collaborative interaction plays a critical role in fostering deeper comprehension and reflective engagement with texts. Consequently, examining how interaction-driven practices function within classroom contexts remains an important area of investigation in contemporary literacy research.

Although previous studies have emphasized the importance of classroom interaction in literacy development, many investigations have primarily focused on general collaborative learning strategies rather than examining how interaction directly shapes the process of reading comprehension in EFL classrooms. Existing research frequently evaluates the effectiveness of discussion-based instruction without exploring the mechanisms through which students construct meaning collectively during reading activities. Furthermore, many studies have concentrated on experimental instructional models rather than examining interaction patterns within authentic classroom environments. As a result, there is limited understanding of how interaction-driven pedagogical practices operate in everyday reading lessons and how students participate in collaborative interpretation processes. In addition, variations in vocabulary mastery and learner motivation may influence how students engage in interactive reading activities, yet these factors are rarely explored in depth. The lack of detailed qualitative analysis of interaction-driven comprehension development creates an important gap in the current literature. Addressing this gap is essential for advancing knowledge about how collaborative meaning-making contributes to literacy development in EFL contexts. Therefore, investigating interaction-driven reading comprehension

within authentic classroom settings offers an opportunity to provide new insights into the pedagogical processes that support meaningful literacy learning.

This study aims to investigate how interaction-driven instructional practices contribute to reading comprehension development in EFL classrooms. The research focuses on examining how collaborative meaning-making emerges during reading activities and how students engage in dialogue to interpret texts. Particular attention is given to the ways classroom interaction influences student participation and interpretative reasoning during reading lessons. The study also seeks to understand how teachers facilitate interactive learning environments that support comprehension development. Through qualitative analysis of classroom practices, the research explores how discussion, questioning, and peer interaction shape the reading process. The findings are expected to provide insights into how collaborative dialogue can enhance students' engagement with texts. By examining interaction patterns within authentic learning contexts, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of literacy development in EFL education. Ultimately, the research aims to inform pedagogical practices that promote more interactive and meaningful reading instruction in secondary English classrooms.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate interaction-driven reading comprehension development in EFL classrooms. Qualitative inquiry was selected because it enables researchers to explore classroom processes, instructional practices, and learner interaction in natural learning environments. According to Aryal, (2024) qualitative research allows scholars to understand educational phenomena by examining participants' experiences, classroom dynamics, and contextual meanings. The design focused on interpreting how collaborative meaning-making occurs during reading activities and how students negotiate textual understanding through classroom interaction. Merriam and (Kelly, 2023) explain that qualitative studies are particularly appropriate for examining teaching practices and learning processes that involve dialogue and social interaction. Within this framework, the research explored the pedagogical mechanisms through which interactive learning strategies shape comprehension development. The investigation emphasized authentic classroom situations in which students participated in discussions, responded to guided questions, and collaboratively interpreted texts. Such an approach allowed the study to capture interaction patterns and interpretative processes that cannot be adequately measured through purely quantitative methods.

Participants

Participants in this study consisted of secondary school students and English teachers involved in classroom reading instruction. The selection of participants followed purposive sampling to ensure that those involved had direct experience with interactive reading activities. (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025) describes purposive sampling as a strategy that allows researchers to select participants who can provide rich information relevant to the research objectives. Students participating in the study represented an EFL learning environment in which reading comprehension was taught through collaborative discussion and guided questioning. Teachers included in the study had experience implementing interactive instructional strategies during reading lessons. The involvement of both

teachers and students enabled the research to examine classroom interaction from multiple perspectives. Teachers contributed insights regarding instructional design, classroom facilitation, and pedagogical challenges encountered during reading instruction. Students provided perspectives related to their engagement, comprehension experiences, and participation during collaborative meaning-making activities.

Instrument

Data were collected using multiple qualitative instruments to capture different aspects of classroom interaction and comprehension development. Classroom observations were conducted to document instructional practices, student participation, and interaction patterns during reading lessons. Observation protocols were designed to record activities such as collaborative discussion, teacher questioning, and student responses to textual interpretation tasks. Interviews with teachers and students were also conducted to explore perceptions of interactive learning and its role in reading comprehension development. emphasize that semi-structured interviews enable researchers to capture participants' experiences while allowing flexibility for deeper exploration of educational phenomena. In addition to observations and interviews, instructional documents such as lesson plans and reading materials were analyzed to understand how interaction-driven strategies were integrated into classroom instruction (Brown & Danaher, 2019). Document analysis allowed the researcher to examine how teachers structured reading activities to encourage collaborative meaning-making. The use of multiple instruments strengthened the credibility of the study by enabling triangulation of data sources. Table 1 presents the instruments used in the research process.

Table 1. Research Instruments and Data Sources.

Instrument	Data Collected	Purpose
Classroom Observation	Interaction patterns, participation, instructional activities	Identify how interaction occurs during reading instruction
Semi-structured Interviews	Teacher and student perspectives	Explore experiences of collaborative meaning-making
Document Analysis	Lesson plans, reading materials	Examine instructional design and reading activities

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach to identify patterns related to interaction-driven comprehension development. Explain that thematic analysis enables researchers to systematically identify recurring themes within qualitative data (Ahmed et al., 2025). The analysis began with data familiarization through repeated reading of observation notes, interview transcripts, and instructional documents. Initial coding was conducted to identify meaningful units related to classroom interaction, collaborative dialogue, and comprehension processes. Codes were then grouped into broader themes representing patterns of collaborative meaning-making and student engagement during reading activities. Emphasize that qualitative analysis involves iterative processes of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to construct meaningful explanations (Locke et al., 2022). Through this process, themes were refined to represent how interaction-driven instructional practices influence reading comprehension development. The final stage of analysis involved interpreting relationships between classroom interaction patterns and students' interpretative engagement with texts.
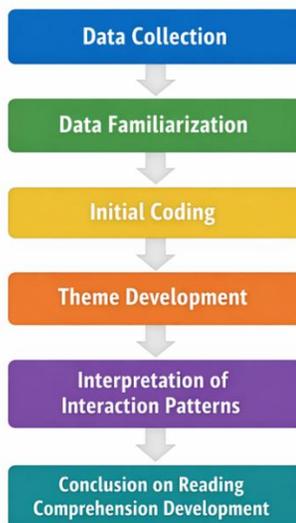
Figure 1. illustrates the stages of qualitative data analysis implemented in the study.

Figure 1 shows that qualitative analysis in this study followed a systematic progression from data collection to interpretation of interaction patterns. The framework highlights how classroom observations, interviews, and documents were analyzed to identify themes related to collaborative meaning-making. Through this analytical process, the study was able to generate insights into how interaction-driven pedagogical practices support reading comprehension development in EFL classrooms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study reveal that interaction-driven instructional practices significantly shaped students' reading comprehension development in EFL classrooms. Classroom observations showed that collaborative discussion and guided questioning created opportunities for students to actively interpret texts rather than merely identify explicit information. Students were frequently involved in small group dialogue where they shared interpretations, clarified vocabulary, and negotiated textual meanings with peers. Teachers also facilitated comprehension development by asking reflective questions that encouraged students to justify their interpretations. These interaction patterns enabled students to connect textual information with their prior knowledge and personal experiences. Interview data further indicated that students felt more confident when reading tasks involved discussion rather than individual silent reading. Teachers reported that interaction-based activities helped reduce reading anxiety and increased classroom participation. Overall, the findings demonstrate that interaction-driven pedagogy fostered a more participatory reading environment that supported deeper textual understanding.

A second major finding relates to how collaborative meaning-making occurred during reading activities. Students often interpreted texts through peer explanation, where stronger readers assisted peers in understanding unfamiliar vocabulary and complex sentences. Such peer interaction enabled students to build shared understanding and refine interpretations collectively. Classroom observations also revealed that guided questioning helped students move beyond literal comprehension toward inferential and evaluative interpretation. Teachers frequently used prompts such as asking students to explain reasons, predict outcomes, and relate text content to real-life

experiences. Interview responses indicated that these interaction patterns helped students develop greater awareness of how meaning is constructed within texts. Students reported that collaborative dialogue made reading tasks more engaging and less intimidating. These findings suggest that interaction-driven learning not only improves participation but also strengthens cognitive engagement with texts.

Table 2. Themes of Interaction-Driven Reading Comprehension Development.

Theme	Description	Evidence Source
Collaborative Interpretation	Students interpret texts through peer discussion	Classroom observation
Guided Questioning	Teachers facilitate comprehension through reflective questions	Teacher interview
Meaning Negotiation	Students clarify vocabulary and concepts collectively	Student interview
Engagement Enhancement	Interaction increases motivation and participation	Observation and interview

Table 2 illustrates the main themes emerging from the qualitative analysis. The themes demonstrate that interaction-driven pedagogy influences both cognitive and social aspects of reading comprehension development. Collaborative interpretation encourages students to explore multiple perspectives on textual meaning. Guided questioning helps students move beyond literal understanding toward deeper analytical interpretation. Meaning negotiation enables students to clarify misunderstandings through peer explanation. Engagement enhancement reflects increased participation when reading tasks involve interactive dialogue.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the importance of classroom interaction in supporting reading comprehension development in EFL contexts. Interaction-driven instructional practices allow students to move beyond passive reading toward collaborative interpretation of texts. E mphasize that classroom dialogue enables learners to construct knowledge collectively through shared reasoning (Rapanta & Felton, 2022). The results of this study align with previous research showing that collaborative talk enhances comprehension and interpretative thinking. Argues that dialogic interaction increases students' engagement with textual meaning and encourages deeper analysis (Hennessy et al., 2023). In the present study, collaborative discussions allowed students to clarify ideas, exchange interpretations, and evaluate textual information together. Such interaction created opportunities for learners to actively construct meaning rather than simply receive information from teachers. Consequently, interaction-driven pedagogy plays a crucial role in strengthening literacy learning in EFL classrooms.

Another important finding concerns the role of guided questioning in facilitating comprehension development. Teachers in this study frequently used reflective prompts to encourage students to explain their reasoning and support interpretations with textual evidence. Dialogic teaching practices help students develop analytical thinking through structured classroom dialogue (Tao et al., 2026). Guided questioning allows learners to explore different perspectives and consider alternative interpretations of texts. The findings of this study support the argument that questioning strategies can scaffold students' comprehension processes. Suggests that reflective questioning helps students engage more deeply with textual ideas and narrative structures (Sunan, 2024). In the

present study, such questioning techniques helped students transition from literal comprehension to inferential interpretation. This indicates that teacher facilitation remains essential in creating meaningful interaction during reading instruction.

The results also demonstrate that collaborative meaning-making contributes significantly to student engagement and confidence in reading activities. When students were encouraged to share interpretations with peers, they became more willing to participate in classroom discussions. Found that peer dialogue supports students in developing interpretative reasoning during reading tasks (Phillips, 2023). Reports that collaborative learning environments increase students' motivation and self-efficacy in language learning contexts. In the current study, students expressed greater confidence when they could discuss textual ideas with classmates. Such collaborative interaction allowed students to clarify misunderstandings and refine interpretations collectively. Emphasize that social interaction is central to literacy development because meaning is constructed through dialogue (Gasser et al., 2022). Therefore, collaborative meaning-making represents a key mechanism through which interaction-driven pedagogy enhances reading comprehension.

The findings of this study also contribute to broader discussions about literacy development in EFL education. Reading comprehension involves complex cognitive processes that require learners to integrate linguistic knowledge with contextual understanding. Argues that successful comprehension depends on strategic interaction between readers and texts. In EFL contexts, this interaction becomes even more important because learners must interpret texts in a non-native language. The results of this study demonstrate that interaction-driven instruction can support these processes by enabling students to discuss vocabulary, clarify concepts, and explore textual meaning collaboratively. Found that peer interaction facilitates vocabulary learning and contextual interpretation of texts (Iglesias-Diéguez et al., 2025). This supports the argument that collaborative learning environments are particularly beneficial for EFL learners. Consequently, integrating interaction-driven strategies into reading instruction can significantly improve literacy outcomes in language learning contexts.

Finally, the study offers insights into how interaction-driven pedagogy can be implemented effectively in secondary English education. Teachers play a crucial role in designing learning environments that encourage dialogue and collaborative interpretation. Emphasize that structured classroom discussion helps students develop metacognitive awareness during reading activities (Li & Yuan, 2022). The findings of this study indicate that interaction becomes most effective when supported by guided questioning and structured group discussion. Without such scaffolding, classroom interaction may remain superficial and fail to support deeper comprehension. Therefore, teachers must carefully design reading tasks that promote meaningful dialogue among students. Such instructional practices can transform reading lessons into collaborative learning experiences. These findings reinforce the importance of interaction-based literacy instruction in contemporary EFL pedagogy.

Implications

The findings of this study provide important pedagogical implications for English language teaching, particularly in EFL contexts. Interaction-driven instructional practices can transform reading lessons from passive activities into collaborative learning experiences. Teachers should therefore incorporate structured discussions, guided questioning, and peer interaction into reading instruction. Such strategies encourage students to actively interpret texts and share ideas with

classmates. The study also highlights the importance of creating supportive classroom environments where students feel comfortable expressing interpretations. Educational institutions should provide professional development programs that train teachers to facilitate dialogic classroom interaction. Curriculum designers may also consider integrating collaborative reading tasks into language learning materials. These pedagogical changes can help improve reading comprehension development and promote deeper engagement with texts.

Research Contribution

This study contributes to the field of language education by providing a detailed analysis of the linguistic and psychological barriers that hinder speaking proficiency among junior high school students. It also offers practical recommendations for teachers and educators to enhance students' speaking abilities through communicative teaching strategies and supportive feedback. By identifying both the challenges and potential solutions, the study fills a gap in the existing literature on language learning difficulties at the junior high school level, particularly in non-native English-speaking contexts.

Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted within a limited classroom context, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study relied primarily on qualitative data obtained through observations and interviews. Although such data provide rich insights into classroom interaction, they may not capture long-term changes in students' reading comprehension performance. Third, the study focused on a specific educational context within EFL classrooms. Different educational environments may demonstrate different patterns of interaction-driven learning. Future studies may therefore consider expanding the research to multiple schools or educational settings. Quantitative measurements of comprehension improvement could also complement qualitative findings. Addressing these limitations would strengthen the evidence base for interaction-driven literacy instruction.

Suggestions

Future research should explore interaction-driven reading instruction in a wider range of educational contexts. Comparative studies across different schools or regions may provide deeper understanding of how interaction patterns vary in EFL classrooms. Researchers may also examine the integration of digital tools to support collaborative reading activities. Online discussion platforms and interactive reading applications could offer new opportunities for collaborative meaning-making. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable in examining how interaction-driven instruction influences literacy development over time. Future investigations may combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to capture both classroom interaction and measurable comprehension outcomes. Exploring the relationship between vocabulary development and collaborative reading practices could also provide valuable insights. Such research would contribute to advancing theoretical and pedagogical understanding of interaction-driven literacy learning.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how interaction-driven instructional practices contribute to the development of reading comprehension in EFL classrooms. The findings demonstrate that structured

classroom interaction, including collaborative discussion and guided questioning, plays a crucial role in supporting students' interpretative engagement with texts. Through collaborative dialogue, students were able to negotiate meaning, clarify vocabulary, and construct shared interpretations of reading materials. These interaction processes encouraged learners to move beyond surface-level comprehension toward deeper analytical and reflective interpretation. The results also indicate that interaction-based learning environments foster greater student participation and confidence during reading activities. When students are actively involved in dialogue and collaborative reasoning, they become more capable of connecting textual ideas with prior knowledge and contextual understanding. Such learning conditions contribute to the development of more meaningful literacy practices in EFL classrooms. Therefore, interaction-driven pedagogy can be considered an effective approach for promoting active and reflective reading comprehension development.

From a broader perspective, the study highlights the pedagogical value of integrating collaborative meaning-making into reading instruction in secondary English education. The findings suggest that reading comprehension development is not solely a cognitive process but also a social and dialogic activity shaped by classroom interaction. Teachers who design learning environments that encourage dialogue, questioning, and peer collaboration can facilitate deeper engagement with texts and support students' interpretative reasoning. The conceptual model proposed in this study demonstrates how interaction-driven instruction can lead to enhanced reading comprehension through processes of discussion, meaning negotiation, and reflective interpretation. These insights contribute to the growing body of research emphasizing the importance of dialogic pedagogy in literacy education. Although the study is situated within a specific EFL classroom context, its findings provide valuable implications for language educators seeking to strengthen reading instruction through interactive learning strategies. Future research may further explore how interaction-driven literacy practices can be integrated with digital learning tools and multimodal reading environments. Such investigations may expand the understanding of how collaborative dialogue can support literacy development in diverse educational contexts.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Raynesa Noor Emiliasari contributed to the conceptualization of the study, data collection, classroom observations, interview administration, and initial manuscript preparation. Emi Emilia contributed to the development of the theoretical framework, research design refinement, and critical revision of the manuscript to ensure academic rigor and conceptual clarity. Budi Hermawan contributed to data analysis, interpretation of qualitative findings, and the improvement of methodological accuracy in the manuscript. All authors participated in reviewing and approving the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for the integrity and accuracy of the research presented in this article.

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