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The Impact of Reading Circles on Students' Reading Comprehension in Algerian Secondary School EFL Classes

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Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to the people who have been my source of strength, support, and inspiration throughout this academic journey.

To my beloved parents, whose endless sacrifices, prayers, and encouragement have always guided me toward success. Your love, patience, and support gave me the courage to persevere through difficult moments.

To my dear brothers and sisters, for their constant support, understanding, and motivation.

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I also dedicate this work to my friends and classmates, who made this journey memorable through their support and positive spirit.

Finally, I dedicate this achievement to everyone who believed in me and encouraged me to pursue my dreams.

Dedication

*To the one who taught me that success can only be achieved through patience and hard work,
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I pray to God that this work be sincere for His sake, blessed, and beneficial lodgments

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Abstract

This thesis explores the effect of reading circles on students' reading comprehension in the context of Algerian EFL classes. This study is based on social constructivist and reader response theory, which stress the importance of collaborative learning and active involvement in texts. This study analyses the learner is able to use structured group discussion and peer interaction to the development of understanding. Furthermore, the research includes age factor and English proficiency level as control variables which might have impact on the students' performance.

The study employs a quantitative descriptive design and uses questionnaires and a classroom-based analysis to gather data from teachers and students. It is anticipated that the results will reveal that the participation in reading circles improves students' engagement, motivation, participation and reading comprehension skills. This study draws attention to the potential value of collaborative brokering in developing English language learning and teaching in the context of the Algerian secondary school.

Keywords: Reading circles, reading comprehension, collaborative learning, EFL learners, social constructivism, reader, response theory.

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List of Initialisms

Initialisms	Meaning
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
IV	Independent Variable
DV	Dependent Variable
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
APA	American Psychological Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
RC	Reading Comprehension

General Introduction

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) involves the development of several essential language skills, among which reading occupies a central position. Reading is not merely a fundamental component of language acquisition; it also serves as a vital means of accessing information, enriching vocabulary, and enhancing overall language proficiency. Within secondary school education, reading comprehension constitutes a critical academic skill, as learners are expected to analyze texts, interpret meanings, and engage effectively with a variety of written materials in English.

Despite its significance, many EFL learners encounter considerable difficulties in comprehending English texts effectively. In the context of Algerian secondary schools, students frequently experience challenges in reading comprehension due to limited vocabulary knowledge, insufficient mastery of reading strategies, and restricted opportunities for active interaction with texts. Moreover, traditional instructional approaches often emphasize teacher-centered practices, where learners assume a passive role by reading texts and answering comprehension questions with minimal discussion or collaborative engagement. Consequently, such practices may reduce learners' motivation and hinder the development of higher-order comprehension abilities and critical reading skills.

In order to address these issues, teachers have increasingly emphasized the importance of using cooperative learning approaches that promote active student involvement in the reading process. One of these approaches is the use of Reading Circles (also known as Literature Circles), where students are organized into small groups to read, discuss, and analyze texts together. In this approach, each student takes a particular role (such as summarizer, questioner, vocabulary finder, or connector), which encourages student interaction and a deeper understanding of the text.

Reading circles can create a more dynamic and student-centered learning environment. By means of discussion and collaboration, students are encouraged to exchange their ideas, clarify their meanings, and develop critical thinking skills while improving their comprehension skills. Thus, it is crucial to examine the effectiveness of reading circles in EFL settings, especially in the Algerian secondary school context.

This research aims to explore the effect of reading circles on students' reading comprehension in Algerian secondary school EFL classes and to find out if this collaborative method can help students improve their comprehension of English texts and become more active participants in the reading process. proficiency. In the context of secondary schools, reading comprehension is crucial skill that students need to master, as they are expected to comprehend texts, interpret meanings, and interact with various written texts in English.

1. Statement of the Problem:

EFL learning; however, a large number of Algerian secondary school students face problems in decoding and making sense of written texts. The problems faced by the students include limited vocabulary, problems in identifying the main idea, and extracting information from reading passages. In many classrooms, reading is still taught in a traditional and teacher-centered way, where students are left alone to read a text and then answer comprehension questions based on the text. This method may not be effective in encouraging active participation and engagement with the text.

As a consequence, students may adopt a passive approach to reading and fail to develop effective strategies for understanding, interpreting, and critically analyzing texts. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to adopt more interactive and collaborative pedagogical approaches that promote active student engagement in the reading process.

One such approach is the use of reading circles, a cooperative learning strategy in which students work in small groups to discuss, interpret, and analyze texts. This method has the potential to enhance reading comprehension through peer interaction, exchange of ideas, and collaborative meaning-making. However, the implementation of reading circles in Algerian secondary school EFL classrooms remains insufficiently explored in the existing literature. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate whether reading circles can significantly improve students' reading comprehension skills.

2. Research Questions

- This study attempts to answer the following questions:
- Does the use of reading circles improve students' reading comprehension?
- Is there a significant difference between students taught through reading circles and those taught traditionally?
- How do students perceive reading circles in EFL classes??

3. Research hypothesis

In order to answer these questions, we hypothesize that:

- H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): Students exposed to reading circles perform significantly better in reading comprehension.
- H_2 (Motivation and Engagement): Students who participate in reading circles will exhibit higher levels of motivation and active engagement during reading lessons compared to traditional teacher-centered methods.
- H_3 (Vocabulary Acquisition): The collaborative interaction and role assignments within reading circles positively contribute to the expansion of students' English

vocabulary.

4. Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

- To examine the current difficulties students, face in reading comprehension in EFL classes.
- To investigate the effectiveness of reading circles as a cooperative learning strategy.
- To evaluate the impact of reading circles on students' reading comprehension.
- To explore students' attitudes toward the use of reading circles in reading activities.

5. Research Methodology

The research focuses on the impact of reading circles on students' reading comprehension. To achieve the research objectives, the present study adopts a descriptive analytical methodology. This approach is highly suitable for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting students' opinions and experiences regarding collaborative reading strategies. Data collection primarily relies on a structured questionnaire administered to secondary school EFL students who have prior experience with reading circles. The questionnaire investigates students' attitudes toward this approach, examining whether they find it motivating, useful for text comprehension, and effective for enhancing reading skills. The collected data is analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, to identify general trends and provide qualitative insights into the students' collaborative learning experiences.

6. Rationale

Reading comprehension is one of the most essential skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It enables students to understand written texts, expand their vocabulary, and develop their overall language proficiency. However, many secondary school students in Algeria face difficulties in understanding English texts due to limited vocabulary, lack of effective reading strategies, and insufficient engagement in reading activities.

In many EFL classrooms, reading instruction is still based on traditional teacher-centered methods where students read texts individually and answer comprehension questions. Such approaches may not fully encourage students' interaction with the text or promote active participation in the learning process. Therefore, there is a growing need for teaching strategies that make students more involved and motivated during reading lessons.

Reading circles represent an interactive and collaborative learning strategy that encourages students to work in small groups and discuss texts together while performing

specific roles. This method can help learners exchange ideas, clarify meanings, and improve their comprehension through discussion and cooperation.

The rationale behind this study is to explore whether implementing reading circles in Algerian secondary school EFL classes can improve students' reading comprehension and make reading lessons more engaging and effective. The study also aims to provide insights for teachers about the usefulness of collaborative reading strategies in enhancing students' learning outcomes

7. Structure of dissertation

Contents of1 This thesis comprises three main chapters in addition to the general introduction and general conclusion. The general introduction describes the study background, the problem statement, the research questions, the research hypotheses, the objectives of the study, the research significance, and the methodology relating to the investigation of the influence of reading circles on EFL students' reading comprehension in Algerian classrooms.

This chapter one is written in two parts. It reviews EFL reading instruction, reading comprehension, cooperative learning, and the reading circles strategy. The chapter also considers the core theoretical underpinnings of the study, which are social constructivism and reader-response theory. In addition, it considers previous research on collaborative reading and on comprehension teaching. Research methodology is the focal point of Chapter Two

The Chapter Two It details the study design, location, participants, sampling technique, and tools for data gathering. The section also clarifies the processes for conducting the study, ethical concerns, and analytic techniques utilized to confirm the trustworthiness of results.

The outcome of Chapter Three is an analysis of the data and a discussion on the findings. Here is presented the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered as the answers to the research questions and hypotheses. The chapter also considers the theoretical and previous research implications of the main findings. It also outlines the teaching implications of the research and evaluates the impact of the reading circles strategy on students' reading comprehension.

The dissertation ends with a general conclusion which summarizes the main findings of the study, discusses its limitations, presents suggestions for teachers and researchers and identifies areas for further research in the field of EFL reading instruction and collaborative learning.

Chapter One :
Literature Review

Introduction:

This chapter explores the significance the outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework of reading comprehension and collaborative learning within EFL contexts. It is informed by the nature of what reading comprehension takes as input and produces as output, its role in secondary education and the major problems that students face when reading. The chapter continues by analyzing cooperative learning as a student-centered teaching method which encourages interaction and collaboration among students in the language learning classroom.

1. Reading Comprehension in EFL Context

Reading comprehension is an intricate cognitive and interactive process whereby readers interpret written texts. It entails decoding letters to words, using what the reader already knows, and interpreting the information presented in the text. Patricia L. Carrell and Joan Eisterhold explain that reading comprehension is the result of the interaction between the reader's background knowledge and the text (Carrell, Eisterhold, 1993)

Similarly, William Grabe explains that reading comprehension is an interactive process that employs a variety of thinking skills, such as predicting, making conclusions, and summarizing, to interpret what is written (Grabe, 2009). Knowledge of vocabulary is also crucial in reading comprehension because the reader needs to be able to recognize and interpret words to comprehend sentences and paragraphs (Nation, 2001) background knowledge plays a significant role in reading comprehension because readers connect new information to what they already know. If the learner has prior knowledge, they are most likely to comprehend the text. Therefore, reading comprehension is not merely a decoding process but a complex combination of language knowledge, thinking skills, and context (Grabe, Stoller, 2013)

1.2. Importance of Reading in EFL Secondary Education

Reading is a very significant activity in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly in secondary school. Reading is a significant source of language input and helps develop vocabulary, grammar, and language skills. Jeremy Harmer says that reading provides learners with authentic language and provides opportunities to develop other skills such as writing and speaking (Harmer, 2007) in secondary school, the ability to understand what is read is very helpful to students in their academic performance because many subjects involve reading and understanding information. Students who have good reading skills can analyze information, interpret information, and complete academic assignments successfully (Grabe, 2009).

Reading activities also enhance critical thinking. When students read and discuss texts, they assess ideas, make inferences, and form opinions about what they read. This enhances learning and cognitive development. Therefore, effective reading instruction is essential for enhancing language skills and critical thinking in EFL learning (Richards, Renandya, 2002).

1.3. Common Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

Many EFL learners struggle with reading comprehension, although it is a crucial skill. One of the main issues is a lack of vocabulary knowledge. Without understanding important vocabulary, learners fail to grasp the overall message of the text (Nation, 2001)

Another significant issue is a lack of motivation to read. In most EFL classes, reading is a passive process that is boring, causing learners to lose interest. Jack C. Richards believes that learners are more motivated when they participate in interactive reading tasks that include real communication (Richards. Renandya, 2002)

Conventional teacher-led teaching also negatively affects comprehension. In such learning environments, the teacher dominates most of the learning tasks, and learners are merely receivers of information. This implies that learners lack opportunities to engage in text discussions, exchange their thoughts, or work together on reading strategies (Grabe, Stoller, 2013).

1.4. Cooperative Learning in Language Teaching

Cooperative learning refers to a situation where students learn together in small groups to achieve a common learning objective. It emphasizes teamwork, interdependence, and individual accountability. According to David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, cooperative learning occurs when students work together to enhance their own learning and the learning of others (Johnson, Johnson, 1999).

In such a learning environment, students engage in discussions, exchange their ideas, and assist each other in solving problems. This is not a typical teacher-centered learning environment because it places students at the center of the learning process.

2. Benefits of Cooperative Learning in EFL

Cooperative learning is very beneficial in EFL contexts. First, cooperative learning increases the amount of interaction among students. David Nunan emphasizes that interaction is an important aspect of language learning because it enables students to use the target language in context (Nunan, 2003).

Second, cooperative learning increases motivation. Group activities allow students to work together and help each other, which reduces stress and increases confidence. Studies have

found that collaborative tasks enable students to develop their language and social skills (Slavin, 2014).

Finally, cooperative learning enables students to be active learners and understand what they are learning. When students interact with each other, they think critically and become more responsible for their own learning

2.1. Differences Between Spoken and Written Communication

Reading circles, also known as literature circles, are small student-led discussion groups where learners read the same text and discuss it collaboratively. Each member performs a specific role that contributes to the group's understanding of the text. The concept of literature circles was popularized by Harvey Daniels, who described them as a cooperative reading strategy that promotes student engagement and discussion (Daniels, 2002).

2.2. Roles in Reading Circles

Reading circles, each student is assigned a role that guides their participation in the discussion. These roles help students focus on different aspects of the text and contribute to a comprehensive understanding.

Common roles include:

- Discussion Leader: guides the group discussion and asks questions about the text.
- Summarizer: provides a brief summary of the reading passage.
- Vocabulary Enricher: identifies and explains unfamiliar words.
- Connector: relates the text to personal experiences or real-life situations.
- Questioner: generates questions to stimulate discussion.

These roles encourage students to analyze the text from multiple perspectives and participate actively in the learning process (Daniels, 2002).

2.3. Advantages of Reading Circles:

Neuroplasticity, which refers to the "brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life," has been shown to be particularly active in early childhood, as evidenced by the synaptic pruning and myelination processes that occur during this time period. Research has shown that environmental stimulation has a direct effect on the cortical thickness of the brain, as well as the dendritic branching patterns of the neurons. Additionally, functional magnetic resonance imaging has shown that the adult brain has a great deal of neuroplasticity, which allows the brain to recover from injury as well as to learn new skills.

The neuroplasticity model has a number of implications for the fields of educational psychology as well as rehabilitation medicine.

2.4. Previous Studies on Reading Circles

Reading circles offer several advantages in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Firstly, they engage students, making reading a collaborative and interactive process rather than a solitary one. Secondly, they enable students to think critically as they evaluate what they read, think about alternative perspectives, and articulate their thoughts. Thirdly, they enhance comprehension of the text through collaborative talk, questioning, and problem-solving. Finally, reading circles encourage students to interact with each other, promoting social learning and building their confidence to participate in class. (Grabe, 2009; Daniels, 2002)

Conclusion

Reading comprehension is a critical skill in EFL learning, requiring cognitive, interactive, and inferential processes. It supports academic success, language development, and critical thinking among secondary school learners. However, many students face challenges such as limited vocabulary, low motivation, and traditional teacher-centered methods. Cooperative learning, particularly reading circles, provides a student-centered approach that encourages discussion, collaboration, and active engagement. Reading circles assign specific roles to learners, fostering participation, comprehension, and critical thinking. Research suggests that this approach improves both reading performance and learner motivation. Despite international evidence, studies on reading circles in Algerian EFL contexts remain limited. Addressing this gap can provide practical insights for improving reading instruction. The literature reviewed forms a solid foundation for the present study. Consequently, the following chapters focus on methodology and empirical investigation to evaluate the effectiveness of reading circles in Algerian secondary schools.

Chapter Two:
Contextual and Theoretical
Framework

Introduction:

This chapter presents the theoretical foundation of the study. It provides an overview of reading instruction in EFL contexts and discusses the importance of reading comprehension in language learning. The chapter also explores collaborative learning and the reading circles strategy as effective instructional practices. In addition, it examines the main theories supporting the study, namely social constructivism and reader-response theory.

1. Overview of English Teaching in Algeria

Over the past few decades, there have been big changes in how English is taught in Algeria. These changes show that more and more people in the country see English as an important tool for communicating with people from other countries, getting ahead in school, and growing the economy. As a global lingua franca, English language instruction aims to provide students with the necessary communicative competence, cross-cultural literacy, and academic skills for higher education and global engagement. In this context, English is no longer just seen as a foreign language subject; it is now seen as an important part of modernizing education.

The Algerian school system has gradually added English to its national curriculum, especially in high school, where students are expected to learn more advanced language skills. The curriculum is made to help students get better at the four main language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Communicative competence is very important. This means not only being grammatically correct but also being able to use language correctly in different social and cultural settings (Ministry of National Education [MNE], 2018).

Algeria has changed its teaching methods from traditional teacher-centered ones to more learner-centered ones. A lot of people use the competency-based approach (CBA) as a guide for teaching English. This method emphasizes enhancing learners' practical skills and fosters active engagement in the educational process. Teachers should not just pass on information, but also help students learn by encouraging them to work together, interact, and solve problems in the classroom.

Also, teaching reading is a big part of teaching English in Algerian high schools. Reading is an important skill for doing well in school because it helps students find information, think critically, and learn new words. Pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities are common parts of teaching that are meant to help students understand and connect with texts better. These practices are in line with modern teaching ideas that stress making meaning and letting students make their own decisions.

Even with these changes, English teaching in Algeria is still not very effective because of a number of problems. Some of these are big class sizes, not enough teaching materials, and teachers with different levels of training. Students also have trouble understanding what they read because they don't get enough practice with real English materials and don't do enough reading outside of class (Saadi, 2019).

Overall, the way English is taught in Algeria shows that there is still work to be done to make sure that schools meet global standards while also meeting local needs and limitations. This section explains how the secondary school curriculum is set up, what common teaching methods are used, and how reading is taught according to the Algerian Ministry of National Education (Ministry of National Education [MNE], 2018; Saadi, 2019).

2. Secondary School Curriculum

English learning becomes obligatory in middle school (year five) and continues throughout all secondary education levels in Algeria (MNE, 2018). The curriculum is designed in such a way that children's language competence is gradually developed through the study of vocabulary and grammar, as well as practical applications of their acquired knowledge.

The national curriculum provides a clear outline of the expected outcomes at each educational level. Its primary objective is developing communicative proficiency rather than grammatical accuracy (MNE, 2018). The approach is consistent with the contemporary global trends of English Language Teaching (ELT), which emphasize a communicative approach and focus on learners' needs (Richards Rodgers, 2014). the four core competencies include:

2.1. Listening

The listening comprehension activities include dialogues, announcements, and informational passages presented via various sources such as recorded audio and video, narration by the teacher, and other forms of multimedia where feasible. As mentioned by Goh and Taib (2006), systematic engagement in listening tasks facilitates development of phonological and contextual processing.

2.2. Speaking

Speaking tasks focus on structured communication activities such as role-playing, pair/group discussion, and presentation within the class. It is important to note that curriculum design encourages development of fluency and accuracy through practical communication experiences. As noted by Richards and Rodgers (2014), active use of speaking skills increases learner confidence and actual performance.

2.3. Reading

The reading curriculum includes a variety of texts such as narratives, informational passages, and short literature pieces which should contribute to the development of learners' vocabulary and conceptual knowledge. In addition, the program involves study of reading strategies such as prediction, summary, and inferencing. This is consistent with evidence that reading comprehension benefits greatly from strategy training (Grabe Stoller, 2011).

2.4. Writing

Writing instruction involves progression from sentence composition to paragraphs and more complex forms of writing such as essay writing and description. Process writing, including drafting and revising activities, is encouraged as this helps promote cohesion and organization (Hyland, 2013).

To ensure consistency in language teaching nationwide, MNE provides national textbooks and teaching guides for all grades. They outline specific learning outcomes, vocabulary, grammatical structures and types of assessment used (MNE, 2018). The idea of standardized curricula is equality of opportunities for all learners regardless of location and other factors. However, implementation may vary depending on the individual characteristics of teachers and other contextual features (Saadi, 2019).

Table 1: Secondary English Curriculum Components in Algerian Schools

Skill Area	Instructional Goals	Key Activities	Assessment Methods
Listening	Comprehension of spoken English	Audio recordings, note-taking	Listening comprehension tasks
Speaking	Oral fluency and interaction	Dialogues, role-plays, presentations	Oral participation, rubrics
Reading	Text comprehension and analysis	Strategy tasks (predicting, questioning)	Reading comprehension tests
Writing	Coherent written expression	Essays, summaries, revisions	Written assignments, portfolios

The curriculum also includes elements of intercultural education, aiming to raise students' awareness of English-speaking societies. Such exposure fosters global competence and contributes to learners' ability to navigate cross cultural contexts.

Despite the structured curriculum, teachers often adapt materials to suit classroom needs, especially in contexts with limited technology or large class sizes. This adaptive practice reflects both teacher agency and the practical realities of Algerian secondary schools.

3. Teaching Approaches Used

The pedagogical approaches employed in English classrooms in Algeria have evolved significantly in response to curricular reforms and global pedagogical trends. These changes reflect a broader shift in educational philosophy, moving from traditional forms of instruction toward more dynamic and learner-centered models. Historically, the grammar-translation method dominated English language teaching practices, emphasizing the memorization of vocabulary, translation exercises, and explicit grammar instruction with limited attention to communicative use of the language (H. Douglas Brown, 2007). While this method contributed to the development of reading and writing skills, it often failed to equip learners with the ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations.

Educational reforms in Algeria have encouraged the adoption of more communicative and interactive teaching approaches. One of the most prominent among these is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which has been increasingly integrated into the national curriculum. CLT prioritizes meaningful communication and authentic language use, aiming to develop learners' ability to express themselves fluently and appropriately in various contexts. Rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy, this approach emphasizes the functional use of language through activities such as role-plays, simulations, group discussions, and project-based tasks (Jack C. Richards Theodore S. Rodgers, 2014).

Empirical studies show that the CLT approach may lead to significant improvements in students' communicative competence and motivation if applied correctly. The CLT approach focuses learner attention and creates conditions for practicing language in context. However, the successful implementation of this method requires skilled teachers, proper instructional materials, and adequate classroom size. As noted by William Littlewood (2014), despite the popularity of this method, its practical implementation often differs because of various contextual factors, including the institutional support for the method and teacher skills.

Another theoretical basis of the course is the TBL framework. This framework is an extension of CLT and involves instruction organized into tasks. In other words, students work on tasks that represent various aspects of real life, such as organizing events, solving problems, and conducting interviews. Since students should apply language in order to accomplish the task, they learn to be fluent and accurate at the same time. According to Jane Willis (1996), TBL allows learners to negotiate meanings, try linguistic structures, and increase confidence in their communicative competence.

Besides CLT and TBL, cooperative learning has been acknowledged as an efficient methodology for teaching English in Algerian classes. Cooperative learning involves grouping students into smaller teams that work together to accomplish certain learning goals. Cooperative learning does not only help develop language skills but also helps cultivate vital social abilities like teamwork, communication, and cooperation. The research conducted by David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, and Karl A. Smith (2007) has shown that group activities could produce better academic performance, enhanced motivation, and positive interpersonal relationships among learners.

The use of technological innovations in teaching English as a foreign language has become ever more significant over time. Technology-assisted learning provides opportunities to make use of numerous materials, which include multimedia resources, interactive activities, and online communication platforms. Teachers may take advantage of various video clips, language learning software programs, and websites to facilitate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Such technologies could make learning more exciting and convenient, especially for technologically savvy students. However, the use of technology in the context of Algerian educational institutions is inconsistent since there are different conditions for implementing these innovations.

Although contemporary pedagogies have been embraced, there are a number of issues that can hinder English language teaching in Algeria. In many cases, large classes can hinder personalized and interactive instruction. At times, teachers may find it hard to incorporate communicative techniques due to lack of adequate time and resources. Furthermore, the lack of professional development programs may hinder teachers' ability to keep abreast with modern pedagogy. According to Saadi (2019), most teachers continue using teacher-centered strategies that may fail to develop learners' communicative skills.

4. Reading Instruction Practices

Reading training is extremely essential in Algerian English classes. Because English is a foreign language, reading is an important approach for children to learn new vocabulary, experience new cultures, and enhance their academic language.

Reading lessons in most classes are structured in a certain manner. First, teachers prepare pupils for reading. They assist pupils recall what they already know about the subject, introduce crucial new vocabulary, and provide a basic overview of the book. This stage helps pupils comprehend the purpose of reading and facilitates understanding.

The next step is to read while doing so. During this level, pupils read the book independently or in groups. Teachers assist students and help them comprehend tough concepts.

One effective tactic is the think-aloud strategy, in which the instructor explains their thoughts while reading. This teaches pupils how to better interpret texts.

After reading, pupils go to the post-reading step. During this stage, kids answer questions, discuss ideas, and write summaries. These exercises encourage students to think carefully about the material and communicate their opinions coherently.

Reading circles are a new and efficient teaching tool in Algerian schools (Daniels, 2002). Students collaborate in small groups to read and discuss a text together. Each student has a designated job, such as summarizer, vocabulary checker, or discussion leader. This encourages everyone to join and exchange ideas.

Reading circles make learning more interactive and engaging. They can help students better grasp texts, stay engaged, and become more aware of their learning styles (Peterson, 2010). Students also learn communication and collaboration skills.

Finally, reading instruction is critical for Algerian students studying English. Structured stages and interactive strategies such as reading circles can help kids enhance their comprehension and learn more effectively.

5. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on two main theoretical perspectives: social constructivism and reader-response theory. Together, these theories form a good foundation for understanding how collaborative reading practices might improve students' comprehension.

Social constructivism stresses that learning takes place via social interaction and cooperation. According to Lev Vygotsky (1978), knowledge is created via discourse and sharing experiences with others. In the context of reading, this indicates that students can get a better comprehension when they collaborate, share ideas, and encourage one another during group activities. This study is based on two key theoretical perspectives: social constructivism and reader-response theory. Together, these theories form a good foundation for understanding how collaborative reading practices might improve students' comprehension.

Social constructivism stresses that learning takes place via social interaction and cooperation. According to Lev Vygotsky (1978), knowledge is created via discourse and sharing experiences with others. In the context of reading, this indicates that students can get a better comprehension when they collaborate, share ideas, and encourage one another during group activities.

Reader-response theory, connected with Louise Rosenblatt (1978), emphasizes the reader's active participation in producing meaning. It implies that comprehension is dependent not just on the text, but also on the reader's personal experiences, emotions, and interpretations.

As a result, students may interpret the same material differently, and their unique reactions are valued in the learning process.

By merging these two viewpoints, this study emphasizes the significance of both social connection and personal involvement in reading. Collaborative practices, such as reading circles, enable students to contribute perspectives while also refining their own understanding, resulting in increased comprehension.

6. Social Constructivism Theory

According to Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, learning is a social and collaborative process, not an individual activity. According to this viewpoint, learners actively generate knowledge by communicating, collaborating, and sharing experiences with others. This means that understanding is not simply passed from instructor to student, but rather developed via meaningful engagement. This method is especially crucial in language classes, since learning a language necessitates practice, idea exchange, and ongoing contact with others.

In terms of reading teaching, social constructivism emphasizes the importance of group-based learning activities. When students collaborate, they are exposed to other perspectives and interpretations. This enables students to broaden their comprehension of texts beyond their specific capabilities. Discussion allows learners to clarify ideas, ask questions, and receive quick response. As a result, understanding becomes richer and more precise. Collaborative learning also boosts students' motivation since they feel more involved and accountable for their learning.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a key notion in Vygotsky's theory, referring to the gap between what a learner can do individually and what they can achieve with supervision (Vygotsky, 1978). According to the ZPD, learning is most successful when pupils receive appropriate assistance. If tasks are too simple, no actual learning happens; if they are too challenging, students may become frustrated. When proper help is offered, pupils can effectively finish difficult activities and progressively gain independence.

In terms of reading instruction, social constructivism highlights the value of group learning activities. When students work together, they are exposed to new viewpoints and interpretations. This allows pupils to enhance their understanding of books beyond their current skills. Discussion helps students to clarify ideas, ask questions, and get speedy responses. As a result, comprehension becomes completer and more exact. Collaborative learning also increases student motivation since they feel more involved and responsible for their learning.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is an important concept in Vygotsky's theory, referring to the difference between what a learner can do alone and what they can do under supervision (Vygotsky, 1978). According to the ZPD, learning is most effective when students receive sufficient help. If assignments are too basic, no real learning occurs; if they are too difficult, pupils may grow frustrated. When appropriate assistance is provided, students can successfully complete challenging tasks and gradually achieve independence.

Social engagement fosters cognitive negotiation. This happens when students discuss their thoughts, compare interpretations, and occasionally argue with one another. Throughout this process, individuals are urged to think critically and explain their positions. Cognitive negotiation enables pupils to improve their comprehension and build higher-order thinking abilities. It also teaches kids to listen to others and appreciate other viewpoints.

According to Mercer (2000), classroom discussion is critical to learning. He says that discussion enables students to externalize their thoughts, making it simpler to organize and enhance their concepts. When students explain their thinking, they gain a better understanding of their own thoughts. At the same time, listening to others allows them to learn new ways of thinking. This collaborative production of knowledge leads to improved understanding and learning outcomes.

Furthermore, social constructivism encourages the development of essential social and communication skills. Students learn how to cooperate, take turns, and effectively express themselves via group projects. These abilities are required not only for academic performance, but also in real-world circumstances. Reading circles, in particular, provide an environment in which students may practice these skills while interacting with material.

Then, this technique helps learners lessen their anxiousness. Students, particularly those who lack confidence, may feel more at ease while working in groups. Instead, then depending solely on the teacher, students can seek assistance from their classmates. This fosters a supportive learning atmosphere in which errors are accepted as part of the learning process. As a result, kids become more eager to participate and take chances in their learning.

To summarize, Vygotsky's social constructivism offers a solid theoretical foundation for collaborative learning in reading education. The Zone of Proximal Development, scaffolding, and cognitive negotiation are all concepts that describe how interaction helps people learn. Teachers may make reading activities more successful and interesting by encouraging students to collaborate, exchange ideas, and encourage one another. This eventually leads to better comprehension, more confidence, and more active involvement in class.

7. Reader Response Theory

According to reader-response theory, meaning is formed via the interaction between the reader and the text rather of being found only in the text. According to this viewpoint, reading is not a passive activity. Instead, it is an active process in which the reader is important to creating meaning. Each reader may interpret the same material differently depending on their particular history and experiences.

According to this view, readers contribute their own knowledge, emotions, beliefs, and life experiences to the text. These factors impact how individuals understand the information they read. As a result, there is no one, set meaning in a text. Instead, meaning varies according on the reader and the circumstance. This transforms reading into a highly personal and dynamic activity.

Reader-response theory emphasizes the necessity of actively engaging with texts. Readers are invited to consider, question, and ponder while reading. They endeavor not only to comprehend the literal meaning of the book, but also to apply it to their own life. This encourages learners to become more engaged and enthusiastic in reading activities.

In the classroom, this strategy is quite effective for improving pupils' comprehension abilities. When students have the opportunity to voice their thoughts, they gain confidence in voicing their perspectives. They also learn how to use textual evidence to substantiate their interpretations. This enhances critical thinking and reading comprehension.

Reader-response theory is especially successful in collaborative learning situations like reading circles. Students discuss their respective perspectives with their group mates. They listen to diverse opinions and compare them to their own. This interchange of ideas allows them to see the text in new and deeper ways.

During group discussions, students may agree or disagree with one another's interpretations. This technique stimulates meaning negotiation by requiring students to explain and defend their beliefs. This involvement allows them to improve their knowledge and generate a more thorough interpretation of the material.

Personal connection is a crucial part of reader-response theory. Students have a deeper understanding of a material when they apply it to personal experiences. For example, a friendship narrative may serve as a reminder of their own relationships. This emotional and personal connection makes reading more meaningful and remembered.

When students gather in reading groups, ideas grow through quiet thought followed by open talk. One learner might start sharing while another waits, then jumps in when ready. Speaking comes naturally here, just like listening does. Meaning builds slowly, piece by piece,

as thoughts connect across voices. The teacher fades into the background as classmates begin teaching themselves. Learning spreads sideways, not just from front to back.

Here's something else that happens. Motivation climbs when learners see their thoughts taken seriously. Because of this, they lean into lessons instead of drifting away. With a sense of ownership, speaking up in conversations feels natural, even expected. Reading assignments stop feeling like chores because curiosity kicks in. Understanding deepens, and facts stick around longer than usual.

A fresh look at how people connect with stories reveals reading isn't just decoding words - it's shaped by experience. When readers meet a text, meaning builds from their own thoughts mixed with what's on the page. Talk around books deepens this even more when learners exchange ideas. Small group conversations turn pages into living dialogues. These moments spark questions, challenge assumptions, sometimes surprise everyone involved. Understanding grows not in silence but through shared reactions. Reflection slips in quietly during pauses between voices. Something shifts when students realize their view matters. The act of talking about literature makes it stick.

8. Conceptual Model of the Study

This study examines the effect of the reading circles strategy as the independent variable on students' reading comprehension as the dependent variable. Age and English proficiency level are included as control variables due to their potential influence on learners' comprehension performance and overall reading outcomes.

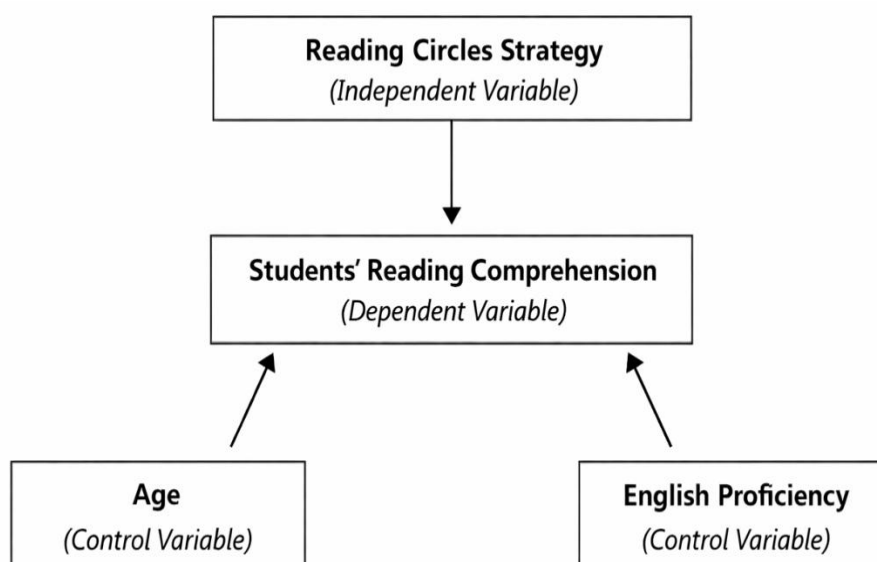


Figure 1 : Conceptual Model

The conceptual model depicts the suggested link between the study's factors. It states that using the reading circles technique, which is focused on coordinated cooperation and peer

interaction, would increase students' reading comprehension. Role-playing, guided group discussions, and meaning negotiation allow students to actively create understanding and deepen their textual interpretations. However, the model also acknowledges that individual learner variations may influence the observed link between the independent and dependent variables.

Age, in particular, is viewed as an important control variable since it may reflect variations in strategic reading development, cognitive maturity, and attention span. In addition to skill level, English proficiency is taken into account because it obviously influences reading ability. Students who are more proficient in the language typically have little trouble understanding word meanings, grammar rules, and discussing texts; those who are still developing their skills frequently require additional assistance to achieve the same comprehension. Thus, the model provides a clear framework for examining how reading circle's function while controlling factors like student characteristics. This setup tightens the reliability of the research itself and makes it easier to see what kind of difference the method actually makes in understanding texts.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, the pedagogical context of English language teaching in Algeria seems to be shifting towards modern learner-centered pedagogy. Modern pedagogies such as communicative language teaching, task-based instruction, cooperative learning, and technological integration have played a key role in developing language pedagogy. However, successful incorporation of these pedagogies requires overcoming the challenges associated with the process. Efforts must be made to overcome challenges related to resources, teacher training, and classroom settings.

Chapter Three:
Research Methodology and
Data Analysis

Introduction:

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted in the study and provides a detailed analysis of the collected data. It describes the research design, the participants involved in the study, the instruments used for data collection, and the procedures followed to analyze the results. The chapter also discusses the findings obtained from the students' questionnaire in order to investigate the impact of reading circles on students' reading comprehension in EFL classes.

1. Methodology

The present study adopted a descriptive analytical methodology to investigate the impact of reading circles on students' reading comprehension in Algerian secondary school EFL classes. This methodology was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to collect, analyze, and interpret students' opinions and experiences related to the use of reading circles in the classroom.

The study relied mainly on quantitative and qualitative data collected through a questionnaire administered to students. The quantitative data helped identify general trends and percentages related to students' perceptions, while the qualitative data provided deeper insights into their personal experiences and attitudes toward reading circles. The descriptive analytical approach enabled the researcher to examine how reading circles influence students' comprehension, motivation, participation, and interaction during reading lessons.

2. Research sample

The research sample consisted of secondary school students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The participants were selected from different classes in order to gather varied perspectives about the effectiveness of reading circles in improving reading comprehension.

The sample included both male and female students from different secondary school levels, with the majority belonging to the third-year secondary level. The participants were chosen because they had experience using reading circles during reading lessons, which allowed them to provide relevant and reliable responses to the questionnaire.

2.1. Students sample

The students' sample consisted of 30 secondary school students who participated in the questionnaire. The participants represented different age groups and school levels, although the majority were 18-year-old third-year secondary students. The inclusion of students from different backgrounds helped provide diverse opinions and experiences concerning the use of reading

circles in EFL classes. The sample also included both male and female participants, which contributed to achieving balance and variety in the collected data.

The selected students had previous experience with reading circles, allowing them to evaluate the effectiveness of this teaching strategy in improving reading comprehension, vocabulary development, classroom participation, and collaborative learning.

2.2. Data collection

Data collection played a central role in this research, providing both numerical trends and individual perspectives on the use of formative assessment in EFL writing instruction. Two instruments were employed: a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

The questionnaire was designed to gather students' experiences with various formative assessment strategies, such as instructor feedback, peer evaluation, and self-assessment. It also assessed the perceived impact of these strategies on different aspects of writing, including grammar, structure, clarity, and confidence. The interviews with instructors provided qualitative insights into the implementation and challenges of formative assessment in real classroom settings.

2.3. Description of students 'questionnaire

The research instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire designed to investigate the impact of Reading Circles on students' reading comprehension in Algerian secondary school EFL classes. The questionnaire consists of both closed ended and open-ended questions, allowing for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

It is organized into seven sections, each addressing a specific aspect of the research objectives:

- **Section 1:** General Information This section collects demographic and background data about participants, including gender, age, school year, and prior experience with Reading Circles. It also includes a general perception item regarding the usefulness of Reading Circles in understanding texts.
- **Section 2:** Impact on Reading Comprehension This section examines the perceived effect of Reading Circles on students' reading comprehension skills, including vocabulary development, identifying main ideas, summarizing texts, and overall reading improvement.
- **Section 3:** Motivation and Participation This section explores students' motivation, emotional responses, participation level, and preferences regarding Reading Circles compared to other reading approaches such as individual or teacher led reading.
- **Section 4:** Group Work Experience This section focuses on collaborative learning within Reading Circles, including peer support, assigned roles — such as Discussion Leader, Summarizer, and Vocabulary Enricher — and challenges related to group interaction.

- **Section 5: Challenges** This section identifies difficulties encountered by students during Reading Circles, such as time management, participation imbalance, communication issues, and classroom organization.
- **Section 6: Overall Evaluation** This section gathers students' general evaluation of Reading Circles, including their willingness to continue using this strategy and their overall assessment of its effectiveness.
- **Section 7: Open-ended Questions** The final section allows students to express their personal opinions freely. It includes questions about what they liked most, difficulties they faced, and suggestions for improving Reading Circles in EFL classrooms.)

3. Data analysis

Questionnaire Results Analysis

Question 01 What is your gender?

This question aimed to identify the gender distribution of the participants involved in the study in order to ensure diversity in the sample and examine whether both male and female students were represented.

Table 2 : Students Sex

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Female	13	44.8%
Male	16	55.2%
Total	29	100%

This table illustrates the age indicate that male students represented the majority of the participants, accounting for 55.2% of the sample (16 students), while female students represented 44.8% (13 students). This distribution shows that both genders were fairly represented in the study, although male students were slightly more numerous.

The inclusion of both male and female participants contributes to obtaining varied perspectives regarding the use of reading circles in EFL classes the findings demonstrate that the sample was sufficiently diverse in terms of gender, which enriches the reliability of the study results.

Question 02: Age

This question aimed to identify the age distribution of the participants involved in the study. Determining participants' age is important because it may influence students' reading abilities, motivation, and classroom participation

Table 3: Students Age

Options	Students Number	Percentage
15	00	00%
16	02	06.7%
17	03	10%
18	25	83.3%
Total	30	100%

Participants were composed of a greater number of reveal that the majority of participants were 18 years old, representing 83.3% of the sample (25 students). Students aged 17 accounted for 10% (3 students), while only 6.7% (2 students) were 16 years old. No participants were aged 15. It indicates that most respondents were final year secondary school students preparing for important academic examinations. Their maturity and educational level may explain their positive attitudes toward collaborative learning activities such as reading circles. the age distribution demonstrates that the sample mainly consisted of older secondary school students, which provides relevant insights into students' perceptions of reading circles in EFL classes.

Question 03: School Year

This question aimed to identify the academic level of the participants involved in the study.

Table 4: School Year

Options	Students Number	Percentage
1st Year Secondary	0	00.00%
2nd Year Secondary	5	16.7%
3rd Year Secondary	25	83.3%
Total	30	100%

The results show that the majority of students (61.9%) are in their first year of study. A smaller percentage, 16.7%, are in their third year, while only 83.8% are in their 3rd year.

This suggests that the participant group is targeted advanced secondary school students who are more experienced in reading comprehension activities and collaborative learning strategies. Their educational background may have contributed to their understanding and appreciation of reading circles.

Question 04: Have you participated in Reading Circles before?

This question aimed to determine whether students had previous experience with reading circles?

Table 5: Participation in Reading Circles

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Yes	28	93.3%
no	02	6.7%
Total	30	100%

The table demonstrates that the participants have the vast majority of participants, representing 93.3% (28 students), had previously participated in reading circles, while only 6.7% (2 students) had not. Soit were already familiar with the reading circle strategy, which may explain their ability to evaluate its effectiveness accurately. Their prior experience likely helped them develop positive attitudes toward collaborative reading activities.

Question 05: Reading circles help me understand texts better

This question aimed to determine students' perceptions regarding the role of reading circles in improving text comprehension.?

Table 6: Reading circles help me understand texts better

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Yes, a lot	17	56.7%
Yes, a little	11	36.7%
Not sure	2	6.7%
No	0	00.00%
Total	30	100%

This table reveals reveal that more than half of the participants (56.7%) believed that reading circles greatly helped them understand texts better, while 36.7% stated that they helped a little. Only 6.7% were unsure, and no participants selected “No.”

These findings indicate that reading circles positively contributed to improving students’ reading comprehension skills. Collaborative discussion and shared interpretation of texts may have enabled students to better understand reading materials. The findings suggest that reading circles are an effective strategy for enhancing text comprehension in EFL classes.

Question 06 After using reading circles, my reading comprehension is:

This question aimed to evaluate students’ perceptions of the impact of reading circles on their reading comprehension level.

Table 7: After using reading circles, my reading comprehension is

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Much better	13	43.3%
Better	13	43.3%
The same	03	10%
Worse	01	03.3%
Total	30	100

This table indicates that the majority of students that 43.3% of the students reported that their reading comprehension became “much better,” while another 43.3% stated that it became “better.” Only 10% believed that their comprehension remained the same, and 3.3% reported negative effects.

Also, it suggests that reading circles had a strong positive impact on students’ reading comprehension abilities. Most students experienced noticeable improvement after participating in collaborative reading activities.

Question 07: Reading circles improve my vocabulary:

This question aimed to investigate whether reading circles contributed to vocabulary development.

Table 8: Students' Perceptions Reading circles improve my vocabulary

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	40%
Moderately	13	43.3%
Slightly	2	06.7%
Not at all	3	10%
Total	30	100%

The Results in this table highlight students' perceptions of improving their vocabulary either strongly (40%) or moderately (43.3%). A small number of participants reported only slight improvement or no improvement at all. These findings demonstrate that collaborative reading activities can enrich students' vocabulary through exposure to new words and peer discussions.

Question (08) Reading circles help me identify the main idea

This question aimed to determine whether reading circles helped students recognize the main ideas in texts.

Table 9: Students' Reading circles help me identify the main idea

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Always	08	26.7%
Often	14	46.7%
Sometimes	08	26.7%
Never	00	00%
Total	30	100%

The data in Table 8 reveals that a majority of students believed that reading circles frequently helped them identify the main ideas of texts. Nearly half of the participants selected "Often," while no participant selected "Never." Now it supports students in analyzing and understanding the central meaning of reading passages. So that confirm the usefulness of reading circles in developing students' reading comprehension skills.

Question 09: Reading circles help me summarize texts

This question aimed to evaluate students' ability to summarize texts through reading circle activities.

Table 10: Reading circles help me summarize texts

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Very well	13	43.3%
Well	07	23.3%
A little	10	33.3%
Not at all	0	00.00%
Total	30	100%

This question is intended to evaluate students' overall perceptions believed that reading circles helped them summarize texts either very well or well. No participants selected "Not at all." These findings suggest that reading circles encourage students to organize ideas and identify important information in texts. Overall, the results demonstrate that reading circles are beneficial for developing summarizing skills among EFL learners.

Question 10: Reading circles make reading lessons:

This question aimed to identify students' attitudes toward reading lessons conducted through reading circles.

Table 11: Reading circles make reading lessons

Options	Number	Percentage
Very interesting	19	56.7%
Interesting	10	40.00%
Boring	1	3.3%
Very boring	0	00%
Total	30	100%

The results of Question 10 indicate that a reading lessons conducted through reading circles interesting or very interesting. Only one student described them as boring. These findings suggest that reading circles increase students' motivation and engagement during

reading lessons. The results confirm that reading circles create a more enjoyable and interactive learning environment

Question 11: During reading circles, I feel:

This question aimed to identify students' level of motivation and engagement during reading circle activities.

Table 12: Specific Challenges Faced by Students' Motivation during Reading Circles

Options	Number	Percentage
Very motivated	15	46.7%
Motivated	10	36.7%
Neutral	05	13.3%
Not motivated	00	00.00%
Total	30	100%

As shown in Table 11, the most frequently reported the majority of students felt either very motivated (46.7%) or motivated (36.7%) during reading circles. Only 13.3% of the participants felt neutral, while none of the students reported feeling unmotivated. These findings suggest that reading circles create a positive and encouraging learning atmosphere that increases students' motivation and participation in reading activities. The results indicate that reading circles have a strong motivational impact on EFL learners.

Question 12: I prefer reading lessons with

This question aimed to determine students' preferred method of learning during reading lessons.

Table 13: Students' Perceptions of Preferred Reading Lesson Method

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Reading circles	17	56.7%
Traditional teacher explanation	3	10%
Both equally	10	33.3%
Total	30	100%

The results in Table 13 that more than half of the participants (56.7%) preferred reading lessons based on reading circles, while only 10% preferred traditional teacher explanations. In addition, 33.3% appreciated both methods equally. These findings demonstrate that students generally favor collaborative and interactive learning approaches over traditional teaching

methods. The results confirm that reading circles are highly appreciated by students in EFL reading classes

Question 13: I participate in group discussions:

This question aimed to evaluate the degree of students' participation in group discussions during reading circles.

Table 14: Participation in Group Discussions

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Very actively	11	36.7%
Sometimes	13	43.3%
Rarely	06	20%
Never	0	00%
Total	30	100%

Table 14 shows that a large majority of students actively participated in group discussions. While 36.7% participated very actively, 43.3% reported participating sometimes. Only 20% stated that they rarely participated. These findings suggest that reading circles encourage communication and interaction among students, although participation levels may vary depending on students' confidence and speaking abilities.

Question 14: Working in groups helps me learn:

This question aimed to examine students' opinions about the effectiveness of group work in the learning process.

Table 15: Effectiveness of Group Work

Options	Number	Percentage
Very much	17	56.7%
A little	10	33.3%
Not much	03	10%
Not at all	0	00%
Total	30	100%

Table 15 presented show that the majority of students believed that working in groups helped them learn very much (56.7%), while 33.3% believed it helped a little. Only a small minority (10%) felt that group work was not very helpful. These findings highlight the importance of cooperative learning strategies in improving students' understanding and classroom performance. the results confirm the educational value of collaborative learning through reading circles.

Question 15: My role in the reading circle is respected by others:

This question aimed to determine whether students felt that their assigned roles were respected during reading circle activities.

Table 16: Respect of Students' Roles in Reading Circles

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	12	41.4%
Often	12	37.9%
Sometimes	06	20%
Never	0	00%
Total	30	100%

The findings presented in Table 16 reveal that most students believed that their roles were always or often respected by their classmates during reading circle activities. No participants selected "Never." These findings suggest that reading circles promote cooperation, mutual respect, and responsibility among group members. The results indicate that students generally experienced positive collaboration during reading circles.

Question 16: My role in the reading circle is:

This question aimed to evaluate students' understanding of their assigned roles during reading circles.

Table 17: Clarity of Students' Roles

Options	Number	Percentage
My role in the reading circle is:	01	3.3%
Clear and easy	16	53.3%
Clear but difficult	07	23.3%

Not clear	05	16.7%
I did not have a role	01	3.3%
Total	30	100%

The findings presented in Table 16 indicate that more than half of the participants (53.3%) considered their roles clear and easy. However, some students reported that their roles were difficult or unclear. These findings suggest that although reading circles are generally well organized, some students may require more guidance and explanation regarding their responsibilities. So, its demonstrate that role distribution in reading circles was mostly successful.

Question 17: The main difficulty in reading circles is:

This question aimed to identify the challenges students face during reading circle activities.

Table 18: Main Difficulties in Reading Circles

Options	Number	Percentage
Lack of participation	07	23.3%
Time management	12	40.00%
Understanding roles	07	23.3%
No difficulty	04	13.3%
Total	30	100%

The findings presented in Table 18 show that time management was considered the main difficulty by 40% of the participants. Other difficulties included lack of participation and problems understanding roles. These findings indicate that while reading circles are beneficial, certain organizational challenges may affect their effectiveness in the classroom. Overall, the results suggest that better planning and clearer instructions could improve the implementation of reading circles.

Question 18: Group work is sometimes:

This question aimed to investigate students' opinions regarding the organization of group work during reading circles.

Table 19: Organization of Group Work

Options	Number	Percentage
Very organized	08	26.7%
Organized	14	46.7%
Disorganized	06	20%
Very disorganized	02	06.7%
Total	30	100%

The findings presented in Table 18 reveal that most participants viewed group work as organized or very organized. However, a minority of students believed that group work was disorganized. These findings suggest that reading circles generally provide a structured collaborative environment, although classroom management remains important for successful implementation. Overall, the results demonstrate that group work organization was positively evaluated by most students.

Question 19: Reading circles take:

This question aimed to identify students' perceptions regarding the amount of time required for reading circle activities.

Table 20: Time Required for Reading Circles

Options	Number	Percentage
Too much time	10	33.3%
Enough time	15	50%
Little time	03	10%
Very little time	02	06.7%
Total	30	100%

The findings presented in Table 19 indicate that half of the participants believed that reading circles required an appropriate amount of time, while 33.3% considered them time-consuming. These findings suggest that although reading circles are appreciated, teachers should carefully manage classroom time to maintain effectiveness and balance. So, analysis shows that students generally accepted the time devoted to reading circle activities.

Question 20: Overall, reading circles are:

This question aimed to evaluate students' overall perceptions of the effectiveness of reading circles.

Table 21: Overall Effectiveness of Reading Circles

Options	Number	Percentage
Very effective	16	53.3%
Effective	11	36.7%
Slightly effective	02	10%
Not effective	01	3.3%
Total	30	100%

Table 21 reveal that the majority of students considered reading circles either very effective or effective. Only a very small number of participants expressed negative opinions. So that confirm that reading circles positively influence students' reading comprehension, motivation, and classroom interaction. It strongly supports the effectiveness of reading circles in EFL classes.

Question 21: Would you like to continue using reading circles?

This question aimed to determine whether students wished to continue using reading circles in future reading lessons.

Table 22: Students' Willingness to Continue Using Reading Circles

Options	Number	Percentage
NO	02	6.7%
MAYBE	11	36.7%
YES	17	56.7%

Total	30	100%
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Table 22 indicate that more than half of the students (56.7%) expressed a desire to continue using reading circles in future classes, while 36.7% answered “Maybe.” Only 6.7% did not wish to continue using them. Students are positive in attitudes toward reading circles and their willingness to engage in collaborative reading activities in the future. That confirm that reading circles are well accepted by students and represent an effective and motivating teaching strategy in EFL classrooms.

Question 21: Would you like to continue using reading circles?

This question aimed to determine whether students wished to continue using reading circles in future reading lessons.

Table 23: Students’ Willingness to Continue Using Reading Circles

Options	Number	Percentage
NO	02	6.7%
MAYBE	11	36.7%
YES	17	56.7%
Total	30	100%

Table 23 indicate that the majority of students (56.7%) expressed their willingness to continue using reading circles in future reading lessons, while 36.7% answered “Maybe.” Only 6.7% of the participants stated that they did not wish to continue using this strategy. These findings demonstrate that students generally held positive attitudes toward reading circles and appreciated their role in making reading lessons more interactive and enjoyable. The results also suggest that reading circles succeeded in increasing students’ motivation and engagement in reading activities. It confirms that reading circles are well accepted among EFL learners and can be considered an effective teaching strategy for improving reading comprehension and classroom participation.

Question 22: How do reading circles help you understand texts better? Please explain. (Open-ended)

This question aimed to explore students’ personal opinions about how reading circles contributed to improving their understanding of texts. The majority of students explained that reading circles helped them understand texts through discussion, exchange of ideas, and cooperation with classmates. Many participants stated that hearing different opinions allowed

them to notice details and meanings that they had not understood individually. Others mentioned that reading circles improved their vocabulary, speaking skills, pronunciation, and confidence during classroom interaction.

Several students emphasized the importance of peer support, explaining that classmates helped them clarify difficult words, understand confusing parts of the text, and feel more comfortable participating in discussions. Some respondents also noted that reading circles transformed reading from an individual activity into a collaborative and enjoyable learning experience. So, a few students mentioned that reading circles did not help them significantly, which may reflect differences in learning preferences or participation levels. The responses indicate that reading circles positively contributed to students' reading comprehension by encouraging interaction, cooperation, active participation, and deeper analysis of texts.

Question 23: What did you like most about participating in reading circles? Why? (Open-ended)

This question aimed to identify the aspects of reading circles that students appreciated most during their learning experience. The responses revealed that most students enjoyed teamwork, cooperation, and sharing ideas with classmates. Many participants explained that discussing texts in groups made reading lessons more enjoyable, interactive, and motivating. Students also appreciated hearing different perspectives, which helped them think differently and better understand the texts.

Some respondents highlighted the social aspect of reading circles, explaining that working closely with classmates increased their confidence and encouraged them to participate more actively. Others mentioned that having specific roles during discussions made the activity more organized and engaging.

In addition, several students reported that reading circles helped them improve their speaking skills, pronunciation, and communication abilities. The interactive atmosphere was also described as less stressful and more comfortable compared to traditional reading lessons. So, they suggest that students valued reading circles because they promoted collaboration, interaction, motivation, and enjoyment in the learning process.

Question 24: What difficulties did you face during reading circles, and how did you deal with them? (Open-ended)

This question aimed to identify the challenges students experienced during reading circles and the strategies they used to overcome them. The responses showed that students faced several difficulties during reading circle activities. Common challenges included lack of self-confidence, difficulty expressing ideas, understanding unfamiliar vocabulary, time

management problems, and unequal participation among group members. Some participants also mentioned organizational issues, distractions, and disagreements during discussions. To overcome these difficulties, many students reported asking questions, listening carefully to classmates' explanations, rereading texts, and preparing ideas before discussions. Others explained that peer encouragement and teamwork helped them become more confident and active participants.

Several students stated that assigning specific roles and following structured discussion guidelines helped improve organization and maintain focus during group work. In addition, students learned to respect different opinions and cooperate in solving misunderstandings during discussions. So, the findings demonstrate that although reading circles may present certain challenges, students generally developed effective strategies to manage these difficulties and benefit from collaborative learning experiences.

4. Discussion of the Findings

The analysis of the questionnaire results revealed that reading circles had a positive impact on students' reading comprehension and classroom engagement in EFL classes. Most participants reported that reading circles helped them understand texts better, identify main ideas, summarize information, and improve their vocabulary. These findings support the idea that collaborative learning strategies can significantly enhance students' comprehension skills. The results also showed that reading circles increased students' motivation and participation during reading lessons. A large number of students described reading activities as interesting and enjoyable when conducted through reading circles. This positive attitude may be explained by the interactive nature of group discussions, which encourages students to exchange ideas, express opinions, and learn from one another.

In addition, the findings demonstrated that students appreciated teamwork and peer collaboration. Many participants stated that listening to different perspectives helped them better understand texts and discover new interpretations. Reading circles also appeared to improve students' speaking skills, confidence, and communication abilities through regular interaction with classmates.

Next, the study also identified some difficulties associated with reading circles. The most common challenges included time management, lack of participation from some group members, and difficulty understanding assigned roles. Some students also experienced shyness or lacked confidence during discussions. Despite these challenges, most participants reported using effective strategies such as asking questions, cooperating with peers, rereading texts, and organizing group roles more clearly.

finally, the findings confirm that reading circles are an effective instructional strategy for improving reading comprehension, motivation, and collaborative learning in Algerian secondary school EFL classes. The positive responses obtained from students indicate that integrating reading circles into reading lessons can create a more active, supportive, and engaging classroom environment.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the research methodology adopted in the study as well as the analysis and discussion of the collected data. The study relied on a questionnaire administered to secondary school students in order to investigate the impact of reading circles on students' reading comprehension in EFL classes.

The analysis of the results revealed that reading circles had a generally positive effect on students' learning experiences. Most participants reported that reading circles helped them better understand texts, identify main ideas, improve vocabulary, summarize information, and participate more actively in classroom discussions. In addition, students expressed positive attitudes toward collaborative learning and showed a strong willingness to continue using reading circles in future reading lessons.

The findings also demonstrated that reading circles increased students' motivation, confidence, and interaction with classmates. Through group discussions and exchange of ideas, students were able to develop deeper comprehension of texts and improve their communication skills. However, some challenges were identified, including time management difficulties, unequal participation among group members, and problems understanding assigned roles.

Despite these limitations, the overall findings confirmed that reading circles represent an effective teaching strategy for enhancing reading comprehension and promoting active learning in EFL classrooms. Therefore, integrating reading circles into reading lessons may contribute to creating a more engaging, cooperative and learner centered educational environment

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This research investigated the effects of adopting the reading circles method on the developing of reading comprehension skills of Algerian secondary school learners of EFL. The main purpose was to find out the effect of involving learners in collaborative reading tasks on their reading comprehension skills and comparing it to the effect of the more traditional teacher-centered approaches. It also aimed at exploring students' attitudes toward reading circles and examining the influence of collaborative interaction on the process of reading.

The findings suggested that reading circles could be a positive instructional practice for developing reading comprehension skills. The study found that the collaborative group tasks caused students to interact more with the reading texts and showed gains as students made meaning of, analyzed, and discussed the readings. The structure of the role assignments converted the students from passive readers to active participants. And, the research implied that reading circles could enhance the motivation as well as the engagement in the classroom. Readers felt relaxed while sharing various meanings in the supportive small group contexts. The sharing of different perspectives promoted learners to think critically and construct meaning collaboratively. The roles like discussion leader summarizer vocabulary enhancer, and connector made learners felt responsible for each other.

Another important finding was that collaboration inside reading circles helped students overcome some of the common problems in reading comprehension EFL learning. The students with less knowledge of the target language and weaker reading skills could get help from their partners with keywords and grasping meaning through the discussion. This is in line with the social-constructivist positions because learning can be fostered through relations with more expert peers and adult instructors. It also supported the reader-response theory because students interacted with the texts using their own knowledge and perspectives.

Based on the questionnaire responses, students reported that reading circles were highly effective in building comprehension compared to their past experiences with conventional, teacher-led instructional programs.

Though, this study has some limitations. The research took place in a fairly limited educational setting with a small sample of secondary students and other influences may not be generalized to all Algerian schools. On top of that, the experiment was relatively short and may have been too short to reveal any low long-term effect on reading comprehension development.

The students reading ability or motivation was not the same either. Based on these findings, some pedagogical implications were proposed. It is recommended for EFL teachers to use reading group strategy like reading circle to promote active learning and participation

General Conclusion

among students. Teachers need to provide appropriate scaffolding to facilitate group dynamics and develop generous teacher scaffolding. Finally, curriculum developers and educational policymakers need to take into account cooperative learning approach into secondary English education program and teacher education program.

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Appendices

Appendix 01

Research Title:

The Impact of Reading Circles on Students' Reading Comprehension in Algerian Secondary School EFL Classes

FORM DESCRIPTION

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is part of a research study that aims to investigate the impact of Reading Circles on students' reading comprehension in EFL classes. Your answers are anonymous and will be used for academic purposes only.

Please answer honestly.

Thank you for your participation.

Section 1: General Information

1. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. Age

- ☐ 15
- ☐ 16
- ☐ 17
- ☐ 18

3. School Year

- ☐ 1st Year Secondary
- ☐ 2nd Year Secondary
- ☐ 3rd Year Secondary

4. Have you participated in Reading Circles before?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Section 2: Impact on Reading Comprehension

5. Reading circles help me understand texts better.

- ☐ Yes, a lot
- ☐ Yes, a little
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ No

Appendices

6. After using reading circles, my reading comprehension is:

- ☐ Much better
- ☐ Slightly better
- ☐ The same
- ☐ Worse

7. Reading circles improve my vocabulary:

- ☐ Strongly
- ☐ Moderately
- ☐ Slightly
- ☐ Not at all

8. Reading circles help me identify the main idea:

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never

9. Reading circles help me summarize texts:

- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Well
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Not at all

Section 3: Motivation and Participation

10. Reading circles make reading lessons:

- ☐ Very interesting
- ☐ Interesting
- ☐ Boring
- ☐ Very boring

11. During reading circles, I feel:

- ☐ Very motivated
- ☐ Motivated
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not motivated

12. I prefer reading lessons with:

- ☐ Reading circles
- ☐ Traditional teacher explanation

- ☐ Both equally

13.I participate in group discussions:

- ☐ Very actively
☐ Sometimes
☐ Rarely
☐ Never

Section 4: Group Work Experience

14.Working in groups helps me learn:

- ☐ Very much
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all

15.My classmates help me understand difficult ideas:

- ☐ Always
☐ Often
☐ Sometimes
☐ Never

16.My role in the reading circle is:

- ☐ Clear and easy
☐ Clear but difficult
☐ Not clear
☐ I did not have a role

Section 5: Challenges

17.The main difficulty in reading circles is:

- ☐ Lack of participation
☐ Time management
☐ Understanding roles
☐ No difficulty

18.Group work is sometimes:

- ☐ Very organized
☐ Organized
☐ Disorganized
☐ Very disorganized

Appendices

19. Reading circles take:

- ☐ Too much time
- ☐ Enough time
- ☐ Little time
- ☐ Very little time

Section 6: Overall Evaluation

20. Overall, reading circles are:

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Slightly effective
- ☐ Not effective

21. Would you like to continue using reading circles?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ No

Section 2: Impact on Reading Comprehension (Open-Ended)

22. In your own words, how have reading circles helped you understand the texts better?

23. Can you give an example of a reading circle activity that improved your comprehension or vocabulary?

Section 3: Motivation and Participation (Open-Ended)

24. What do you enjoy most about participating in reading circles?

25. What aspects of reading circles make it easier or harder for you to stay motivated?

Section 4: Group Work Experience (Open-Ended)

26. How does working in a group help you understand difficult ideas? Can you give an example?

27. How do you feel about the role you were assigned in the reading circle? Would you suggest any changes?

Section 5: Challenges (Open-Ended)

28. What is the biggest challenge you face during reading circles, and how do you think it could be improved?

29. Do you have any suggestions for making group discussions more effective or organized?

Section 6: Overall Evaluation (Open-Ended)

30. Overall, how would you describe your experience with reading circles?

31. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for teachers using Reading circles in class?

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بحث أثر استراتيجيات حلقات القراءة في تحسين الفهم القرائي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الأقسام الجزائرية. وتعتمد الدراسة على النظرية البنائية الاجتماعية ونظرية استجابة القارئ، اللتين تؤكدان على أهمية التعلم التعاوني والتفاعل النشط مع النصوص. كما تسعى الدراسة إلى توضيح دور المناقشة الجماعية والتفاعل بين المتعلمين في تطوير مهارات الفهم القرائي.

اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي والكمي من خلال استخدام الاستبيانات وتحليل الأنشطة الصفية لجمع البيانات من الأساتذة والتلاميذ. ومن المتوقع أن تُظهر النتائج أن حلقات القراءة تسهم في زيادة الدافعية والمشاركة وتحسين الفهم القرائي لدى المتعلمين. كما تؤكد الدراسة أهمية استراتيجيات القراءة التعاونية في تطوير تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في السياق الجزائري. الكلمات المفتاحية: حلقات القراءة؛ الفهم القرائي؛ التعلم التعاوني؛ متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية؛ البنائية الاجتماعية؛ نظرية استجابة القارئ.