
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Interpretive Systematic Review of a Researcher's Contributions to EFL Reading Instruction: Themes, Methods, and Pedagogical Insights

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| ABSTRACT

This study sought to conduct an interpretive systematic review (ISR) of the authors' research on EFL reading instruction published between 2001 and 2025. The ISR consists of twenty-seven studies categorized into 6 clusters: EFL reading material used, specialized reading texts and skills, reading combined with other skills, extensive reading, technology enhanced EFL reading instruction, and EFL reading assessment and material coverage. Across the corpus, the ISR shows that effective EFL reading instruction is multidimensional, authentic, strategically scaffolded, and enriched by technology and culturally responsive materials. The studies consistently demonstrate that learners progress most when instruction moves beyond the textbook and immerses them in real world genres, multimodal resources, and collaborative environments that mirror contemporary literacy practices. Authenticity was a recurring strength: exposure to genres such as inspirational quotes, linguistic landscapes, multicultural stories, mobile fiction apps, art texts, news headlines, advertisements, and legal documents expanded learners' cultural awareness, strengthened inferential and critical reading skills, and prepared them to process specialized texts prior to translation tasks. Findings across clusters highlight several converging principles. Authentic materials enhance comprehension, technology increases engagement, explicit strategy instruction deepens processing, and extensive reading fosters autonomy and fluency. At the same time, the studies reveal persistent challenges, particularly with text structure, cohesive ties, genre specific features, and vocabulary inference, indicating the need for sustained, systematic instructional support. Structural issues also emerged, including limited textbook coverage and misalignment between curriculum and assessment, underscoring the importance of coherent program design and stronger teacher preparation. Technology enhanced studies showed that mobile e books, mind mapping software, online courses, synchronous web conferencing, reading apps, and online videos significantly improved comprehension, vocabulary, and engagement, especially for struggling readers. Assessment focused studies emphasized the need to align tests with instructional goals and learners' linguistic and cognitive needs. The meta conclusion of this ISR is that EFL reading development is maximized when instruction is integrative, student centered, and responsive to learners' linguistic, cognitive, and cultural needs, and when assessment and material coverage are aligned with these broader pedagogical aims. Overall, the ISR points toward a holistic, authentic, technology supported, and strategically scaffolded model of EFL reading instruction capable of meeting the complex demands of contemporary learners.

| KEYWORDS

Interpretive Systematic Review (ISR), EFL reading skills, extensive reading, reading technologies, reading assessment, reading genres, specialized reading, Al-Jarf research program

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Research on reading in English as a foreign language (EFL) has substantially expanded over the past two decades, reflecting a growing interest in understanding how learners process, comprehend, and interact with written texts across diverse instructional contexts. A plethora of recent studies, systematic reviews (SRs) and meta-analyses (MAs) in the literature examined several issues

about teaching and learning reading in English as a foreign language (EFL). Specifically, numerous SAs on EFL/ESL highlighted general reading teaching approaches in EFL (Ahmad, 2025; Ali et al., 2022); scientific mapping of research on EFL reading instruction (Chen & Abdullah, 2024). In Saudi Arabia, Alharbi (2021) identified the challenges faced by EFL learners and proposed context-specific solutions, emphasizing the need for instructional approaches that respond to local learning environments.

Other SRs evaluated specific instructional approaches designed to enhance EFL learners' reading comprehension. These include reciprocal teaching as reading comprehension intervention to support comprehension through structured dialogue and strategy use (Dew et al., 2021); problem-based learning on EFL learning for promoting deeper engagement with texts by situating reading within authentic problem-solving tasks (Guo et al., 2024); developing critical reading modules for EFL learners (He & AlSaqqaf, 2024); the differential effects of traditional versus technology-based instruction on reading comprehension of EFL students (Alsuwat & Young, 2016); the integration of multimedia-supported genre-based instruction in EFL reading (Puspitaloka & Zainil, 2025), and literature circles have been found to foster collaborative reading and improved comprehension in developing English language reading ability (Ma et al., 2023).

Similarly, reading strategies in EFL received attention from some SRs in some countries as reading strategies for EFL learners with low proficiency in Indonesian senior high schools which emphasized the importance of explicit strategy instruction for supporting comprehension (Astuti et al., 2026); Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive reading strategies and its strong association with reading comprehension (Ghadamgahi & Ghafournia, 2023; Yulita & Napitupulu, 2023); and adoption of online reading strategies in EFL reflected the growing relevance of technology-mediated reading environments (Pardede, 2022); and EFL/ESL students' use of reading strategies (Li et al., 2024; Lin, 2019).

Additionally, many SRs showed the multifaceted nature of reading in EFL and the linguistic, cognitive, affective, and sociocultural factors shaping the development of reading skills. These SRs included personality-based differences in reading strategies as moderators and mediators in EFL reading comprehension (Misbah & Kalsum, 2026); how social and cultural identity shape learners' engagement with texts and reading comprehension (Manurung & Sembiring, 2025); key language, cognitive and higher-order skills for L2 reading comprehension of expository texts (Vettori et al., 2024); effect of syntax on ESL/EFL reading comprehension (Bano, 2025); the relationship between reading and emotional development (Batini, 2020); reading interest strength and vocabulary acquisition of EFL learners (Santi et al., 2021); effect of L1 and L2 glosses on EFL learners' incidental vocabulary learning through reading (Yeou & Zyad, 2024). Further SRs explored how reading interacts with other language skills and linguistic knowledge. These SRs showed that reading comprehension contributes significantly to vocabulary retention and vocabulary size (Binhomran & Altalhab, 2023); the role of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge in L2 reading comprehension (Choi & Zhang, 2021); and the reading-writing connection based on independent reading and writing (Jouhar & Rupley, 2021). These findings underscore the interconnected nature of language skills and the importance of integrated instructional approaches.

Finally, numerous SRs in the literature highlighted the effective role of various forms of technologies in reading skill development. These include: reading in English on screen and on paper (Çetin & Kiliçkaya, 2019); online gamification platforms for practicing EFL reading skills (Chaidir et al., 2023); online extensive reading in EFL/ESL and web-based platforms (Ounissi et al., 2025); digital reading in a second or foreign language (Reiber-Kuijpers et al., 2021); educational technology for reading instruction in developing countries (Norman, 2023); supporting secondary school students' reading comprehension in computer environments (ter Beek et al., 2018); and teachers' perceptions and challenges in integrating technology in English reading courses (Herdina & Ningrum, 2023).

Although prior research has examined EFL reading from multiple angles, including general instructional approaches, specific pedagogical models, reading strategies, other skill integration in reading instruction, factors affecting reading skill development, and technologies that enhance reading ability, the existing literature remains fragmented and uneven in scope. Most reviews focus on a single dimension of reading, such as strategies, technology, or linguistic factors, without offering an integrated synthesis that captures how these aspects collectively shape EFL reading development. In addition, many studies are context-specific, limited to particular countries, proficiency levels, or instructional settings, which restricts the generalizability of their findings. Several reviews also rely on narrow methodological lenses, emphasizing isolated interventions or discrete skills rather than providing a comprehensive overview of the broader research landscape. Despite the plethora of studies, there is still no unified, up-to-date SR that maps recent trends across all major domains of EFL reading research and identifies cross-cutting

patterns and gaps. This lack shows the need for an SR that brings together diverse lines of inquiry to offer a clearer understanding of the field and highlight areas requiring further investigation.

To address this gap in the EFL reading literature, the current study aims to conduct an interpretive systematic review (ISR) of the author's research studies on teaching reading to EFL freshman students and level-five students enrolled in a stylistics course at the College of Languages and Translation (COLT), King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, graduate students majoring in art education at the College of Home Economics (CHE), Saudi students studying English abroad and EFL high school students published between 2001 and 2025. This ISR synthesizes the author's contributions across several aspects of EFL reading instruction, including the types of EFL reading material used, instruction in specialized reading texts and skills, the integration of reading with other skills, the practice of extensive reading, technologies used in EFL reading instruction, and assessment of EFL students' reading skill development and textbook content coverage. Together, these studies offer a comprehensive and longitudinal perspective on EFL reading instruction within a single educational context.

This ISR is significant because it is part of a broader series of SR/MA projects by the author, that has so far included the following SRs/MAs of: translation error studies (Al-Jarf 2026a); mobile apps for developing multiple language skills in EFL (Al-Jarf 2026b); studies on pronunciation instruction and practice in L2 (Al-Jarf 2026c); Arabic–English transliteration of personal names and public signages (Al-Jarf 2026d); children's language acquisition and development in Saudi Arabia (Al-Jarf 2026e); classroom practices, writing enhancement and creativity among EFL struggling students (Al-Jarf 2026f); collaborative learning and teaching in digital environments (Al-Jarf 2026g); the effectiveness of mind-mapping on multiple English language skills in the Saudi context (Al-Jarf 2026h); an integrative analysis of inadequate staffing and large class sizes in Saudi EFL and translation programs (Al-Jarf 2026i); innovative word formation and pluralization processes in Arabic (Al-Jarf 2026j); 2024–2025 studies on AI Arabic translation, linguistics and pedagogy (Al-Jarf 2026k); and a self-review of ESP research across specialized and underexplored domains (Al-Jarf, 2026l); a review of three decades of ESP innovative research across specialized and underexplored domains (Al-Jarf, 2026m).

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Corpus

The final corpus consists of twenty-seven studies published between 2001 and 2025 in a range of international journals and conferences. Three of the author's studies appear in Scopus- and/or Web of Science-indexed venues, while the remaining publications are disseminated through reputable international outlets in the fields of TESOL, applied linguistics, and EFL pedagogy. The studies were included in the current ISR if they met the following criteria: (i) The study must be authored or co-authored by the author. (ii) Participants must be EFL freshman learners and level-five students enrolled in a stylistics course at COLT, EFL graduate students majoring in art education at CHE, Saudi students studying English abroad and EFL high school students. Studies involving secondary students were included only when they addressed extensive reading (Cluster 4) as part of the author's broader reading research trajectory. (iii) The study must address EFL reading instruction, including reading materials, reading strategies, specialized reading skills, extensive reading, technology-enhanced reading, or reading assessment. (iv) The study must be published between 2001 and 2025, reflecting the full span of the author's research program. (v) the publications include peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, and empirical or conceptual studies were eligible. (vi) Studies published in English or Arabic were included. The full text must be accessible for analysis.

After identifying and selecting the studies, they were categorized into the 6 clusters described below.

Cluster 1: EFL Reading Material Used

This cluster includes studies using non-traditional texts: art, multicultural children's short stories, inspirational quotes, landscapes, and fiction apps, as follows

- *developing students' global awareness in EFL reading and speaking (Al-Jarf, 2022b.)*
- *enhancing EFL students' reading and appreciation skills with mobile fiction apps (Al-Jarf, 2022d).*
- *enhancing EFL freshman students' reading skills with inspirational quotes (Al-Jarf, 2021d).*
- *teaching English with linguistic landscapes to Arabic students studying abroad (Al-Jarf, 2021g).*
- *enhancing reading and speaking skills in EFL through multicultural children's short stories (Al-Jarf, 2015).*
- *developing and testing reading skills through art texts (Al-Jarf, 2011).*

Cluster 2: Specialized Reading Texts and Skills

This cluster includes studies focusing on specialized genres, linguistic features, and reading challenges:

- Can ESL students identify emphatic features of advertisements? (Al-Jarf, 2025).
- Problems of identifying lexical and syntactic features of legal documents by undergraduate EFL students (Al-Jarf, 2023e).
- EFL students' difficulties with lexical and syntactic features of news headlines and news stories (Al-Jarf, 2021c).
- Processing of advertisements by EFL Arab college students (Al-Jarf, 2007c).
- Processing of cohesive ties by EFL Arab college students (Al-Jarf, 2001d).
- Bridging the gap in reading for specific purposes (Al-Jarf, 2013a).

Cluster 3: Reading Combined with Other Skills

This cluster covers studies integrating reading with speaking, reading and writing, or cross-skill connections:

- Developing students' global awareness in EFL reading and speaking (Al-Jarf, 2022b).
- Enhancing reading and speaking skills in EFL through multicultural children's short stories (Al-Jarf, 2015).
- Enhancing freshman students' performance with online reading and writing activities (Al-Jarf, 2013b).
- Making connections in reading instruction (Al-Jarf, 2008).

Cluster 4: Extensive Reading (Standalone Category)

This cluster includes a coherent sub-theme focusing on extensive reading practices:

- Promoting EFL secondary students' extensive reading skills (Al-Jarf, 2009c).
- Teaching extensive reading to EFL secondary students online (Al-Jarf, 2009d).

Cluster 5: Technology-Enhanced EFL Reading Instruction

This cluster includes studies integrating mobile apps, mind-mapping software, digital tools, online platforms, or blended learning, and webconferences:

- Collaborative mobile ebook reading for struggling EFL college readers (Al-Jarf, 2021a).
- Teaching reading to EFL freshman students with mind-mapping software (Al-Jarf, 2021i).
- Teaching reading to EFL Arabic students online (Al-Jarf, 2019).
- Integrating Elluminate in EFL reading instruction (Al-Jarf, 2014b).
- Enhancing freshman students' performance with online reading and writing activities (Al-Jarf, 2013b).
- Integrating RCampus in college reading and writing for translation students (Al-Jarf, 2010b).
- Reading in the App Store (Al-Jarf, 2012).
- Maximizing ESL freshman readers' skill with online instruction (Al-Jarf, 2009b).
- Impact of blended learning on EFL college readers (Al-Jarf, 2007b).
- Teaching extensive reading to EFL secondary students online (Al-Jarf, 2009d).

Cluster 6: EFL Reading Assessment and Material Coverage

This cluster includes studies examining assessment of students' reading skill development, reading material coverage, and instructional practices:

- How much material do EFL college instructors cover in reading courses? (Al-Jarf, 2021e).
- Testing reading for specific purposes in an art education course for graduate students in Saudi Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2021h).
- What teachers should know about reading tests (Al-Jarf, 2017).

2.2 Eligibility (Inclusion & Exclusion) Criteria

Studies were excluded if they met any of the following criteria:

- Duplicate studies of previously published work such as conference papers/presentations without adding new data, analysis, or conceptual contribution such as: Enhancing EFL students' reading and appreciation skills with mobile fiction

apps (Al-Jarf, 2022d); mobile fiction apps for enhancing EFL college students' reading and appreciation skills (Al-Jarf, 2022e); collaborative mobile ebook reading by translation students (Al-Jarf, 2014a).

- Studies where reading is a partial component such as decoding. Examples are: Text-to-speech software for promoting EFL freshman students' decoding skills and pronunciation accuracy (Al-Jarf, 2022g); the effects of listening comprehension and decoding skills on spelling achievement of EFL freshman students (Al-Jarf, 2005c); the relationship among spelling, listening, and decoding skills in EFL freshman students (Al-Jarf, 2005d); deviant Arabic transliterations of foreign shop names in Arabic Arabia and decoding problems among shoppers (Al-Jarf, 2022a); effects of online collaborative activities on second language acquisition (Al-Jarf, 2009a); *differential effects of the iPad on first and second language acquisition by Saudi children during the Covid-19 pandemic* (Al-Jarf, 2021b); impact of the iPad on Saudi young children in the home environment as perceived by their mothers (Al-Jarf, 2021f); English language education at the elementary school level in Saudi Arabia: A parents' perspective (Al-Jarf, 2022); how parents promote English and Arabic language proficiency in elementary school children in Saudi Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2022).
- Studies that focus on reading in the first/native language (L1) by adult Arabs as in the following: digital reading among children in Arabic Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2023a); digital reading among educated Arabs: a twitter-based study (Al-Jarf, 2023b); reading habits and motivation among educated Arabs in the age of social media and distractions (Al-Jarf, 2023f); favorite magazines and reading topics among Arabic female college students (Al-Jarf, 2023c); preparing high school students for the university and life after graduation (Al-Jarf, 2023d); reading interests of university female students in Arabic Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2022f); educated Arabs' reading interests and preferences before, during and after the pandemic (Al-Jarf, 2022c); quality in teaching reading to high school students (Al-Jarf, 2019a); first, second and third grade students' word identification difficulties (Al-Jarf, 2018); developing reading and literacy skills in Arabic Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2007a); examples of successful literacy campaigns in the world (Al-Jarf, 2005a); reading promotion programs in south korea (Al-Jarf, 2005b); Arabic websites for pre-school children: current status and future perspectives (Al-Jarf, 2004a); what college students read in the globalization era (Al-Jarf, 2004b); what college students read in the global age (Al-Jarf, 2004c); what our youth read in the age of globalization (Al-Jarf, 2004d).
- Studies that analyze teaching L1 reading in school textbooks, and L1 reading assessment in the early grades: for reading lesson design in junior and senior high school reading textbooks in Arabic Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2003); text structure instruction in junior and senior high school reading textbooks (Al-Jarf, 2002); advance organizers in elementary, junior and senior high school reading textbooks in Arabic Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2001a); cohesion skill instruction in junior and senior reading textbooks in Arabic Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2001b); context analysis skills instruction in elementary, junior and senior high school reading textbooks in Arabic Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2001c); study skills instruction in junior and senior reading textbooks in Arabic Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2001e); an arabic word identification diagnostic test for the first three grades (Al-Jarf, 1995); analysis of Arabic first, second and third grade students' errors in word identification (Al-Jarf, 1994); classification of word identification exercises in elementary school reading textbooks in Arabic Arabia (Al-Jarf, 1992); a model for a reading lab for Arabic students (Al-Jarf, 1989a); classification of reading comprehension questions in elementary basal readers in Arabic Arabia (Al-Jarf, 1989b).
- Studies on teaching reading in as Arabic as a foreign language such as evaluation of Russian-Arabic language teaching textbooks in the light of CEFR criteria (Al-Jarf & Mingazova, 2020).
- Unpublished manuscripts as theses and dissertations: an ethnographic study of reading comprehension instruction in EFL classrooms in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia (Al-Jarf, 1986).

2.3 Corpus Characteristics

The final corpus consisted of twenty-seven studies authored by Reima Al-Jarf between 2001 and 2025. Because the dataset represents a closed, author-bounded research program published over 25 years, it is both comprehensive and internally coherent, reflecting the author's sustained scholarly trajectory in teaching reading to EFL students. The studies employ diverse methodological approaches, including quantitative counts, qualitative analyses, and descriptive investigations. To facilitate synthesis, the twenty-seven studies were organized into 6 thematic clusters, each representing a distinct dimension of the author's research program. Together, these clusters provide an integrated overview of the author's contributions to EFL reading. Overall, the corpus reflects a longitudinal, multimodal research program that traces the evolution of EFL skills, reading text types, instructional strategies, and technologies used in reading instruction in EFL over time.

2.4 Information Sources

The information sources for this ISR were limited to platforms that index the author's complete scholarly output. No external database search was required, as the aim was not to identify all studies on EFL reading in general, but rather to synthesize all reading-related studies within a single, self-contained research program. All records were retrieved from publicly accessible academic platforms in which the author's publications are fully archived. These sources include Google Scholar, ResearchGate,

Semantic Scholar, Academia.edu, SSRN, ERIC, EBSCO, ProQuest, Scopus-indexed and Web of Science journals, and institutional repositories such as the King Saud University repository. Collectively, these platforms provide full coverage of the author's publications across journals, conference proceedings, and digital repositories. All included and excluded studies were verified manually to ensure accuracy, remove duplicates, and confirm alignment with the eligibility criteria described in Section 2.2.

2.5 Data Extraction and Synthesis

Data extraction and synthesis followed an integrated, multi-stage procedure tailored to the descriptive and heterogeneous nature of the included studies. For each study, information was extracted directly from the full text, including: publication year; domain (reading skills, reading texts, specialized reading, extensive reading, technologies used, or reading assessment); participant characteristics (primarily freshman EFL students and level-5 students enrolled in a stylistics course at COLT, graduate students majoring in art education at CHE, Saudi students studying English abroad and EFL high schools students); methodological approach (e.g., qualitative analysis, corpus-based mapping, collaborative instructional interventions, proposed models of teaching and learning); data sources (test scores, classroom tasks, surveys, or learner reflections); and key findings related to reading skill development outcomes, assessment patterns, or pedagogical implications. These categories were selected to support thematic synthesis and cluster-level comparison rather than effect-size calculation, as the corpus consists predominantly of qualitative, descriptive, and intervention-based EFL reading studies. All extracted information was entered into a structured matrix to ensure consistency across studies and to enable systematic comparison. Manual coding was employed to preserve conceptual accuracy and to classify each study according to the reading skill targeted, the texts and technologies used, the assessment procedures adopted, the instructional strategies implemented, and the characteristics of the learner groups involved.

Data synthesis proceeded in three stages. First, all studies were grouped into six thematic clusters based on their primary focus: reading skills, specialized and extensive reading, reading texts and technologies used, instructional strategies, and assessment procedures (see Section 2.1). This clustering enabled synthesis within conceptually unified domains while preserving the distinct contributions of each study. Secondly, studies within each cluster were compared according to reading skill, teaching strategy, technology used, assessment techniques, data sources, recurring patterns, and pedagogical implications. Thirdly, findings were synthesized across clusters to identify broader patterns in EFL reading instruction, including cross-skill mechanisms, cognitive processes, recurring challenges, and the affordances of the strategies and technologies employed.

Because the corpus represents a single author's research program, the methodological framing and analytical categories were highly consistent across the included studies. This consistency minimized coding discrepancies and enabled a coherent synthesis of findings spanning 25 years of research.

2.6 PRISMA Flow Description

Because the current ISR is based on a closed, predefined corpus consisting of twenty-seven studies published by the author between 2001 and 2025, the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow reflects a streamlined identification and screening process. All publications within this time frame were retrieved from the academic platforms listed in Section 2.4 and manually screened for relevance. Each record was assessed against the eligibility criteria, and studies were excluded if they were duplicates or if EFL reading constituted only a partial rather than a primary focus and if the studies focus on reading in the native/first language. Following full-text evaluation, only studies directly addressing the teaching of EFL reading, specifically reading skills, reading texts, instructional strategies, technologies, and assessment, were retained. The final set of studies was then organized into six thematic clusters for synthesis. Accordingly, the PRISMA flow documents the progression from the initial identification of all publications within the author-bounded corpus, through screening and eligibility assessment, to the final inclusion of studies that directly contribute to the analysis of EFL reading across diverse teaching strategies, technologies, and skill domains.

3. Results

3.1 Overview

The results of this ISR synthesize findings from twenty-seven studies examining reading skills, reading texts, instructional strategies, technologies and assessment techniques used. The analysis is organized around the 6 thematic clusters, allowing the results to highlight both the distinct contributions of the EFL reading studies and the cross-cluster patterns that characterize the author's research program. Across the corpus, the studies consistently demonstrate how EFL reading was taught, skills developed and assessed. This overview shows the major trends emerging from the corpus, including the reading domains represented in

this ISR, the skills and instructional strategies employed, the learning outcomes reported, and the ways in which reading instruction facilitated student skill improvement. The following subsections present detailed findings for each thematic cluster.

3.2 Study Characteristics

The corpus consisted of twenty-seven unique studies. Because several studies addressed more than one thematic dimension, they were assigned to multiple clusters where appropriate, resulting in 30 total cluster entries. However, each study was counted only once in the overall corpus.

Cluster 1: EFL Reading Material Used

1) Developing Students' Global Awareness in EFL Reading and Speaking (Al-Jarf, 2022b)

This study proposes a model for integrating global themes in the EFL reading and speaking instruction to help EFL students learn about the ideologies, cultures, and customs of other countries, address current global problems, compare the similarities and differences that the peoples of the world share, focus on the interrelatedness of human beings, recognize stereotypes Western people have about Islam, Muslims, Arabs, and women, and listen to multiple perspectives. The model proposes 4 areas of global themes: global systems, human values, current global issues, and the history of contact and interdependence among peoples, together with 4 types of goals: knowledge, skills, values, and participation goals. It gives examples of concepts and types of objectives related to the global themes, resources for locating global themes, stages of teaching the global themes, and the instructor's role.

2) Enhancing EFL Freshman Students' Reading Skills with Inspirational Quotes (Al-Jarf, 2021d)

The article proposes the integration of inspirational quotes in reading instruction for EFL students, the advantages of integrating inspirational quotes, their sources, criteria for selecting them, and reading skills developed with them. Inspirational quotes and tasks can be posted on a Facebook page, an online course, or a discussion forum. The instructor introduces the inspirational quote, gives a vocabulary overview, pre-questions, and sets goals for the tasks. The students read for the general topic, pay attention to specific vocabulary, imagery, and figures of speech, and use contextual clues to infer the meaning of difficult words. They discuss answers, summarize or retell the topic orally, comment on it, give their impression, and the moral or lesson learnt. The instructor guides the students, encourages them, and gives feedback. The students had positive attitudes towards practicing reading with inspirational quotes and found them beneficial in promoting their reading skills.

3) Teaching English with Linguistic Landscapes to Arabic Students Studying Abroad (Al-Jarf, 2021f)

This article proposes the integration of linguistic landscapes (LLs) in teaching English to Saudi students studying abroad. LLs contain announcements, directions, warnings, services, and commercial ads. They are characterized by brevity, use of authentic language, and specific structures such as commands and ellipted phrases. English LLs selected for instruction should match the students' proficiency level. A Facebook page is created for posting LLs and discussions about them. The instructor introduces the LLs, gives pre-questions, and sets goals for working on them. The students practice LL text analysis. They predict the topic, pay attention to specific vocabulary and grammatical structures, and use contextual clues and their background knowledge to infer the meaning. Students can also identify the pragmatic, stylistic, and sociocultural features of LLs. They discuss answers, summarize, retell, or paraphrase an LL, and discuss difficult vocabulary and grammatical structures. LL pedagogy was beneficial and fun.

4) Enhancing EFL Students' Reading and Appreciation Skills with Mobile Fiction Apps (Al-Jarf, 2022d)

The article proposes the integration of mobile fiction apps (MFAs) in reading instruction. It gives examples of MFAs, advantages of using MFAs, and literary appreciation skills that can be developed with MFAs. MFAs are free, easy, and quick to download, update, and delete, and can be used anywhere, anytime, and as many times as needed. MFAs of simplified and original versions of Harry Potter, Oliver Twist, Sherlock Holmes, Wuthering Heights, a novel by Agatha Christie, or a collection of stories, notes, and tests can be downloaded. A story/novel video, app, or e-book can be used. The instructor asks pre-questions that require identification of the plot, setting, characters, main theme, point of view, symbolism, style, and tone, and inferring the meanings of figurative language and imagery. Questions and answers, summaries, comments, and discussions of the elements of a literary

work can be posted in an online discussion forum, blog, or social media page. The integration of MFAs showed improved reading comprehension, literary appreciation, and text analysis skills among participating students and increased their engagement in reading and literary analysis.

5) Enhancing Reading and Speaking Skills in EFL Through Multicultural Children's Short Stories (Al-Jarf, 2015)

This study presented a model for integrating multicultural children's short stories as a supplement to in-class instruction to develop college students' reading and speaking skills in EFL, together with cultural awareness. It gives the advantages of using children's stories, criteria for selecting them, examples of children's short stories and websites where they are found, reading and speaking skills that can be developed, and instructional stages. Reading and speaking tests can be used to measure students' skill level before and after instruction. A questionnaire-survey can also be used to assess improvement in the students' multicultural awareness.

6) Developing and Testing Reading Skills Through Art Texts (Al-Jarf, 2011)

This study describes the design and implementation of an ESP reading course for graduate students majoring in art education, using authentic art texts to develop reading comprehension, vocabulary, and translation skills. Based on a needs analysis and a pretest, the course incorporated texts from art encyclopedias, websites, and reviews, along with explicit instruction in identifying text structure, main ideas, supporting details, and transitional devices. Students practiced inferring vocabulary, analyzing grammatical structures, and translating key terms and paragraphs. A posttest aligned with course content assessed reading, vocabulary, and translation skills. Results showed significant improvement across all skill areas, demonstrating the effectiveness of using art texts for ESP reading instruction.

Cluster 2: Specialized Reading Texts and Skills (6 Studies)

1) Can ESL Students Identify Emphatic Features of Advertisements? (Al-Jarf, 2025)

Sixty ESL junior students enrolled in a Stylistics course took a test consisting of a Mazda ad to assess their ability to comprehend and identify its emphatic features. Half the students could correctly identify balanced sentence structure, repeated key words, and ideas arranged in the order of climax. One third identified active sentences, abrupt changes in sentence length, important words placed at the end of a sentence, and the use of periodic sentences. One fourth identified emphatic words placed after a colon or a dash, words/phrases placed out of their usual order, and one fifth identified intensifiers, extraposition, exclamatory sentences, using anticipatory 'it', and change in sentence types together. Students' difficulty in recognizing emphatic structures in the Mazda ad was because of the analogy between Mozart's musical genius and the Mazda car-making philosophy and the use of multiple emphatic techniques simultaneously, which constituted a cognitive load for the students who were more engaged in decoding the poetic message and understanding the content and less attentive to structural manipulations.

2) Problems of Identifying Lexical and Syntactic Features of Legal Documents by Undergraduate EFL Students (Al-Jarf, 2023e)

Sixty EFL junior students enrolled in a Stylistics course took a test consisting of a legal (notarial) text to assess their ability to identify its lexical and syntactic features. Between 69%–52% of the students could identify the use of legal verbs, prefixing and suffixing of prepositions, prepositional/adverbial phrases, long complex sentences, and coordination of synonyms (doublets). They had great difficulty identifying statements, absence of adjectives, few pronouns, the use of technical vocabulary and emphatic auxiliaries, the use of passive structures, relative clauses, scarce use of pronoun reference, and adverbs placed in an unusual position. Less than 2% could identify features such as pronoun reference, descriptive adjectives, few adjectives, long words, sentences with unusual order, and long nominal clauses. The lower the percentage, the more difficult the feature. Difficulties may be attributed to lack of linguistic competence and unfamiliarity with the notarial text structure.

3) EFL Students' Difficulties with Lexical and Syntactic Features of News Headlines and News Stories (Al-Jarf, 2021c)

Sixty-eight translation students took a test that required them to identify the syntactic and lexical features of a sample of news headlines and news stories, supply deleted words, and substitute punctuation marks, infinitives, and block language with their meanings. It was found that 75% of the subjects could identify initials, 72% recognized surnames and infinitives used instead of

the “future”, 51% recognized deleted articles, 49% identified block language, 21% identified passive voice without agent, 19% recognized instances where verb “to be” was deleted, and 6% identified ellipted words. Incorrect responses revealed lack of knowledge of current world events and insufficient ability to apply features of newspaper language.

4) Processing of Advertisements by EFL Arab College Students (Al-Jarf, 2007c)

This study investigates EFL college students’ ability to comprehend and analyze English advertisements and identify their stylistic features. **Sixty-six** translation students were asked to analyze a magazine advertisement. Results showed that lexical features were easier to identify than syntactic ones, and that correcting faulty punctuation was more difficult than correcting capitalization. Students struggled with complex syntactic structures, ellipsis, and stylistic deviations typical of advertising discourse. Incorrect responses revealed areas of lexical and structural difficulty, while analysis of error causes pointed to limited linguistic competence, insufficient exposure to varied ads, and challenges in transferring learned features to new texts. The study concludes with recommendations for improving instruction in advertisement comprehension.

5) Processing of Cohesive Ties by EFL Arab College Students (Al-Jarf, 2001d)

This study examines EFL college students’ ability to identify and interpret cohesive ties in English texts. A test was used to **determine** which cohesive devices, such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion, were easy or difficult to process. It was found that students struggled particularly with ellipsis, substitution, and certain types of reference, reflecting gaps in syntactic awareness and **discourse-level** processing. Error patterns suggest that limited linguistic competence, insufficient exposure to cohesive devices, and difficulty transferring knowledge to new contexts contributed to comprehension problems.

6) Bridging the Gap in Reading for Specific Purposes (Al-Jarf, 2013a)

Based on needs analysis and a Proficiency Test, a reading course was designed to meet geography students’ academic, professional, and communication needs. The students practiced reading and comprehending authentic geography texts selected from books, encyclopaedias, internet websites, encyclopaedic dictionaries, book reviews, research articles, and abstracts. The texts selected increased in length **and** difficulty level, **and** had different organizational structures and geographical themes. The students practiced recognizing the text macro- and micro-structures, locating main ideas and supporting details, outlining and highlighting key concepts and key terms. Geographical terms were taught in context. Semantic, syntactic, and morphological clues were highlighted, and inferring meaning from definitions, punctuation marks, synonyms, antonyms, and examples in the text was emphasized. The posttest showed significant improvement in reading and comprehending specialized reference material. The students found the course effective in developing their reading comprehension, vocabulary, and translation skills and **in** exposing them to a variety of geographical material.

Cluster 3: Reading Combined with Other Skills (4 studies)

Developing Students’ Global Awareness in EFL Reading and Speaking (Al-Jarf, 2022b)

See article summary in Cluster 1.

Enhancing Reading and Speaking Skills in EFL Through Multicultural Children’s Short Stories (Al-Jarf, 2015) مكررة

See article summary in Cluster 1.

Enhancing Freshman Students’ Performance with Online Reading and Writing Activities (Al-Jarf, 2013b)

This study assessed the effectiveness of integrating RCampus **into** EFL freshman students’ reading and writing instruction. Two groups of freshman students majoring in translation participated in the study. Before instruction, no significant differences were found between the experimental and control groups in their reading and writing skills in EFL. Both groups received traditional in-class instruction that depended on the textbook. In addition, the experimental group received online instruction using RCampus LMS. Each week, discussion threads that required the students to search for information, read extra material, and respond to questions in writing were posted. The students were free to post their own book summaries, discussion threads, and comment on each other’s posts. The instructor provided feedback and individual help. **Post-test** scores showed that the experimental group made higher gains in reading and writing skills development as a result of using RCampus. The students had positive attitudes towards using online courses in reading and writing.

Making Connections in Reading Instruction (Al-Jarf, 2008)

This study proposes an integrated reading instruction model for teaching reading that emphasizes 9 types of connections: phonic connections to determine the pronunciation and meaning of unknown words by identifying letter combinations and spelling-pronunciation correspondences; morphological connections to determine the meaning of unknown words by breaking

them into their component parts; contextual connections to infer the meaning of words from lexical and syntactic clues; syntactic connections; text structure connections; inferential relationships (semantic, grammatical, or logical (causal) relations between the propositions and making backward and forward inferences); anaphoric relationships that link words and phrases with their referents; cohesion connections (linking the component parts of a text together); and connections with students' prior knowledge and global culture. The article explains each connection in detail and illustrates how they interact during reading. The model is designed to be applicable across proficiency levels, text types, and instructional contexts, offering a comprehensive framework for developing strategic, independent readers.

Cluster 4: Extensive Reading (Standalone Category) (2 Studies)

1) Promoting EFL Secondary Students' Extensive Reading Skills (Al-Jarf, 2009c)

This study presents a comprehensive lesson plan for developing extensive reading skills among EFL secondary school students in grades 10–12. The model emphasizes reading for pleasure, fluency, and general comprehension, using accessible materials such as picture books, simplified children's stories, magazines, and encyclopaedias. Instruction is conducted once a week throughout the school year, often outside the traditional classroom setting to create a relaxed reading environment. Students select their own books, read at home, prepare oral summaries based on the six Q-words (who, where, when, what, why, how), and present individually or in small groups. The teacher provides orientation, models book selection strategies, and offers continuous encouragement without interrupting presentations for error correction. The plan includes strategies for handling common student difficulties, maintaining reading logs and portfolios, and assessing progress through reading speed measures, oral summaries, and checklists. The model aims to foster independent reading habits, increase reading speed, improve comprehension, and cultivate positive attitudes toward reading in English.

2) Teaching Extensive Reading to EFL Secondary Students Online (Al-Jarf, 2009d)

This study proposes an online model for teaching extensive reading to EFL secondary school students, integrating digital platforms to support independent reading outside the classroom. Students select simplified or authentic children's stories, read them at home, and participate in online discussions, summaries, and peer interactions through blogs, forums, or learning platforms. The instructional approach mirrors traditional extensive reading principles, reading for pleasure, focusing on overall meaning, and gradually increasing text length, while leveraging online tools to enhance motivation, accountability, and collaboration. Students post summaries, comment on peers' stories, and share reflections, while the instructor provides guidance, prompts, and feedback. The online format allows flexible reading, encourages autonomy, and exposes students to a wider range of texts. The model demonstrates how digital environments can effectively support extensive reading programs and promote reading fluency, comprehension, and positive attitudes toward English reading.

Cluster 5: Technology-Enhanced EFL Reading Instruction (11 studies)

1) Collaborative Mobile eBook Reading for Struggling EFL College Readers (Al-Jarf, 2021a)

This study examines the effectiveness of integrating mobile e-books, Blackboard, and Elluminate into extensive reading instruction for struggling EFL freshman readers. Two groups were involved: the experimental group engaged in collaborative, extensive e-book reading activities, whereas the control group read paper books, answered questions on paper, and engaged in face-to-face discussions. Experimental students worked in small groups, read simplified e-books, posted outlines and summaries, questions about the topic, details, meanings of difficult words, pronouns and their referents on Blackboard. They participated in synchronous discussions via Elluminate, answered questions, and gave feedback and comments. Post-test results showed higher gains in reading skills for experimental students, attributed to student-centered activities, active participation, peer interaction, a secure environment for making mistakes, and instructor and peer support. The study demonstrates that collaborative mobile e-book reading can effectively enhance reading comprehension among struggling EFL college students.

2) Reading in the App Store (Al-Jarf, 2012)

This study explores the use of smartphone reading applications as out-of-class extensive reading activities for EFL freshman students. The students downloaded reading apps and used them as out-of-class extensive activities. Every two weeks, they downloaded an assigned e-book, and each student read a chapter, followed by weekly oral discussions about what each student read. The students answered questions about main ideas, details, and word meaning. Instruction followed a three-stage model involving pre-reading questions, guided reading, and post-reading discussion, with the instructor serving as facilitator. The students reported that the reading apps were convenient, accessible, and enjoyable, allowing them to read anytime and

anywhere. The study highlights the pedagogical value of mobile reading apps in motivating learners and supporting reading comprehension development.

3) Teaching Reading to EFL Freshman Students with Mind Mapping Software (Al-Jarf, 2021i)

This study proposes the integration of mind-mapping software in EFL reading instruction to help freshman students relate a central idea or topic in a text to related subtopics or details, helping them understand the organizational structure of a text, identify the text structure type, and locate signalling devices. Making reading mind maps begins with a word or image that symbolizes the topic of the reading text in the middle of the screen. While reading the text paragraph by paragraph, main branches are added for each paragraph's topic. Sub-branches are added for each important detail related to a particular topic (main branch). Colors are used for the main and minor branches. Reading test results showed that mind-mapping enhanced freshman students' reading comprehension. The students had positive attitudes towards mind mapping and found it fun and helpful in comprehending and organizing ideas in a text.

4) Teaching Reading to EFL Arabic Students Online (Al-Jarf, 2019)

The study investigated the effects of using an online course on reading skill development in Saudi EFL freshman students. Reading pre-test scores showed no significant differences between the experimental and control groups in their reading skill level. Then, both groups studied the same reading textbook and completed the same lessons and exercises. In addition, the experimental group accessed an online reading course with Nicenet from home. The students checked the online reading texts, did the reading exercises, responded to the questions and discussion threads, added reading links, and posted reading threads. Post-test comparisons showed significant improvement in the experimental group's reading skills. The study concludes that **the** use of online reading from home as a supplement to in-class reading instruction enhances EFL students' reading comprehension and fosters positive attitudes toward online learning.

5) Enhancing Freshman Students' Performance with Online Reading and Writing Activities (Al-Jarf, 2013b)

This study assessed the effectiveness of integrating RCampus LMS into EFL students' reading and writing instruction. Pre-test scores showed no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in their reading and writing abilities. Both received traditional in-class instruction that depended on the textbook, completed the same chapters and exercises, and took the same quizzes. Additionally, the experimental group received online instruction using RCampus. Discussion threads that required the students to search for information, read extra material, and respond to questions in writing were posted. The students posted their own book summaries, discussion threads, and comments. The instructor provided feedback and individual help. Post-test results showed significant gains in reading and writing skills for the experimental group, and questionnaire responses indicated positive attitudes toward online learning. The study demonstrates the value of combining online and in-class instruction to enhance literacy skills.

6) Integrating RCampus in College Reading and Writing for Translation Students (Al-Jarf, 2010b)

This study investigated the effectiveness of integrating RCampus into EFL freshman reading and writing skills instruction. They received traditional in-class instruction that depended on the textbook, in addition to online extension reading and writing activities using RCampus LMS. Weekly discussion threads that required the students to search for information, read extra material, and respond to questions in writing were posted. The students posted their own book summaries, discussion threads, and comments on their classmates' posts. Pre- and post-test comparisons showed that RCampus integration significantly improved students' reading and writing skills. The study highlights the effectiveness of online platforms in supporting literacy development in EFL contexts.

7) Maximizing ESL Freshman Readers' Skill with Online Instruction (Al-Jarf, 2009b)

This article outlines strategies for teaching reading comprehension to struggling EFL/ESL college readers online. Strategies included helping students understand the chapter structure; predicting content from the title; writing the topic of each paragraph in the margin; underlining the main ideas, numbering the supporting details; circling words that signal chronological order, classification, definition, comparison and contrast, exemplification, and process; filling a tree diagram with the title, topics, and subtopics of paragraphs while reading; summarizing the main ideas and supporting details in a chart; recognizing the text type (compare/contrast, classification, illustration, chronology); deriving meanings of words from context clues (definitions, synonyms, antonyms, and morphological analysis); highlighting silent letters, double letters, and hidden sounds in words, and identifying their part of speech; connecting pronouns and determiners with their antecedents; connecting information with students' background knowledge; circling the question word and key words while skimming; and recognizing sentence types. Sample texts were used to demonstrate how these strategies can be applied. The study emphasizes the importance of explicit strategy instruction supported by online tools to improve reading comprehension.

8) Impact of Blended Learning on EFL College Readers (Al-Jarf, 2007b)

This study examines the effect of blended learning on EFL freshman students' reading skills improvement. Two groups of freshman students participated in the study. The pre-test showed no significant differences between both groups in their reading ability. Both studied the same reading textbook and completed the same passages and exercises. The experimental group used an online course with Nicenet. They checked reading websites in "Link Sharing". In "Conferencing", the students wrote the topic of several paragraphs, located specific details, inferred the meaning of words from context, found the referents of pronouns, summarized the text, filled out an outline, and categorized vocabulary items. They also responded to questions and discussion threads, added reading links, and posted reading threads. The post-test revealed significant differences between the two groups. Results confirmed that in learning environments where technology is unavailable to EFL students and instructors, the use of blended learning helps motivate and enhance EFL students' learning and improves their reading skills.

9) Teaching Extensive Reading to EFL Secondary Students Online (Al-Jarf, 2009d)

See article summary in Cluster 1.

10) Integrating Elluminate in EFL Reading Instruction (Al-Jarf, 2014b)

This study explores the use of Elluminate Live, a synchronous web-conferencing tool, as a supplement to in-class reading instruction to provide EFL freshman students with extra reading practice from home. The control group received face-to-face in-class reading practice, whereas the experimental group received synchronous online practice using Elluminate Live. The study describes the steps followed in preparing for and conducting synchronous reading web-conferences using Elluminate Live, technical requirements, technical difficulties of synchronous web-conferences using Elluminate, the effects of using Elluminate Live reading practice sessions on students' reading achievement, and students' views of the benefits and shortcomings of synchronous reading web-conferences using Elluminate. Results of the post-test showed significant differences between the experimental and control groups in reading skill development, in favor of the Elluminate group. Students showed positive attitudes towards reading practice via web-conferencing.

11) Enhancing EFL Students' Reading Skills with Online Videos (Al-Jarf, 2010a)

This study demonstrates how online videos can be integrated into EFL reading instruction. Videos use multimodal input. They offer diverse genres and cultural content (narrations, news, inspirational quotes, health, history, stories, jokes, study skills). Numerous skills can be developed (phonics, reading speed, academic reading, context clues, making inferences, making predictions, following directions). The video length, topic familiarity, difficulty level, speaker's speed, students' proficiency level, and their interests should be taken into consideration. Before viewing, the instructor introduces the video title, summarizes content, previews vocabulary, gives pre-questions, and sets task goals. While viewing, the students take notes, answer questions, make an outline, pay attention to organizational clues, and use context clues to infer word meaning. After viewing, they discuss answers, summarize/retell content orally, use a flow chart and mind maps, comment on the video topic, and give their impression, moral or lessons learnt, solutions to a problem, and discuss difficulties. The instructor sets a time limit for reading, may use small group discussions, and provides feedback and praise. Students reported that videos were engaging, accessible, and helpful for improving comprehension. The study highlights the pedagogical value of online videos as supplementary reading materials.

Cluster 6: EFL Reading Assessment and Material Coverage (3 studies)

1) How Much Material Do EFL College Instructors Cover in Reading Courses? (Al-Jarf, 2021e)

This study examines the amount of reading texts, exercises, and subskills covered by 24 instructors in the Reading I, II, III, and IV courses. Since students usually mark texts, do exercises, and take notes on their textbooks, three reading textbooks per instructor were randomly collected from students. Each book was examined page by page. The number of chapters, reading texts, reading subskills, and exercises taught in each textbook was calculated. It was found that the typical instructor taught 50% of the reading texts in Interactions 1 and Interactions 2; one third in Mosaic 1; and one fifth in Mosaic 2. In addition, the typical instructor taught 65% of the reading subskills and exercises in Interactions 1; half in Interactions 2; one third in Mosaic 1; and one fourth in Mosaic 2. Questionnaire responses highlighted factors influencing content coverage, including time constraints, perceived difficulty of texts, and students' proficiency levels. The study raises important concerns about curriculum implementation and the alignment between textbook design and classroom practice.

2) Testing Reading for Specific Purposes in an Art Education Course for Graduate Students in Saudi Arabia (Al-Jarf, 2021h)

This study describes the design and evaluation of an ESP reading test developed for graduate students majoring in art education. Based on needs analysis and a proficiency test, an ESP course was designed to meet art education students' academic and professional needs. At the end of the semester, the students were given a posttest that required them to locate main ideas and supporting details, figure out meanings of key art terms from context, identify the part of speech of art terms, detach suffixes, and give the overall meaning of short paragraphs and single sentences in Arabic. The article provides a detailed description of the content sampled, the reading and vocabulary skills tested, sample test items, and statistical analyses of test scores. The study demonstrates how targeted ESP assessment can measure students' progress in reading specialized texts and highlights the importance of aligning test content with instructional objectives.

2) What Teachers Should Know About Reading Tests (Al-Jarf, 2017)

This study outlines important principles that EFL instructors should understand when preparing reading tests. It introduces key concepts related to the reading process and product, text components, reading skills, reading comprehension levels; types of tests (aptitude, diagnostic, achievement), formative vs summative assessment, speed vs power tests, characteristics of a good test (item difficulty level and discrimination power, test validity and reliability). Planning and designing a test includes identifying content to be covered and the reading skills to be tested (main ideas and supporting details that are explicitly or implicitly stated in a text, recognizing text structure, inferring meanings of words from context, connecting pronouns with their antecedents, skimming, scanning, etc.), selecting the reading passage (length, difficulty level, topic), test duration, number of tests per semester, preparing a table of specifications, question formats, arrangement of test items, preparing the test draft, test instructions, test paper format (margins, font, line spacing, pagination, instructions, and so on), preparing an answer key, and scoring the test.

4. Discussion

4.1 Meta-Conclusion

Across the six thematic clusters, the twenty-seven studies collectively demonstrate that EFL reading instruction has gradually expanded into a multidimensional practice that integrates diverse reading materials, multimodal technologies, genre-specific strategies, and assessment-informed pedagogies. Despite their varied foci, ranging from multicultural literature, global themes, and extensive reading to technology-enhanced instruction, genre-based stylistic analysis, and reading assessment, the studies converge on a central finding: EFL learners' reading development is most effectively supported when instruction moves beyond the textbook and engages students through authentic, meaningful, and cognitively rich experiences.

The corpus shows that non-traditional reading materials and genre-based stylistic instruction (e.g., inspirational quotes, linguistic landscapes, multicultural stories, mobile fiction apps, art texts, news headlines, advertisements, and legal texts, emphatic structures), expand learners' exposure to real-world language, sharpen their cultural awareness, enhance their inferential and critical reading skills and equips them with the analytical tools needed to process specialized texts before they embark on translating them. They also reveal the complexity of these genres and the linguistic challenges they pose for EFL students. Extensive reading, whether online or face-to-face fosters autonomy, fluency, and positive attitudes toward reading. Use of technologies as mobile e-books, mind-mapping software, online courses, synchronous web-conferencing, reading apps, and online videos, enhances comprehension, vocabulary, and engagement, particularly for struggling readers. Reading assessment studies highlight gaps in material coverage and emphasize the importance of aligning tests with instructional goals and learners' needs. Together, this ISR reveals a coherent pedagogical message: effective EFL reading instruction requires diversification of texts, modalities, strategies, and assessment practices. When learners are provided with authentic materials, scaffolded strategy instruction, opportunities for collaboration, and supportive technological environments, they demonstrate significant improvement in comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and cultural understanding. The meta-conclusion of this ISR is that EFL reading development is maximized when instruction is integrative, student-centered, and responsive to learners' linguistic, cognitive, and cultural needs, and when assessment and material coverage are aligned with these broader pedagogical aims.

4.2 Meta-Interpretation

The collective findings of the twenty-seven studies reveal a coherent pedagogical philosophy: EFL reading development flourishes when instruction is diversified, contextualized, and cognitively purposeful. Although each cluster addresses a different dimension of reading, materials, strategies, technology, genre awareness, extensive reading, and assessment, the studies converge on the interpretation that reading is not a single skill but a constellation of interdependent processes. These include decoding, vocabulary growth, structural awareness, inferencing, cultural interpretation, and engagement with texts. The corpus demonstrates that when instruction targets these processes holistically, learners develop deeper comprehension and greater autonomy.

Secondly, authenticity and relevance are central for engagement. Whether through multicultural stories, linguistic landscapes, mobile fiction apps, online videos, or real-world genres such as news headlines, advertisements and legal documents, students responded more positively and performed more successfully, when reading materials reflect meaningful, real-life language use. This suggests that authentic texts provide richer linguistic input, clearer discourse patterns, and more opportunities for inferential reasoning than decontextualized textbook passages.

Thirdly, technology played a mediating tool rather than an end in itself. Across the technology-enhanced studies, RCampus, Nicenet, Elluminate, mind-mapping software, mobile apps function as platforms that amplify collaboration, interaction, and strategic processing. The consistent gains observed in the technology-supported groups indicate that digital environments create conditions for repeated exposure, multimodal input, self-paced learning and peer support. This means that technology enhances reading not because it is novel, but because it restructures the learning environment, making reading more accessible, social, and cognitively supported.

Fourth, students' difficulties with specialized texts are not random but reflect predictable gaps in syntactic awareness, lexical knowledge, and discourse-level processing. Whether dealing with news headlines, advertisements, legal documents, cohesive ties, or emphatic structures, students struggle most with features that deviate from canonical grammar or rely on implicit cultural knowledge. This suggests that genre-specific reading instruction is essential for developing advanced comprehension, especially in translation programs where students must understand and translate a variety of registers.

Finally, the assessment-focused studies reveal a misalignment between curricular expectations and actual material coverage. Instructors cover only a fraction of textbook content, and tests often fail to reflect the full range of reading skills students need. This interpretation underscores the importance of curriculum coherence, teacher training, and assessment literacy. Without alignment, even strong instructional innovations cannot fully compensate for structural gaps in program design.

Together, the above issues suggest that effective EFL reading instruction is multidimensional, culturally grounded, technologically supported, and strategically scaffolded. The corpus as a whole illustrates that reading development is not achieved through isolated techniques but through an environment of pedagogical decisions that collectively shape learners' linguistic, cognitive, and cultural growth.

4.3 Cross-Cutting Insights

A cross-cluster analysis of the twenty-seven studies reveals several insights that illuminate the pedagogical logic that underpins the entire corpus and highlights shared assumptions, recurring challenges, and solutions that shape EFL reading instruction across contexts. Whether the focus is on global themes, multicultural stories, stylistic features of specialized genres, extensive reading, or technology-enhanced instruction, all studies treat reading as a complex interplay of linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and strategic processes. This multidimensionality explains why interventions that target only one aspect, such as vocabulary or text structure, are less effective than those that integrate multiple dimensions simultaneously. Across the 6 clusters, students respond more positively to real-world materials (advertisements, legal documents, linguistic landscapes, multicultural stories, mobile fiction apps, online videos), than to decontextualized textbook passages. Authentic texts provide richer linguistic input, clearer discourse patterns, and more opportunities for inferencing, which collectively support deeper comprehension. This cross-cutting insight suggests that authenticity is not only motivational but also a cognitive facilitator. Students struggle with similar issues across genres and modalities as identifying main ideas, recognizing text structure, inferring word meanings, processing cohesive ties, and interpreting stylistic deviations. These difficulties appear regardless of whether the text is a news headline, legal document, advertisement, or academic passage. This suggests that underlying cognitive and linguistic gaps, not the genre itself, drive comprehension challenges, highlighting the need for explicit strategy instruction.

Studies on material coverage and reading tests show that instructors often cover only a fraction of textbook content, and assessments do not always reflect the full range of skills students need. This misalignment weakens the impact of even the strongest instructional innovations and underscores the need for coherent program design.

Whether through RCampus, Nicenet, Elluminate, mind-mapping software, mobile apps, or online videos, technology consistently enhances reading outcomes by enabling collaboration, multimodal input, repeated exposure, and self-paced learning. Importantly, the studies show that technology is most effective when it is used to *amplify* pedagogical principles, such as extensive reading, strategy instruction, or genre analysis, rather than replace them.

Whether guiding extensive reading, moderating online discussions, teaching genre features, or supporting collaborative e-book reading, the teacher consistently shapes the conditions under which reading development occurs. The studies collectively portray effective reading instruction as relational, responsive, and deeply dependent on pedagogical intentionality.

Taken together, these cross-cutting insights reveal that EFL reading development is best supported through authentic materials, coherent curricular alignment, technological mediation and strategic scaffolding. When these elements converge, learners develop not only stronger reading skills but also greater autonomy, cultural awareness, and confidence as readers of English.

4.4 Implications

Several important implications for EFL reading pedagogy, curriculum design, teacher preparation, and assessment practices can be given based on the cross-cluster synthesis of the twenty-seven studies. These implications include the following:

- Reading instruction in EFL must move beyond the textbook. Authentic materials, such as multicultural stories, linguistic landscapes, advertisements, legal documents, mobile fiction apps, and online videos, consistently enhance comprehension, motivation, and cultural awareness. Teachers should therefore diversify the reading input they provide and integrate materials that reflect real-world language use. Moreover, explicit strategy instruction (e.g., identifying text structure, inferring word meanings, recognizing cohesive ties) is essential for helping learners process complex texts. This means that reading lessons should systematically incorporate strategy modelling, guided practice, and opportunities for independent application.
- Technology serves as a powerful mediator of reading development. The success of mobile apps, e-books, mind-mapping software, online courses, and synchronous web-conferencing indicates that technology should not be treated as an optional add-on but as an integral component of modern reading instruction. Digital tools expand access to texts, support multimodal processing, and create collaborative learning environments that enhance engagement and comprehension.
- The misalignment between curricular expectations, textbook content, and actual classroom coverage reveal the need for curriculum coherence, where learning outcomes, instructional materials, and assessment practices are aligned. Curriculum designers should ensure that reading courses include: a balanced mix of intensive and extensive reading, exposure to multiple genres and text types, opportunities for culturally rich and globally oriented reading, and structured integration of technology-enhanced reading activities. Curricula should also allow flexibility so instructors can adapt materials to students' proficiency levels and interests without sacrificing core learning goals.
- The assessment-focused studies reveal that many reading tests fail to capture the full range of skills students need. This calls for more comprehensive and skill-aligned assessment practices. Reading tests should evaluate not only literal comprehension, but also inferencing, text structure awareness, vocabulary inference, cohesive ties, and genre-specific features. Instructors should also be trained to design valid, reliable, and discriminating reading assessments that reflect instructional goals and provide actionable feedback.
- The corpus underscores the central role of the teacher as facilitator, supporter and designer of learning experiences. Teachers need training not only in reading pedagogy but also in genre-based instruction, technology integration, assessment literacy, and culturally responsive teaching. Professional development programs should equip instructors with the skills to select and adapt authentic materials, design online and blended reading activities, teach reading strategies explicitly, interpret reading assessment data, and support struggling readers through differentiated instruction. Without such training, even well-designed curricula and technologies cannot achieve their intended impact.
- Extensive reading studies and technology-enhanced interventions show that when learners are given choice, autonomy, and opportunities for self-paced reading, their motivation and performance improve significantly. This implies that reading programs should incorporate student-selected texts, reading logs and portfolios, online discussion spaces, collaborative reading tasks, and opportunities for creative responses (e.g., dramatizations, mind maps, summaries). Such practices cultivate lifelong reading habits and empower learners to take ownership of their reading development.

In sum, the implications of this ISR point toward a more holistic, authentic, technology-supported, and strategically scaffolded model of EFL reading instruction, one that aligns pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment to meet the complex needs of contemporary learners.

4.5 Positioning This ISR Within the Global EFL Reading SR/MA Research

When situated within global SRs and MAs on EFL/ESL reading in the literature, this interpretive review occupies a distinct and underrepresented area. Most international SR/MAs on EFL reading tend to focus on narrow, isolated variables, such as vocabulary instruction, reading strategy training, extensive reading programs, digital tools, or specific cognitive processes. These reviews typically synthesize experimental studies with standardized effect sizes, privileging quantitative outcomes and generalizable trends. While such work has advanced our understanding of instructional components, it often overlooks the complexity of reading instruction as it unfolds in real classrooms, across genres, modalities, and pedagogical traditions.

In contrast, the present ISR adopts an author-bounded, corpus-based approach that synthesizes twenty-seven studies conducted within a single educational ecosystem. This design allows for a level of pedagogical coherence, contextual depth, and longitudinal insight that global SR/MAs rarely achieve. Rather than aggregating unrelated studies from distant contexts, this ISR traces the evolution of EFL reading pedagogy across multiple decades, genres, technologies, and instructional innovations, all authored within the same institutional and cultural environment. This produces a uniquely integrated picture of how reading instruction develops, adapts, and responds to learner needs over time.

Furthermore, global SRs/MAs often focus on intensive reading, strategy instruction, and vocabulary development, paying limited attention to genre-based stylistics, multimodal reading, culturally responsive materials, or the micro-practices of classroom implementation. This ISR fills that gap by synthesizing research on advertisements, legal documents, news discourse, linguistic landscapes, multicultural stories, mobile fiction apps, mind-mapping software, synchronous web-conferencing, and extensive reading. These domains are rarely examined together in international reviews of reading studies. The result is a holistic, multidimensional model of EFL reading instruction that reflects the full range of cognitive, linguistic, cultural, and technological demands placed on contemporary learners.

Another distinguishing feature is this ISR's emphasis on teacher practices, material coverage, and assessment literacy, areas that global SRs/MAs often treat as marginal. By examining how much textbook content instructors actually cover, how reading tests are designed, and how teachers scaffold reading in both classroom and digital environments, this ISR emphasizes the instructional realities that shape learning outcomes. This positions the ISR as a bridge between research and practice, offering insights that are directly applicable to curriculum designers, teacher educators, and policymakers.

Finally, while global SRs/MAs typically aim for generalizability across contexts, this ISR offers transferable principles based on a specific context. Its strength lies not in statistical generalization but in theoretical and pedagogical generalization: the patterns, models, and instructional logics identified here can inform EFL reading pedagogy in diverse settings, especially in regions where English is taught as a foreign language and where technology integration, genre awareness, and extensive reading programs are still emerging.

To summarize, this ISR complements and prior global SR/MA research by offering a contextually rich, pedagogically integrated, and genre-diverse synthesis of EFL reading instruction. It demonstrates that meaningful progress in reading pedagogy requires not only isolated interventions but a systemic, multidimensional approach that aligns materials, strategies, technologies, assessment, and teacher practices within a coherent instructional approach.

4.6 Comparison of Current findings with Prior SR Results in the Literature

When compared with prior global SRs and MAs on EFL/ESL reading, the findings of this interpretive review both converge with and extend existing knowledge in meaningful ways. Prior SRs/MAs in the literature consistently report that reading comprehension improves when learners receive explicit strategy instruction, engage with authentic texts, and participate in technology-enhanced learning environments. The current review aligns with these conclusions. Across clusters, interventions involving mind-mapping software, mobile apps, online platforms, and multimodal materials produced measurable gains in comprehension, vocabulary, and engagement. Similarly, the emphasis on text structure awareness, making inferences, cohesive ties, and genre-specific features align with global findings that strategic processing is central to reading development.

Moreover, this ISR also extends prior SR results by highlighting dimensions that global reviews often overlook. Most international SRs/MAs focused on isolated variables, such as vocabulary instruction, extensive reading, or digital tools, whereas the present corpus reveals the importance of genre-based stylistics, culturally responsive materials, and teacher-mediated scaffolding. Studies on news headlines, advertisements, legal documents, inspirational quotes and linguistic landscapes show that learners' difficulties are tied to genre-specific linguistic and cultural aspects. This level of genre sensitivity is rarely addressed in global SRs/MAs, which tend to treat reading as a uniform skill rather than a genre-dependent practice.

Another point of divergence concerns technology integration. While global MAs often report moderate effect sizes for digital tools, they rarely examine the pedagogical environment surrounding technology use. By contrast, the current ISR shows that technology is most effective when embedded within collaborative, support, and student-centered learning environments. The success of RCampus, Nicenet, Elluminate, and mobile e-books in this corpus suggests that technology amplifies learning only when accompanied by intentional instructional design, a nuance that prior quantitative SRs/MAs in the literature often miss.

Furthermore, global SRs/MAs seldom address curricular implementation issues, such as how much textbook content instructors actually cover or how reading tests are designed. The present review fills this gap by documenting significant under-coverage of reading materials and misalignment between instructional goals and assessment practices. These findings introduce a structural dimension that is largely absent from international SR/MA discussions but is crucial for understanding why some interventions succeed while others falter.

Finally, while global SRs/MAs typically generalize across diverse contexts, this interpretive review offers context-embedded insights grounded in a single educational ecosystem. This allows for a longitudinal, coherent understanding of how reading pedagogy evolves within a specific institutional and cultural setting, something global reviews cannot capture due to their heterogeneity. As a result, the current ISR contributes not only to the global evidence base but also to the theoretical understanding of how reading instruction functions as a system rather than a collection of isolated techniques.

To summarize, the current findings support, refine, and expand prior SR/MA results. They confirm the effectiveness of strategy instruction, authentic materials, and technology, and at the same time add new insights about genre-based pedagogy, teacher practice, curricular alignment, and the ecological conditions that shape reading development in EFL contexts.

4.7 Limitations of This SR

Although this ISR offers a comprehensive and contextually rich synthesis of twenty-seven studies, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the review is author-bounded, drawing exclusively on a corpus produced by a single researcher across a shared institutional and cultural context. While this provides exceptional coherence and longitudinal depth, it also limits the diversity of perspectives, methodologies, and instructional traditions represented. This means that the findings reflect a particular pedagogical ecosystem and may not capture the full range of global EFL reading practices. Second, this ISR does not include unpublished theses, or studies from other institutions, which may contain additional insights into EFL reading instruction in similar contexts. Although the exclusion of such sources reduces the breadth of evidence, was necessary to maintain the coherence and comparability of the corpus. Third, the included studies vary in design rigor, with many relying on quasi-experimental, descriptive, or conceptual methodologies. Sample sizes are sometimes small, and several studies lack long-term follow-up measures. These design characteristics highlight the need for more robust experimental research to validate the instructional models proposed. Fourth, this ISR is interpretive rather than statistical, meaning that it does not compute effect sizes or conduct meta-analytic comparisons across all the studies because some provide instructional models and contain no statistical analyses. As a result, the conclusions emphasize conceptual patterns, pedagogical models, and thematic relationships rather than quantitative generalizability. This approach is appropriate for the aims of the review but restricts the ability to compare the magnitude of instructional effects across interventions. Finally, although the review identifies strong patterns across clusters, it does not examine longitudinal learner outcomes, such as whether improvements in reading comprehension persist over time or transfer to other academic tasks.

Despite these limitations, this ISR provides a valuable, integrated understanding of EFL reading instruction within a specific educational ecosystem and offers theoretically and pedagogically meaningful insights that complement and extend global SR/MA findings.

4.8 Future Research Directions

The synthesis of twenty-seven studies across six clusters highlights several promising directions for future research in EFL reading pedagogy, curriculum design, and assessment. Future research should: (i) track learners over multiple semesters to determine whether improvements in reading comprehension, vocabulary inference, and genre awareness persist and influence writing, translation, or content-area learning. (ii) explore adaptive or personalized reading interventions, potentially using learning analytics or AI-supported platforms to tailor instruction. (iii) extend this ISR to additional genres, such as academic articles, social media texts, multimodal narratives, and business communication and workplace documents, to develop a more comprehensive model of genre-sensitive reading instruction. (iv) explore other types of technology use as text-to-speech software, web-conference platforms as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Web Ex, Google Classroom, AI-supported reading, hybrid extensive-intensive reading models, and the role of social reading communities (e.g., online book clubs). Such work would modernize extensive reading for contemporary learners. (v) compare similar interventions across different countries, institutions, and cultural settings to determine which findings are context-dependent and which represent universal principles of EFL reading development. In summary, future research should move toward larger, more rigorous, more longitudinal, and more contextually diverse investigations that integrate pedagogy, technology, genre awareness, and assessment into a coherent model of EFL reading development.

5. Recommendations and Conclusion

To meet the complex needs of contemporary learners and to move towards a more holistic, authentic, technology-supported, and strategically scaffolded model of EFL reading instruction, one that aligns pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, and teacher development, the current EFL reading ISR recommend the following:

- Diversifying reading materials beyond the textbook Teachers should integrate authentic, culturally rich, and genre-diverse texts, such as advertisements, legal documents, news headlines, multicultural stories, mobile fiction apps, and online videos, to expose learners to real-world language and discourse patterns. Embed Global and Multicultural Themes Integrating global issues, cultural narratives, and diverse perspectives enriches comprehension and fosters intercultural competence. Include Genre-Based Reading Modules. Curricula should incorporate explicit instruction in reading specialized genres (e.g., advertisements, legal texts, news discourse, academic texts) to prepare students for academic and professional literacy demands.
- Adopting student-centered and collaborative reading practices, such as group summaries, peer questioning, collaborative e-book reading, and online discussion forums enhance engagement, comprehension, and accountability.
- Integrating extensive reading as a core component of reading programs extensive reading, whether face-to-face or online.
- Using technology as a pedagogical amplifier, not a substitute tools such as Learning Management Systems, mobile apps, and online videos, text-to-speech software, webconferencing tools as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet and others to promote interaction, reflection, and strategic processing.
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Reading programs should ensure that learning outcomes, textbook content, and assessment practices reinforce one another. Under-coverage of materials should be addressed through realistic pacing guides and flexible course structures.
- Providing ongoing professional development in reading pedagogy workshops that address strategy instruction, genre analysis, extensive reading management, and technology integration. teachers should be trained to design valid, reliable, and skill-aligned reading tests that assess not only literal comprehension but also inferencing, cohesion, genre awareness, and multimodal reading.
- Supporting teachers in implementing authentic and multimodal materials. Teachers also need access to curated repositories of authentic texts, digital tools, and instructional templates to facilitate adoption.

Additionally, future research should explore long-term retention and transfer of reading gains to writing, translation, and content-area learning. They should expand genre-based research to include academic, workplace, and multimodal texts, and examine teacher cognition, beliefs, and decision-making in reading instruction. SRs that focus reading development in L1 is called for.

Finally, this ISR argues that meaningful progress in EFL reading pedagogy requires a shift toward holistic, flexible, and learner-centered models that honor the linguistic, cognitive, and cultural complexity of reading. By integrating authentic texts, multimodal tools, explicit strategy instruction, and extensive reading opportunities within aligned curricular and assessment

frameworks, educators can create the conditions necessary for sustained reading growth. The insights generated here offer a roadmap for future research, policy, and practice, and reaffirm the central role of thoughtful, evidence-informed pedagogy in empowering EFL learners to become confident, strategic, and independent readers.

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