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How Classroom Reading Activities Shape Students' Motivation to Learn English: A Qualitative Study at Senior High School

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A B S T R A C T

Students' motivation to participate in English reading activities may decline when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and complex texts without sufficient instructional support. This study explored how classroom reading activities influenced Grade XII students' motivation to learn English at SMA Persada Bandar Lampung. A descriptive qualitative design was employed. Data were collected through four classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with one English teacher and ten purposively selected students, and analysis of lesson plans, teaching materials, worksheets, and classroom photographs. These sources were used complementarily to capture classroom practices, participants' experiences, and supporting instructional evidence. Data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña framework through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings showed that students' reading motivation was dynamically shaped by linguistic difficulty, perceived competence, teacher mediation, and peer interaction. Teacher modelling, guided reading, vocabulary assistance, and constructive feedback made reading tasks more manageable and increased students' confidence. In contrast, difficult pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and lengthy texts reduced attention and participation. Meaningful materials and collaborative reading also reduced anxiety and encouraged students to contribute to post-reading discussions. These findings suggest that reading activities become motivating when teachers combine appropriately challenging materials with gradual scaffolding, supportive feedback, and purposeful peer collaboration.

Keywords: *Collaborative Reading, EFL Learners, Learner Motivation, Reading Anxiety, Teacher Scaffolding*
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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a core element of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it is a way of teaching students vocabulary, grammatical structures, discourse structure, and different forms of written communication. When reading, it is not just about the meaning of one word but the way ideas are organized, linked to others, and read in a given context. Reading skills, therefore, support other language skills and also help in building the entire communicative skill set (Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Harmer, 2015). In senior high school, reading is particularly important because students are expected to understand more complex texts, respond to comprehension questions, discuss meanings, and use information from texts in the next classroom. Yet reading is pedagogically very important and is only as valuable as if many students are willing, confident, and motivated to read the texts.

In many EFL classrooms, reading is still a challenging activity rather than an enjoyable one. Students will encounter a lot of unknown vocabulary, complex sentence structures, long passages, and subjects that are not related to the course or the students themselves. Text difficulty, therefore, affects not only comprehension but also learners' motivation to read. There is research that has indicated that different levels of text difficulty affect reading comprehension and motivation, and materials that are difficult to read in the literature can make learning to read a lot more difficult so that learners might not continue reading

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(Namaziandost et al., 2019; Niazifar & Shakibaei, 2019; Yang & Tseng, 2021). There are also translations, and spelling and pronunciation, which are not always the same in English.

Another challenge is that students are forced to read out loud, and they may not want to say any of the words they heard in front of their class. Such difficulties can cause hesitation, fear of being wrong, avoidance of teacher questions, and not enough classroom involvement. These challenges are not just cognitive (and linguistic) in nature. They are also affective and motivational. Reading anxiety, learners' attitudes toward the situation, perceived competence, and confidence in the use of reading strategies can affect how students approach the text and how they keep moving forward when there is a problem. Chen et al. (2022) demonstrate the close relationship between EFL reading anxiety, learning motivation, attitudes, and strategy use.

Alfiani et al. (2024) also show that reading comprehension is influenced by affective and cognitive factors. These findings are especially relevant to classroom situations where students may have some linguistic knowledge but are reluctant to read, respond to questions, or share their interpretation because they are afraid of being wrong. So students' passivity in reading lessons shouldn't be seen as an indication of failure or lack of interest. It can be associated with anxiety, low self-efficacy, lack of support, or even failure in reading. Motivation is a valuable theoretical concept to explain these responses. Motivation is the effort that learners put into a task, the willingness to engage in it, and the persistence to continue when difficulties arise (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013).

In the case of reading, motivation is the interest of students in reading, attitude toward reading, belief in the usefulness of reading, willingness to invest in it, and confidence in reading written English. Akbari et al. (2019) emphasize how learner attitudes can be used to develop L2 reading motivation, and (Wang & Gan, 2021) show that EFL reading motivation is a set of dimensions that can be systematically identified and studied. Reading motivation is dynamic rather than fixed. It can increase when learners understand a text, are offered positive feedback when they engage in discussion, or when they encounter repeated new vocabulary, difficult pronunciation, or public correction. The dynamic nature of reading motivation means that students' engagement cannot be explained by stable individual characteristics. It is also influenced by the immediate classroom environment and the teacher's activities. Li & Foong (2020) view reading motivation as a developing system in which interacting conditions influence motivation and not as an isolated learner trait. This is supported by research that links motivation to strategy use, engagement, and reading proficiency (Ghavamnia & Kashkouli, 2022; Kassem & Alqahtani, 2023; H. Li et al., 2024).

In general, students who feel confident about applying strategies are more likely to continue, whereas students who do not know how to navigate a difficult passage may withdraw from the activity. Motivation and metacognitive strategy use are related to students' willingness to read as well, and students feel better able to monitor and control their reading skills (Wei et al., 2025). In order to explain the relationship between reading and motivation, self-efficacy is very important. Reading self-efficacy refers to whether or not students believe in their ability to complete reading tasks successfully. Students who believe they can read the text, find important information, or improve through practice are more likely to continue when it gets hard to do so. Low reading self-efficacy learners will avoid participation even before beginning the task. Anggia et al. (2023) find significant differences in students' reading self-efficacy in an online extensive reading program, and it is clear that confidence is an important factor in reading activities.

Similarly, Jarssa et al. (2025) link an integrated reading approach with the enhancement of secondary school students' reading self-efficacy and motivation to improve their reading performance. Shaona (2025) also emphasizes that reading motivation and self-efficacy are two key factors in promoting EFL reading achievement. These studies suggest that it is important to motivate reading instruction so that students are not forced to read increasingly difficult texts to achieve success over time. The quality of classroom reading activities is of paramount importance.

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Reading is more motivating if students have sufficient preparation, guidance, opportunities to interact, and feedback. Pre-reading activities can activate background knowledge, introduce difficult vocabulary, establish a purpose for reading, and reduce uncertainty before students experience the full text. Almekhlafy & Alqahtani (2020) show how the motivational aspect of pre-reading can be harnessed, while (Lin et al., 2025) show that pre-reading scaffolding can increase reading comprehension, motivation, and attitudes. Scaffolding is important because it breaks down very demanding reading tasks into manageable stages and allows for instructional support to be gradually adjusted according to students' needs. Teacher modeling, guided reading, vocabulary explanation, pronunciation practice, comprehension prompts, and corrective feedback can all function as forms of scaffolding.

Evidence also indicates that scaffolded instruction can tackle both the cognitive and emotional aspects of EFL reading. Kennedy & Chinokul (2020) found that a scaffolded reading experience with a graphic novel helped students understand and motivate reading. Kazemi et al. (2020) similarly demonstrate that dynamic assessment can foster reading comprehension and motivation through the integration of assistance into the learning process.

More recently, Sun (2025) stressed the effectiveness of teacher and peer scaffolding in an L2 reading program. Such support is especially valuable when students are reluctant to read out loud because of pronunciation issues. When the teacher first models how words and sentences are spoken, they get a linguistic example and emotional reassurance. They are not expected to do it without preparation; mistakes can be seen as a part of the learning process and not as a marker of failure. Teacher support is also a positive thing for students' emotional attachment. Derakhshan et al. (2025) relate perceived teacher support to reading motivation through emotional experiences including enjoyment, anxiety, and boredom. This means that the teacher's role goes beyond selecting texts and assessing comprehension.

The teacher also creates the emotional context in which students decide whether it is safe to try, ask questions, make mistakes, and get involved. In the Indonesian EFL context, Muniroh et al. (2024) describe reading engagement as involving behavioral, affective, cognitive, and social aspects. This multi-dimensional perspective is in line with classroom practices in which students may appear quietly while they are anxious, uncertain, or lack confidence. It also supports the idea that reading should be a social and emotional experience for students, not just a source of text. More motivation supports working together. Reading with peers helps students to learn new vocabulary, hear different interpretations from one another, ask questions in a less threatening environment, and get ideas before taking part in the whole class discussion. Abdel-Al Ibrahim et al. (2023) showed that collaborative learning with scaffolding-based instruction and self-assessment, along with reading comprehension, motivation, and anxiety, has positive effects on learning ability.

Reading circles also facilitate students to understand and learn from the text and interact with each other to promote motivation and engagement (Khonamri et al., 2024). Peer assessment also enhances reading comprehension, motivation, and vocabulary development by making students active participants in learning rather than passive recipients of teacher assessment (Ritonga et al., 2022). Moreover, blended discussions have been associated with learning motivation and EFL reading performance (Shang, 2021).

However, meaningful materials are equally important because students are more likely to use texts that they find relevant and understandable or relate to their experiences. Authentic materials can support reading comprehension and motivation while also strengthening reading anxiety (Namaziandost et al., 2022). Literature-based instruction can also enhance language skills, motivation, and cultural understanding as children are able to respond to stories, characters, and situations rather than reading solely to answer comprehension questions (Mardiani & Baharuddin, 2023).

Hidayati et al. (2024) further show that flexible multilingual and multimodal learning practices can improve the enjoyment and proficiency of EFL students. They are not restricted to reading motivation, but rather to the pedagogical point that learners are more confident in their experiences when classroom learning is guided by different meaning-making resources

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and multiple pathways are provided. Research has thus established much more significant connections between reading motivation, anxiety, self-efficacy, strategy use, text difficulty, instructional scaffolding, teacher support, and collaborative learning.

However, much of this research has focused on identifying relations between variables, testing motivation instruments, or assessing the impact of individual instructional interventions. Wang & Gan (2021) developed and validated an EFL reading motivation questionnaire, while (Ma & Zhao, 2025) investigated the relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension ability. Reading strategy instruction has also been investigated in this way (H. Li et al., 2022), performance assessment in this way (Heydarnejad et al., 2022), integrated reading methodologies (Jarssa et al., 2025), or scaffolded and collaborative instruction (Abdel-Al Ibrahim et al., 2023).

These studies provide valuable evidence of what may improve motivation and comprehension, but they do not always explain how students experience everyday reading activities as they unfold in a natural classroom. In addition to the study of reading habits in adolescents and secondary school students, reading interventions and motivational orientations in adults have been investigated as well (Jaramillo-Ponton et al., 2019; Luele, 2023; Yau, 2022).

However, strong qualitative evidence remains needed from Indonesian senior high schools, particularly evidence that connects classroom observations with the perspectives of both teachers and students. Studies in Indonesia provide important information on reading self-efficacy, affective and cognitive mechanisms, teacher engagement in EFL, and enjoyable multimodal learning (Alfiani et al., 2024; Anggia et al., 2023; Hidayati et al., 2024; Muniroh et al., 2024). The present article builds on this evidence to investigate how everyday classroom reading activities influence students' motivation through teacher modeling, pronunciation support, vocabulary assistance, peer interaction, and participation in post-reading activities.

The main issue of interest in this study is not only that reading activities improve motivation but how specific experiences within reading activities encourage or discourage students from participating. The novelty of this study is that it is a classroom-based qualitative study of reading motivation as a result of linguistic difficulty, confidence, teacher support, peer cooperation and students' actual participation. Rather than reducing motivation to a questionnaire score or a single reading intervention, the study looks to how motivation is formed and negotiated during actual reading lessons. It is interested in how students respond when they encounter pronunciation and vocabulary difficulties, how teacher scaffolding informs whether they are able to keep reading and how collaborative reading prepares students for interacting after reading.

The descriptive qualitative design of the study was developed in SMA Persada Bandar Lampung. The participants included one English teacher and students from a Grade XII class. Data was collected with classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with the teacher and ten purposively selected students, and the use of relevant instructional materials. The data were then used to contextualise reading exercises and motivating responses from students. The data were organised and reduced, displayed and interpreted using the interactive qualitative analysis process of (Miles et al., 2018).

How do classroom reading activities influence students' motivation to learn English at SMA Persada Bandar Lampung? This study aims to explore how students experience and respond to reading activities and to identify instructional conditions that support or constrain students in their motivation. In the discussions, we touch upon four interrelated questions: reading activities, the relationship between linguistic difficulties and students' confidence, the effect that reading activities have on post-reading engagement and teacher and peer support, and the role of teacher and peer support in maintaining motivation for students to be involved in reading.

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METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to examine classroom reading activities and students' experiences of how these activities shaped their motivation to learn English. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study focused on participants' experiences, classroom behaviors, interactions, and motivational responses in a natural instructional setting rather than numerical measurement or hypothesis testing (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Creswell & Poth, 2024). The descriptive design enabled the researchers to examine students' motivational responses as they occurred during actual reading instruction.

The study was conducted in one Grade XII class at SMA Persada Bandar Lampung. The participants consisted of one English teacher and students aged 16 to 18 years with varying levels of English proficiency. The teacher was selected because of their direct involvement in the implementation of classroom reading activities. [If ethically appropriate and available, briefly state the teacher's relevant teaching experience here.] Ten students were purposively selected for interviews to represent different patterns of classroom engagement, including actively engaged students, less engaged students, and students with different levels of confidence in reading activities. Purposive selection was used to obtain information-rich participants who could provide relevant accounts of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Patton, 2002).

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Four classroom meetings were observed, covering pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. An observation protocol was used to systematically record students' attention, participation, confidence, responses to linguistic difficulties, peer interaction, and teacher support during reading activities. The observations also documented how reading tasks, teacher modelling, vocabulary assistance, guided reading, feedback, and collaborative activities were implemented in the classroom. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with the English teacher and ten selected students to explore their experiences, perceived difficulties, participation, confidence, and motivational responses to reading activities. The interviews were [audio-recorded with participants' permission] and [transcribed verbatim] for analysis. Supporting documents included lesson plans, teaching materials, student worksheets, and photographs of classroom activities. These data sources were selected to complement one another by capturing classroom practices through observation, participants' experiences through interviews, and instructional evidence through documents. The combination of sources also enabled data triangulation and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the classroom phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2024; Patton, 2002).

Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis model proposed by Miles et al. (2018), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Observation notes, interview transcripts, and relevant documents were first reviewed and coded according to the focus of the study, including linguistic difficulties, student confidence, attention, participation, teacher support, and peer interaction. Related codes were subsequently grouped into broader categories and organized into thematic summaries. The researchers then compared patterns across observations, interviews, and documents to identify relationships among the categories and develop interpretations of students' motivational responses. Conclusions were continuously checked against the available data to ensure that the interpretations were supported by evidence from the three data sources.

Ethical procedures were maintained throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from the teacher and participating students before data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the intended use of the data. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. Participants' identities and personal information were kept confidential in reporting the findings.

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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The classroom observations, teacher interviews, student interviews and instructional documents contributed to four interconnected findings. First, reading activities increased students' motivation when introduced through teacher modelling and gradual instructional support. Second, students' motivation fluctuated based on the linguistic difficulties they experienced (e.g., unfamiliar vocabulary and pronunciation). Third, meaningful and collaborative reading activities increased students' willingness to participate in post-reading discussions. Finally, the teacher did a great job keeping them motivated - he was able to help them with cognitive guidance, corrective feedback and emotional support. These results suggest that the motivation behind reading activities did not depend on texts alone. It was generated via interaction of task difficulty, students' perceived competence, teacher scaffolding, and peer support.

Scaffolded reading activities and students' motivation

The classroom observations showed that reading classes typically began with a brief introduction of the topic and instructions on how to complete the task. The teacher sometimes read the text out loud to students at the beginning and then asked them to read individually. Some students immediately started to pay attention to the text and listened to the teacher and tried to read quietly. These differences indicated that students' motivation was closely related to whether they felt sufficiently prepared to approach the text.

The teacher did not expect students to read independently without prior support. Instead, reading was introduced through a gradual sequence of modelling, repetition, guided practice, and individual performance. The teacher explained:

> *"For reading activities, we read sentence by sentence. I read first, then the students continue. After that, they repeat and read one by one." (Teacher)*

This instructional sequence provided students with an example of pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, and reading fluency before they were asked to perform independently. Teacher modelling reduced the uncertainty students experienced when encountering unfamiliar English words. It also made the reading task appear more manageable because students could first listen, imitate, and practise before reading individually.

The teacher further explained that the motivational value of reading depended on how the activity was facilitated:

> *"Reading activities actually give students motivation depending on how we make them want to read. So far, students think English is difficult because the pronunciation is not the same as the written words, so they feel lazy because they are afraid of making mistakes. That is why I start by reading first as the teacher, then the students follow. After that, they read individually, and if there are mistakes, I correct them. This can make them more motivated to learn." (Teacher)*

The teacher felt that motivation could be developed through instruction, this statement says. Students were not necessarily unwilling to learn English; they were often reluctant to participate because they feared difficulty or embarrassment. By providing a model before reading, the teacher reduced what students would feel if they read aloud. After their time listening and practicing, the teacher provided feedback. Student interview responses also confirmed the teacher was correct.

Students generally found reading useful because it helped them improve pronunciation, vocabulary, and understanding of English texts. They appeared to be motivated when they saw improvements in those areas. Good reading experiences made them want to do it again, and repeated difficulty without sufficient help would reduce their interest in doing it.

These results show why the reading text alone did not motivate students. When the teacher made the task a series of achievable parts in which to work, the students were motivated. The transition from teacher modelling to guided repetition and individual reading

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allowed students to make progress slowly. It reflects the fact that motivation for reading is evolving and conditioned by the interaction between learners and their teaching environment and not a static personality trait (J. Li & Foong, 2020).

This finding is consistent with an earlier study that scaffolding can enhance reading comprehension, motivation, confidence, and emotional readiness. Abdel-Al Ibrahim et al. (2023) showed that scaffolding-based instruction, collaborative learning, and self-assessment were all positively associated with reading comprehension and motivation for EFL students in response to anxiety. Kennedy & Chinokul (2020) also showed that scaffolded reading experiences can enhance comprehension and motivation. Lin et al. (2025) also reported that pre-reading scaffolding improved reading comprehension, motivation, and attitudes through a structured process of reading to prepare students before they read the text.

This study adds a more contextual explanation to scaffolding in a typical senior high school classroom. Teacher modelling was not just linguistic. It also let students know they were not expected to know the correct pronunciation in a single moment. This scaffolding was a cognitive and affective support mechanism. Cognitively, students got a model they could imitate. Affectively, they were reassured that uncertainty and mistakes were part and parcel of learning.

This is consistent with the Indonesian evidence of Muniroh et al. (2024), who describe EFL reading engagement as behavioural, affective, cognitive, and social. In the present classroom, all these dimensions were visible simultaneously: the students' attention and willingness to read were behavioural engagement, their confidence and anxiety were affective engagement, their attempts to interpret vocabulary were cognitive engagement, and interaction with teachers and peers was social engagement. Reading instruction therefore required more than just reading texts and checking answers. It required support on all these dimensions.

Linguistic challenges, anxiety, and reading self-efficacy

Students' motivation changed throughout the reading process. Although many students initially appeared interested in the activity, their attention and participation sometimes declined when they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary, long passages, or difficult pronunciation. Some students continued trying to infer meanings from the surrounding sentences, while others paused, waited for assistance, or stopped engaging with the text. These differences suggest that motivation was influenced not only by students' interest in the topic but also by their judgment of whether they could successfully complete the task.

The teacher identified pronunciation as the most prominent challenge:

> *"The main challenge is pronunciation. Pronunciation is very difficult for students. They find it hard to follow reading activities, so at least I read first, then I check their pronunciation. If it is incorrect, I correct it. English pronunciation is difficult because it does not match the written words." (Teacher)*

Students' difficulties with pronunciation became particularly visible during oral reading. Some learners were hesitant to read individually because they were worried about pronouncing words incorrectly in front of their classmates. This concern reduced their confidence and made them more dependent on teacher modelling. The difficulty was not simply their inability to recognize written words. It was also the social and emotional risk of making an observable mistake.

Vocabulary limitations created a related difficulty. Student interviews indicated that long texts containing many unfamiliar words interrupted reading fluency and comprehension. Students sometimes had to stop repeatedly to identify meanings, making it difficult to maintain attention to the overall message of the text. When this happened, reading became a sequence of isolated word-level problems rather than a meaningful attempt to understand the passage.

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These findings indicate that linguistic difficulty influenced motivation through students' perceptions of competence. Students who believed they could pronounce the words and understand the general content were more likely to remain focused. Students who doubted their ability became less confident and more likely to withdraw from participation. Thus, apparent passivity did not necessarily indicate a lack of interest in English. It sometimes reflected low reading self-efficacy and fear of public error.

This interpretation is supported by Alfiani et al. (2024), who demonstrate that reading comprehension is associated with both affective and cognitive factors. Students' comprehension cannot be separated completely from emotions such as anxiety, confidence, or willingness to participate. Anggia et al. (2023) also emphasize the importance of reading self-efficacy, showing that learners differ in their beliefs about their ability to complete reading activities. Such beliefs influence whether students approach difficult texts as manageable challenges or as tasks they are likely to fail.

The present finding is also consistent with Chen et al. (2022), who identify relationships among EFL reading anxiety, motivation, attitudes, and strategy use. When anxiety increases, learners may struggle to apply strategies effectively because their attention becomes focused on the possibility of failure. Conversely, when students receive appropriate assistance, their anxiety can decrease and their willingness to engage can improve. Derakhshan et al. (2025) similarly connect teacher support with reading motivation through emotional experiences such as enjoyment, anxiety, and boredom.

Reading self-efficacy provides a useful explanation for the students' different reactions. Learners with stronger self-efficacy are more likely to persist, ask for help, and apply strategies when facing unfamiliar vocabulary. Learners with weaker self-efficacy may avoid reading aloud or remain silent even when they understand parts of the text. Jarssa et al. (2025) associate an integrated reading approach with increased reading self-efficacy and motivation among secondary school students, while Shaona (2025) emphasizes the contribution of motivation and self-efficacy to reading achievement.

In this study, teacher modelling helped develop self-efficacy by allowing students to experience incremental success. Students first listened to the text, then repeated the teacher's pronunciation, and eventually read independently. This sequence reduced the gap between what students were initially able to do and what the activity required. As students became more familiar with pronunciation and vocabulary, they appeared more willing to continue participating.

The difficulty level of the reading materials also requires consideration. Research has shown that text difficulty influences both comprehension and motivation (Namaziandost et al., 2019; Niazifar & Shakibaei, 2019; Yang & Tseng, 2021). Texts that are too difficult may overload students with unfamiliar vocabulary and complex structures, while texts that are insufficiently challenging may not sustain interest. The classroom evidence suggests that reading materials should therefore be selected or adapted according to students' proficiency and accompanied by appropriate preparation.

This does not mean that teachers should remove all linguistic challenges. Difficult vocabulary and unfamiliar pronunciation can contribute to learning when students are given strategies and support to manage them. H. Li et al. (2022) demonstrate that reading strategy instruction can support comprehension, motivation, and self-efficacy. Similarly, Kassem & Alqahtani (2023) connect motivation and strategy use with reading comprehension. The pedagogical issue is therefore not whether students encounter difficulty, but whether the difficulty is structured in a way that allows them to respond successfully.

Meaningful reading and post-reading participation

The observations showed a clear relationship between students' engagement during reading and their participation after reading. Students who remained focused on the text were generally more willing to answer questions, express opinions, and respond to the teacher's prompts. Students who struggled to understand the passage or lost concentration during reading were more likely to remain silent during the post-reading stage.

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The teacher described this difference:

> *"During reading activities in class, I see that some students are very enthusiastic and focused on reading, and some are even ready for discussion after finishing the reading. However, there are also some students who still have difficulty understanding the text, so I need to give them additional guidance." (Teacher)*

This finding suggests that post-reading participation was at least partly determined before the discussion began. Students who had an adequate understanding of the text in reading were able to generate ideas and information about what they could contribute. Those who were not sure what to say about the text weren't confident of their answers and were less willing to speak.

Students' feelings about what they liked to read also influenced their participation. Interview responses suggested that students like stories, quotations, and texts in daily life. Some students were also interested in films, games, and social media. They found those topics easier to relate to and more personal. Familiarity eased the cognitive load of the reading of the text and provided students with experience or opinions that they could share in a conversation.

This finding supports the use of authentic and personally meaningful materials in EFL reading curriculum. Namaziandost et al. (2022) found that authentic materials influenced reading comprehension, motivation, and anxiety. Authenticity in this context does not come about as a text is just written outside of the classroom but also whether students believe that the material is relevant to what they are learning, doing, or experiencing in their everyday lives. When students can relate a text to a familiar scenario, they are more willing to interpret, question, and discuss it.

Literature-based materials may have just as much benefit. Mardiani & Baharuddin (2023) report that literature-based EFL instruction can foster language growth, motivation, and cultural understanding. Stories provide characters, conflicts, and situations for students to see from a different perspective, so post-reading discussion is more than a case of finding the correct answer. Further, Hidayati et al. (2024) demonstrate that multilingual and multimodal learning can enhance students' enjoyment and proficiency. This suggests that teachers can enhance reading engagement by using visual, digital, and multilingual resources that connect written texts to other means of meaning.

Collaboration also increased students' readiness to participate. Students seemed to be more comfortable discussing difficult vocabulary or discussing their interpretation with peers before addressing the class in front of everyone. Collaborative reading gave students the chance to see what they were missing, to negotiate what they knew, and to talk to their friends about it. It therefore served both academic and emotional purposes.

This is in line with Abdel-Al Ibrahim et al. (2023), who found that collaborative learning and scaffolding-based instruction can enhance reading comprehension and motivation and reduce anxiety. Khonamri et al. (2024) also show that reading circles are a good method to promote motivation and engagement. Students do not depend on the teacher to create meaning in reading circles; they offer their ideas, explain one another's thoughts, and share responsibility for reading the text.

The peer interaction can be especially important for students who don't want to speak directly in whole-class environments. If the answer is tested in a smaller group, students will have more confidence to contribute publicly. Ritonga et al. (2022) show that peer assessment can impact reading comprehension, motivation, and vocabulary learning; Shang (2021) connects discussion-based instruction to motivation and reading performance. These studies indicate that participation is formed through interaction and not after individual comprehension has been completed. The classroom evidence also indicates that collaborative activity must be planned. Students don't just have to be in groups but want to be engaged. Students need to have something clear for them to work on, whether it be the main idea or learning new words, summarizing a section, comparing the interpretation, or preparing a

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response following the reading of a book. Teacher guidance is needed to ensure that peer interaction is helpful to comprehension and not simply another conversation.

This study thus shows a link between reading engagement and classroom participation. Students who understood the text were more open to discussion, and peer interaction also helped them develop their understanding. Reading and post-reading activities should therefore be built as part of a series of stages and not separate activities. Support before and during reading can prepare students for the reading, and post-reading interaction may reinforce the meaning of the text.

Teacher support as cognitive and affective mediation

Across the data, the teacher emerged as the central mediator of students' reading experiences. The teacher functioned as a model of pronunciation, a facilitator of comprehension, a provider of corrective feedback, and a source of encouragement. These roles were interconnected. Linguistic guidance reduced confusion, while emotional reassurance reduced the fear of making mistakes.

Teacher modelling was especially prominent. Before students read independently, the teacher demonstrated words, phrases, and sentences:

> *"For reading activities, we read sentence by sentence. I read first, then the students continue. After that, they repeat and read one by one." (Teacher)*

The practice provided English to students who may not commonly see it outside the classroom. It also allowed them to see how well the learner's understood pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm of spoken English. To those students who were not sure how English spelling and pronunciation corresponded and the model was not the first thing in their mind and were concerned that they could use to begin with, the model provided a practical framework for their own learning.

But modelling alone was not enough. The teacher had also checked the reading and provided feedback and corrective comments. The effectiveness of this feedback was in how it was delivered. Correcting in ways that embarrassed students might raise anxiety while providing correction that was supportive would help them see mistakes but not withdraw from it. In this class, modelling before correction seems to have made feedback more acceptable because students had first been shown an example and an opportunity to attempt the reading.

Teacher explanations of vocabulary and pronunciation reduced confusion and made them feel more confident in student interview responses, which are evidence of teacher support that influenced competence and emotional readiness. When students were confident that help would be available if they were experiencing difficulties, they were more likely to take part.

This is consistent with Derakhshan et al. (2025), who show that teacher support is related to reading motivation through emotions such as enjoyment, anxiety, and boredom. Zhang and Zhang & Kim (2025) suggest motivational pathways between perceived teacher support and student engagement in EFL classrooms. All of these studies show that teacher support has a significant impact on engagement not only in terms of understanding but also in terms of how students perceive learning.

The present study builds on this argument and shows how support was provided by small, sustained classroom practices. The first sentence being read out in front of the students, correct pronunciation with meaning, explaining new vocabulary to struggling students, and the need for support at the end of the sentence all helped to confirm that struggle was expected and manageable. Such practices created an environment in which students could participate without being expected to do them perfectly from the beginning.

The research is also in line with Muniroh et al. (2024), who emphasize the behavioural, affective, cognitive, and social aspects of reading engagement among Indonesian EFL teachers. The teacher in this study, however, addressed these dimensions by motivating students to remain behaviourally engaged, and helped them to process the text cognitively, reduce

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affective anxiety, and organize social interaction. However, teacher support should not lead to a permanent dependence. If the teacher always reads first, translates every new word, and provides students with a response immediately, students may not be as willing to practice strategies on their own. Good scaffolding should gradually transfer responsibility. Students might need a lot of modelling at first but less so as their pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence improve. Sun (2025) promotes the inclusion of teacher and peer scaffolding and suggests that support could be shared out among learners and not be fully teacher-controlled.

In addition, the gradual transfer can also be reinforced by strategy instruction and assessment practices as well. H. Li et al. (2022) found that reading strategy instruction can improve strategy use, motivation, and self-efficacy. Kazemi et al. (2020) showed dynamic assessment to support reading comprehension and motivation, and Heydarnejad et al. (2022) showed performance-based assessment is related to academic motivation, self-efficacy, and foreign language anxiety. This suggests that teachers can hold motivation through not only final comprehension but also students' efforts, strategy use, and progress.

The results show that the effect of reading activities on motivation was mediated by classroom support. Students were more engaged when reading tasks were introduced slowly, linguistic difficulties were treated as manageable, and opportunities for peer interaction were available. Their motivation declined as vocabulary, pronunciation, or text complexity was greater than their ability to respond. Teacher modeling and feedback worked to fill the gap by instilling confidence in students and providing a clear pathway through the task.

The four findings are therefore closely related. Scaffolded activities elevated students' confidence; stronger confidence helped them keep going through linguistic difficulties; engaging and successful engagement helped them prepare for post-reading practice; teacher and peer support ensured that the process continued at each stage. Reading motivation in this classroom was not born out of a single method or material. It was based on the relationship between the learner, the text, the teacher, the students, and the sequence of classroom activities.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that students' reading motivation was shaped not by the number of activities alone but by task design and instructional support. Clear instructions, pronunciation modelling, vocabulary scaffolding, gradual practice, constructive feedback, and collaborative reading encouraged participation, whereas linguistic difficulty and limited vocabulary reduced attention. These findings suggest that reading motivation is a dynamic process influenced by perceived competence, teacher mediation, and peer interaction. Teachers should select appropriately challenging texts, provide vocabulary and pronunciation support, model difficult language, offer constructive feedback, and incorporate structured collaborative activities to strengthen students' confidence and participation. However, the findings are context-specific, as the study involved one teacher and one Grade XII class in a single school. Future research should examine motivation over longer periods, include diverse educational contexts, and combine qualitative evidence with measures of reading anxiety, self-efficacy, engagement, and reading comprehension.

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