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Unlocking Potential: Lecturers' Perceptions of Collaborative Strategic Reading in English Language Teaching at Higher Education

Windy Puspitasari Suparto*
Amirullah Abduh²
Muhammad Basri³

^{1,2,3}Makassar State University, Makassar, INDONESIA

*Corresponding email: windypuspitasari10@gmail.com

Abstract

This research investigates university instructors' perceptions regarding implementing Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) techniques in English language teaching within higher education contexts. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study conducted in-depth interviews with ten English lecturers across various universities to explore the pedagogical benefits and challenges associated with CSR. The findings indicate that, despite certain operational constraints, most instructors perceive CSR as an effective instructional strategy that enhances students' reading comprehension, critical thinking abilities, and collaborative engagement. CSR fosters active participation, facilitates deeper cognitive processing, and strengthens analytical reading skills. Nevertheless, lecturers highlighted several challenges, including limited institutional support, time constraints, and students' initial reluctance toward collaborative learning. Despite these obstacles, CSR was recognized as a valuable pedagogical approach for promoting student-centred learning and improving reading comprehension in tertiary

education. The study emphasizes the necessity for structured training programs and institutional backing to optimize the efficacy of CSR in higher education English instruction.

Keywords: Collaborative Reading Strategy; English Language Teaching; Reading Comprehension; Higher Education; Student Engagement

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a foundational component of language acquisition and academic development, serving not only as a medium for acquiring information but also as a critical tool for constructing meaning, developing reasoning skills, and engaging with texts in a purposeful manner. In the context of English language learning, reading comprehension is essential for enabling learners to navigate academic texts, absorb content across disciplines, and engage in higher-order thinking. As emphasized by McNamara (2007, pp. 3–4), reading is a multi-layered cognitive process involving decoding, interpreting, and synthesizing information, which requires active mental engagement at various levels. Pardo (2004) describes reading comprehension as a dynamic interaction between the reader and the text, where meaning is constructed based on prior knowledge, linguistic proficiency, and contextual understanding. These processes, however, are not automatically acquired. They require direct instruction, cognitive scaffolding, and the use of strategic learning approaches to be effectively developed especially in learners at the tertiary level.

Despite the significance of reading comprehension in academic success, many university students, particularly those studying English as a foreign language (EFL), continue to face substantial challenges in understanding

complex texts, organizing information, and making inferences. Traditional reading instruction methods, which often rely heavily on individual silent reading or teacher-led explanations, may fail to engage students in meaningful ways or foster deeper comprehension. Within this pedagogical landscape, Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) emerges as a promising instructional approach that combines cooperative learning principles with explicit reading strategies aimed at improving comprehension and promoting active learner participation. CSR enables students to engage with texts interactively, monitor their understanding, and learn from peers through structured group activities, making the reading process more collaborative and cognitively enriching.

The primary aim of this research is to investigate university instructors' perceptions of implementing CSR in English language teaching within higher education settings. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how instructors perceive the benefits and challenges of CSR, how they implement it in classroom practice, and how its application aligns with the needs and characteristics of university students. These objectives are based on the premise that teachers are key agents in the successful implementation of any pedagogical strategy. Their experiences, beliefs, and contextual constraints significantly influence how instructional methods are adapted and sustained in real teaching environments.

While CSR has been widely studied in primary and secondary school contexts, especially in inclusive classrooms and general education settings, there is a noticeable gap in the literature concerning its application in vocational or higher education institutions. Research has predominantly emphasized students' perspectives and learning outcomes, with limited attention given to how

instructors conceptualize and apply CSR in post-secondary English instruction. Furthermore, studies focusing on vocational students such as those preparing for careers in tourism, hospitality, or technical fields are particularly scarce. This is a critical oversight, given that these students often require strong reading comprehension skills tailored to workplace communication and specialized texts.

This study addresses that gap by focusing on university instructors who teach English in higher education, particularly in vocational institutions such as polytechnics. It seeks to understand their perspectives on the pedagogical utility of CSR, the institutional and classroom challenges they face, and their views on its effectiveness for enhancing students' reading comprehension and classroom engagement. By doing so, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on strategic reading instruction and provides insights that can inform teacher training, curriculum development, and institutional support systems.

In sum, this introduction sets the stage for a qualitative exploration of how CSR is perceived and practiced by university-level English instructors. The study is situated within the broader need to enhance reading instruction in tertiary education and responds directly to gaps in current scholarship that have largely overlooked the voices and experiences of higher education practitioners. It positions CSR not just as a method for teaching reading but as a potentially transformative approach to fostering collaborative learning, critical thinking, and language development in the university classroom.

'Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) has been recognized as an effective instructional approach that can

be integrated with other strategies to enhance reading comprehension (Klingner et al., 2012). One such complementary method is the use of study journals or reading logs, which serve as tools for students to reflect on their experiences and integrate newly acquired knowledge with pre-existing concepts (Hurst, 2005). Reading logs, also known as reading response journals, are instrumental in fostering students' engagement with texts and improving their ability to extract meaning (Nosratinia & Hooshmand Fateh, 2017). CSR employs four fundamental strategies: previewing (activating prior knowledge), click and clunk (monitoring comprehension), get the gist (identifying key ideas), and wrap-up (summarizing and questioning) (Klingner & Vaughn, 1998). Several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of CSR in improving reading comprehension across various educational levels. Research by Carter (2019) and Zhang and Seepho (2013) suggests that CSR significantly enhances the reading skills of EFL learners.

However, there remains a gap in the literature regarding its implementation in higher education contexts, as most studies focus on primary and secondary education (Joseph & Schisler, 2009). Joseph and Schisler (2009) identified three types of struggling readers: (1) those who exert considerable effort in decoding words but fail to extract meaning, (2) those who understand the meaning of words despite weak decoding skills, and (3) those who can decode but fail to integrate meaning into a broader conceptual framework. To address these challenges, education professionals have explored various pedagogical strategies, including cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, peer-assisted learning, and CSR (Gauthier, 2001; Klingner et al., 2012). Cooperative learning, as described by Johnson and Holubec (1984), fosters a supportive

learning environment where students assist one another in maximizing comprehension outcomes. Faridi (2010) emphasized the need for educators to design and assess instructional frameworks that account for students' perceptions and achievements. Research has shown that collaborative learning approaches, such as CSR, enhance students' cognitive engagement and language proficiency (Yuliasri, 2012; Mujiyanto, 2016). Nosratinia and Hooshmand Fateh (2017) argue that CSR promotes both linguistic and cognitive development by encouraging social interaction and active participation in reading activities. Instructors play a crucial role in modeling CSR strategies, facilitating discussions, and guiding students in processing textual information (Grabe & Stoller, 2013; Karabuga & Kaya, 2013).

CSR involves a structured implementation process that includes activities such as activating prior knowledge, making inferences, identifying main ideas, resolving comprehension difficulties, synthesizing concepts, and self-monitoring (Gani et al., 2016). Studies have consistently supported the effectiveness of CSR in fostering deeper engagement with texts. For example, Suryaningsih (2018) found that CSR improved students' reading comprehension by enabling them to identify main ideas, infer meanings, and establish textual connections. Similarly, Nosratinia et al. (2017) and Gani et al. (2016) reported that CSR enhanced students' performance on standardized reading assessments. Kassem (2013) compared CSR with individual strategic reading (ISR) and found both approaches to be equally effective in improving comprehension outcomes. Furthermore, Amjadi (2021) noted that students' attitudes toward reading improved following the implementation of CSR. Given the persistent challenges in reading comprehension among higher

education students, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of CSR in enhancing students' ability to engage with and comprehend academic texts. By investigating CSR's application in a university setting, this research seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on evidence-based reading instruction.

Figure 1: The Relationship Between CSR, Learning Strategies, Higher University, and Existing Research



Source: Author's analysis of existing research and missing elements in the study, 2025

METHODS

This study was conducted at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic (Poltekpar) in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, during the 2024/2025 academic year, from September to November 2024. The research focused on first- and third-semester students in the Culinary Arts program and explored lecturers' perceptions of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in English

language teaching. A qualitative research approach was employed, utilizing informal conversations and classroom observations to gather insights. The study involved 10 English instructors from various institutions, consisting of nine female and six male lecturers. Their teaching experience ranged from five to twenty years, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives on CSR implementation in higher education. Qualitative research was chosen for its effectiveness in capturing educators' subjective experiences and interpretations of pedagogical strategies (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

A purposive sampling technique was used to select lecturers with relevant teaching experience and familiarity with CSR strategies. To be included in the study, participants needed to have at least five years of experience teaching English and prior exposure to CSR techniques. Ethical approval was obtained before data collection, and all participants provided informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality. Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research as it allows for the selection of participants with deep knowledge of the subject, enhancing the depth and reliability of findings (Etikan, 2023).

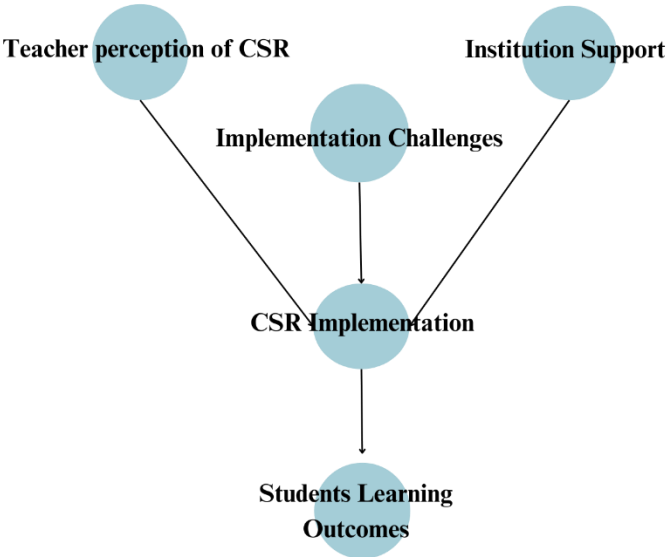
Three primary methods were employed to collect data. First, unstructured conversations were conducted, where each lecturer participated in a 45–60-minute discussion focusing on their experiences with CSR, its benefits, and the challenges they faced in implementing it. Second, classroom observations were carried out, with each lecturer observed for two class sessions to analyze the real-world application of CSR strategies. Third, focus group discussions were organized to further explore emerging themes from the interviews and classroom

observations, providing a deeper understanding of CSR implementation. A triangulated approach was applied, integrating multiple data sources to enhance the reliability and credibility of the findings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2023).

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. The first phase, familiarization with data, involved reviewing transcripts from interviews, classroom observations, and focus group discussions multiple times. In the second phase, initial codes were generated to identify key patterns and recurring themes related to lecturers' perceptions, challenges in CSR implementation, and student engagement. The third phase involved searching for themes, where the coded data were categorized into broader themes aligned with the study's research objectives. During the fourth phase, themes were reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and consistency. In the fifth phase, each theme was clearly defined and named to accurately represent the data. Finally, in the sixth phase, findings were structured and presented in alignment with the study's focus. Thematic analysis is widely recognized for its flexibility in identifying patterns and meanings within qualitative data (Nowell, 2024).

To enhance research credibility, member checking was conducted, allowing participants to review and validate the interpreted data. Additionally, triangulation was applied by comparing data from interviews, classroom observations, and focus group discussions, strengthening the reliability of the findings. Ethical considerations were strictly followed, ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality. All collected data were securely stored, and participants retained the

right to withdraw at any stage. Adhering to ethical research standards is essential for maintaining the integrity and validity of qualitative studies (Tracy, 2023).
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of CSR Implementation in Higher Education



Source: Author’s analysis based on methodology section, 2025

RESULTS

Advantages of CSR Implementation

The study revealed several advantages of implementing Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in higher education. One of the most notable benefits was the increased involvement of students, where lecturers observed that previously passive students became more active in discussions, contributing meaningful insights

and demonstrating improved comprehension. Furthermore, CSR played a significant role in the growth of intellectual capabilities, as students engaged in structured group discussions and collaborative problem-solving exercises, fostering critical thinking and analytical skills. Another key advantage was the enhancement of book comprehension, particularly for students at advanced levels. Lecturers noted that CSR significantly improved students' ability to process and understand complex academic materials, making learning more effective and engaging.

Challenges in CSR Implementation

Despite the benefits, the study identified several challenges associated with CSR. One major concern was time management, as many lecturers found the CSR approach to be time-consuming, especially in large classes with students of varying proficiency levels. Managing discussions and ensuring equal participation required additional preparation and class time. Another challenge involved group dynamic issues, where some students dominated discussions while others remained passive, making it difficult to achieve balanced engagement. Additionally, resource adaptation emerged as a limitation, as lecturers faced difficulties in generalizing CSR strategies across different text types and academic disciplines. While CSR was effective for narrative and expository texts, it was more challenging to adapt to highly technical or abstract materials.

Innovative Adaptations of CSR

To overcome these challenges, the study identified several innovative adaptations to improve CSR implementation in higher education. One adaptation was the integration of digitally-supported collaborative

tools, such as Google Docs and Perusall, which allowed students to annotate texts collectively and engage in interactive discussions. Another adaptation involved alternative grouping strategies, where lecturers experimented with flexible peer collaborations and instructor-guided discussions to ensure balanced participation among students. Additionally, a hybrid CSR model was introduced, combining independent reading tasks with structured group discussions. This approach enabled students to develop individual comprehension skills while also benefiting from collaborative learning experiences.

Implications for Practice

The findings highlight key implications for practice, particularly in professional development, resource development, and assessment integration. The study underscores the need for specialized training programs to equip lecturers with the skills needed to effectively implement CSR, manage classroom dynamics, and facilitate student engagement. Additionally, resource development should be a priority, with universities working towards creating CSR-compatible instructional materials that align with the principles of collaborative learning. Another important aspect is assessment integration, as institutions should consider adopting collaborative reading assessment methods that evaluate students' comprehension and engagement within CSR-based activities.

Institutional Support for CSR

Successful CSR implementation requires strong institutional support to ensure sustainability. Universities should focus on curriculum integration, ensuring that CSR aligns with course objectives while

maintaining a balanced approach with other teaching strategies. Adequate resource allocation is necessary, particularly for providing digital tools and collaborative learning platforms. Class size considerations must also be taken into account, as larger classes may require modified CSR strategies to maintain effectiveness. By addressing these factors, higher education institutions can maximize the potential of CSR, fostering deeper student engagement, improving reading comprehension, and promoting more effective collaborative learning environments.

Figure 3. Summary of Findings on CSR Implementation in Higher Education

Findings	Description	Implications	Evidence
Higher Student Engagement	CSR encouraged active participation and deeper discussions.	Enhances collaborative learning and knowledge retention.	80% of lecturers observed increased participation .
Improved Critical Thinking	Students developed better analytical and problem-solving skills.	Strengthens intellectual capabilities for higher education.	75% reported improvements in student reasoning.
Enhanced Reading Comprehensi	Students demonstrated a better	Supports independent	70% found CSR helpful in

on	understandi ng of academic texts.	learning and deeper text engageme nt.	comprehensi on skills.
Time Management Issues	CSR implementati on required extended class time.	Adjustme nts are needed in lesson planning and pacing.	60% of lecturers found CSR time- consuming.
Challenges in Group Dynamics	Unequal participation , with some students dominating discussions.	Requires structured grouping and guided facilitation .	40% reported an imbalance in group activities.
Difficulties in Resource Adaptation	CSR was less effective for technical and abstract materials.	Requires tailored strategies for different academic texts.	50% of instructors struggled with adaptation.
Digital Tools as a Solution	Online platforms improved collaborative reading interactions.	Institution s should integrate digital CSR tools.	75% of lecturers reported better engagement with digital tools.

Institutional Support Needed	Lack of resources and CSR training for educators.	Investment in faculty development and teaching resources.	85% of lecturers requested additional support.
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Source: Author’s summary based on findings, 2025

DISCUSSION of the RESULT

The findings reveal that lecturers at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic perceive Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) as a valuable pedagogical approach in English language teaching. Many lecturers highlighted its effectiveness in increasing student engagement, enhancing cognitive abilities, and improving reading comprehension. The observation that previously passive students became more active in discussions suggests that CSR fosters a more collaborative learning environment. This aligns with prior studies indicating that interactive reading strategies enhance student participation and motivation (Sousa, 2023; Ugwuozor, 2020). However, while lecturers generally viewed CSR positively, the study also highlights the complexities of implementing it in higher education settings, requiring significant adjustments to suit university-level learning structures.

Despite its advantages, lecturers encountered several challenges in applying CSR. One major issue was time management, as CSR requires structured group activities that can be time-consuming, particularly in large classes with diverse proficiency levels. Some lecturers expressed concerns that

balancing CSR with other instructional methods was difficult due to the constraints of academic schedules. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that collaborative learning strategies often require additional planning and classroom time, which can be challenging in rigid university timetables (Li, 2020; Benlyazid, 2019).

Another significant challenge involved group dynamics and student participation. Lecturers reported difficulties in ensuring equal contributions from all students, as some tended to dominate discussions while others remained passive. This imbalance reduced the effectiveness of CSR in fostering inclusive learning. Moreover, variations in language proficiency among students sometimes hindered collaborative engagement, making it necessary for lecturers to adapt CSR techniques to suit different skill levels. The issue of uneven participation in group-based learning has been widely documented in higher education research, underscoring the need for structured facilitation.

Resource adaptation was another concern raised by lecturers. While CSR is designed to be a flexible strategy, lecturers found it challenging to generalize its principles across various text types and academic disciplines. Some reported difficulties in adapting CSR strategies to more technical or specialized reading materials, such as tourism-related texts or research articles. This suggests that while CSR is effective for general comprehension improvement, modifications are necessary for discipline-specific applications. Previous studies have emphasized the need for tailored CSR frameworks that align with the unique demands of different fields (Febrianti, 2023; Knight & Kijai, 2023).

To address these challenges, lecturers developed innovative adaptations to improve CSR implementation. One significant adjustment was the integration of digital tools, such as collaborative annotation platforms, which enabled students to engage with texts more interactively. Digital applications facilitated asynchronous participation, allowing students to contribute at their own pace, which helped address issues of time constraints and unequal participation. Studies have shown that technology-enhanced CSR improves student engagement and comprehension (Aulia, 2020; Benlyazid, 2019).

Another adaptation involved alternative grouping methods to accommodate large class sizes. Instead of traditional fixed groups, some lecturers implemented rotational peer discussion models, allowing students to interact with different peers throughout the semester. This approach helped mitigate group dynamic issues by ensuring diverse interactions and equitable participation. Hybrid implementation, which blended individual reading tasks with group discussions, was also explored as a means of balancing structured CSR strategies with independent learning. Research suggests that hybrid models enhance student autonomy while preserving the benefits of collaborative learning (Jang, 2023).

Overall, the study highlights a broader issue concerning the integration of collaborative learning strategies in higher education. While lecturers recognized the benefits of CSR, they also acknowledged the structural limitations of university environments, such as fixed curricula, assessment methods, and classroom management challenges. This tension reflects the ongoing debate in educational research regarding

the feasibility of fully implementing collaborative learning at the tertiary level (Ferreira, 2024; Wu & Xu, 2024). The study suggests that rather than fully replacing traditional reading strategies, CSR should be adapted as a complementary approach, integrated with existing instructional methods to optimize its impact.

The discussion of findings demonstrates that CSR holds significant potential for improving English language learning in higher education, but its implementation requires careful adaptation. While lecturers appreciate the strategy's ability to foster engagement and comprehension, challenges such as time constraints, group dynamics, and resource adaptation must be addressed. By incorporating technological tools, alternative grouping methods, and hybrid instructional models, CSR can be successfully integrated into university settings. Future research should explore long-term strategies for institutionalizing CSR within higher education curricula to maximize its effectiveness in diverse learning environments.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the potential of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) as an effective approach for enhancing English language learning in higher education. The findings indicate that lecturers at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic generally perceive CSR positively, recognizing its ability to foster student engagement, improve reading comprehension, and promote collaborative learning. However, the study also reveals key challenges in implementation, including time constraints, group dynamics, and the need for resource adaptation. These factors suggest that while CSR offers

pedagogical benefits, modifications are necessary to align it with university-level instructional frameworks.

To address these challenges, lecturers have developed innovative adaptations, such as integrating digital tools, employing alternative grouping methods, and implementing hybrid instructional models. These strategies help mitigate the limitations of traditional CSR approaches and enhance their applicability in higher education. However, the broader tension between collaborative learning and university constraints suggests that CSR should be integrated as a complementary method rather than a full replacement for existing strategies.

Future research should explore long-term institutional support for CSR, including professional development for lecturers and curriculum adjustments. By refining implementation strategies, CSR can serve as a sustainable approach to improving student learning outcomes and fostering a more interactive academic environment in higher education.

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