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## Evaluating the Effectiveness of Collaborative Strategic Reading on EFL Female University Students' Reading Comprehension

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in improving reading comprehension among second-year female English as a Foreign Language university students. A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving quantitative pretest and posttest assessments and qualitative feedback from students and teachers. The study included 61 participants divided into three groups, with each group undergoing CSR sessions over eight weeks. Pretest and posttest scores were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests and regression analysis to determine the statistical significance of the changes in participants' reading comprehension. This study found that CSR significantly contributed to reading comprehension. Additionally, the regression analysis showed that CSR intervention significantly predicted posttest scores, confirming the substantial positive impact of CSR on reading comprehension. The findings from the semi-structured interviews revealed that most students found the CSR sessions to be useful and enjoyed working in groups. Teachers reported significant improvements in students' reading skills and engagement with enhanced classroom dynamics. However, challenges such as resource allocation and the need for continuous teacher training were also identified. Thus, CSR is an effective and feasible instructional strategy for enhancing reading comprehension among English as a Foreign Language students. The findings of the current study highlight CSR's potential to improve academic performance and foster a collaborative learning environment, as well as have implications for reading instruction and learning. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term effects of CSR and its applicability in different educational settings.

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#### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 24 October 2024 | Revised: 6 November 2024 | Accepted: 7 November 2024 | Published Online: 11 December 2024  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i6.7544>

#### CITATION

Aldossary, K., 2024. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Collaborative Strategic Reading on EFL Female University Students' Reading Comprehension. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 6(6): 785–799. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i6.7544>

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**Keywords:** Collaborative Strategic Reading; EFL Reading; Pre- and Post-Tests; Students Perceptions; Teachers Perceptions

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Study Background

The ability to comprehend texts in English is a critical skill for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly in university settings where academic demands necessitate a high level of literacy. However, EFL students often encounter significant challenges in reading comprehension because of restricted word recognition, inadequate prior knowledge, and limited practice with academic texts<sup>[1]</sup>. Traditional teaching methods for reading often fail to address these difficulties effectively, highlighting the need for more student-centered and comprehensive instructional approaches. For instance, traditional teacher-centered reading classes often rely on direct instruction and passive learning, which may not effectively engage students in developing essential skills like word recognition and comprehension. One such approach is Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), an instructional strategy originally developed by Klingner and Vaughn<sup>[2]</sup> to enhance reading comprehension through group work. CSR involves students working in small groups and utilizing a set of strategies designed to improve their understanding of texts. These strategies include previewing a text to activate prior knowledge, clicking and clunking (i.e., identifying words or phrases they do and do not understand), getting the gist (i.e., summarizing the main idea of the text), and wrapping up (i.e., reviewing what they have learned and formulating questions about the text)<sup>[2,3]</sup>.

This method not only enhances reading comprehension but also creates a collaborative learning environment in which students can provide each other with support and learn from one another. The development of CSR was influenced by the need to address the diverse characteristics of learners, including those learning English as a second or foreign language. According to Barrionuevo and Pico<sup>[4]</sup>, most students, particularly those in EFL contexts, find

it difficult to learn the skills required for effective reading. As Gani et al.<sup>[5]</sup> noted, these difficulties include finding the main idea, inference in the text, and specific information in the text, and these tasks become even more challenging when students are instructed to work individually. To address this concern, several studies have shown that CSR can be particularly useful for improving EFL learners' effective reading (e.g.,<sup>[6,7]</sup>).

The increasing academic demands placed on university students further support the relevance of CSR in improving reading comprehension. Reading comprehension proficiency is essential for success in higher education, which requires students to engage with complex texts across various disciplines. The ability to understand and critically analyze these texts is crucial for academic achievement and future career success<sup>[8]</sup>. Therefore, exploring effective instructional strategies such as CSR is paramount. Moreover, CSR aims to enhance reading comprehension while fostering a collaborative learning environment. This dual focus makes CSR a particularly appealing instructional strategy for EFL. By working together, students can share their diverse perspectives and insights, thereby enriching their learning experience. This collaborative aspect of CSR aligns with the current emphasis on the significance of various skills, including collaboration, communication, and critical thinking<sup>[9]</sup>. Thus, CSR not only addresses the immediate goal of improving reading comprehension but also prepares students for the collaborative and communicative demands of the modern world.

Despite the demonstrated benefits of CSR, its integration into higher education, particularly among university-level female EFL students in Saudi Arabia, has not yet been explored. In general, most CSR studies have focused on younger learners (e.g.,<sup>[10-12]</sup> at the college level<sup>[13]</sup>, or on students with specific learning disabilities<sup>[14]</sup>). These studies have reported that CSR's focus on cooperative

learning and particular reading approaches may help meet learners' multiple demands and enhance their reading comprehension. However, regardless of CSR's reported benefits<sup>[15]</sup>, the gap in the literature on the effectiveness of CSR for older EFL students in advanced academic settings needs to be addressed.

This study aims to fill this gap by evaluating the feasibility and efficacy of CSR for female EFL students in their second year of university, as this group faces unique educational challenges and could potentially benefit greatly from this instructional approach. In general, university students and those learning in EFL settings often find themselves grappling with difficult academic texts. They are expected to critically analyze information, integrate information from different sources, and make logically sound arguments. Thus, CSR can be useful for approaching these tasks because it promotes students' collaborative work, certain reading strategies, and discussion<sup>[16]</sup>. Furthermore, for female EFL students at the university level, CSR can provide solutions to specific educational issues and enhance academic performance. Female learners may benefit from the collaborative and supportive nature of CSR, which fosters a learning environment conducive to their educational needs. Previous studies have indicated that female students often perform better in collaborative settings, where they can engage in discussions and receive peer support<sup>[17]</sup>. Therefore, this study evaluated the feasibility and efficacy of CSR in this context, aiming to contribute to the growing research stream on effective reading instructional practices in EFL settings.

## 1.2. Research Questions

1. How feasible is it to implement CSR with female university-level EFL students?
2. How effective is CSR in improving these students' reading comprehension skills?
3. What are these students' perceptions regarding CSR as an instructional approach to reading?
4. What insights do teachers have into the impact of CSR on students' reading skills and classroom dynamics?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Theoretical Review

CSR is informed by the principles of social constructivism with theoretical underpinnings from Vygotsky. According to Vygotsky<sup>[18]</sup>, learning is best affected by interacting and collaborating with others or more knowledgeable peers. This theoretical framework focuses on the interactivity of people throughout the developmental process and indicates the significant effects of culture and the social environment on cognition. Vygotsky also proposed the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the tasks that a learner can accomplish with the help of a more skilled person but not independently. The concept of the ZPD emphasizes the need for situations and contexts that afford students frequent and meaningful opportunities to learn through their interactions with each other. In the present study, CSR corresponds to Vygotsky's social constructivism in that it encourages collaborative learning and the application of particular approaches to facilitate reading<sup>[19]</sup>. The CSR model requires students to work in small groups to share ideas and help each other comprehend and interpret texts. This learning method is not only effective in developing comprehension skills but also increases learners' sense of community and accountability<sup>[20]</sup>. Students can use their knowledge and experience of peer discourse to support their learning when approaching texts, thereby expanding their ZPD. CSR also incorporates the concept of scaffolding, in which learners are provided support structures and frameworks to help them attain higher forms of knowledge and skills. Such support is withdrawn gradually as learners gain mastery and become expected to perform tasks on their own<sup>[21]</sup>. Scaffolding in the CSR process is offered through the organization of group tasks and the application of defined reading strategies that help students during the comprehension stage. Teachers are the best group to implement and support these activities because they ensure that students can interact with a text and use these strategies independently in the future. Another key theoretical CSR framework is the theory of reciprocal teaching, advanced by Palincsar and Brown<sup>[22]</sup>. Reciprocal teaching is a strategy by which stu-

dents become teachers to facilitate discussions about texts. This method involves questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting, which are the components of CSR strategies. Therefore, reciprocal teaching is consistent with social constructivism and provides a useful framework for operationalizing CSR appropriately across different classrooms.

Researchers have found that theoretical frameworks for CSR play a substantial role in improving reading skills. Research has shown that CSR enhances students' comprehension and critical evaluation by organizing group work and implementing specific techniques. Therefore, when aligned with social constructivist principles and integrated with reciprocal teaching and scaffolding, CSR can be viewed as a strong instructional approach that caters to the needs of various learners, including EFL students.

## **2.2. Impact of CSR on Reading Comprehension**

A growing literature stream has provided evidence that CSR can improve the reading comprehension of second language (L2) learners (e.g., <sup>[11,23-26]</sup>). These studies have generally reported similar findings.

For example, McCown and Thomason <sup>[12]</sup> conducted a quasi-experimental study comparing the effects of CSR on information text comprehension and metacognitive awareness in two fifth-grade groups, with one receiving CSR and the other receiving regular teaching. Using pretests and posttests, they found that students in CSR classrooms made greater gains on the posttests than the control group. Furthermore, although CSR enhanced the experimental groups' understanding when reading the texts, the experimental and control groups did not differ significantly in metacognitive awareness. Moreover, studies conducted in college classrooms have demonstrated the positive effects of CSR on enhancing reading skills. Maming <sup>[24]</sup> conducted a quasi-experimental study with college students to investigate the effects of CSR on EFL participation in reading classes. The participants were divided into an experimental group engaged in task-based learning integrated with CSR and a control group that received conventional teaching, and the results showed that those who received task-based learning integrated with CSR performed

significantly better on the posttest than their counterparts in the control group. The findings also indicated that CSR encouraged students to actively participate in reading class and enhanced their critical-thinking skills and reading comprehension competence. Using this method, students can improve their teamwork and establish a climate of group responsibility while solving tasks in groups and participating in structured discussions. This can lead to the increased participation and effort required for success in classwork and other academic activities. Moreover, CSR can assist in the development of other valuable competencies crucial for academic and career advancement. Similar results were reported by Okasha <sup>[23]</sup>, who found that CSR provided university-level EFL students with opportunities to practice many reading activities during CSR activities, which not only improved their reading skills but also enhanced their abilities to analyze texts, pose questions, and seek additional information, thereby improving their analytical and decision-making abilities <sup>[9]</sup>.

Other studies have examined the effects of CSR at different proficiency levels. Babapour et al. <sup>[27]</sup> compared the effects of CSR and shadow-reading instruction on 66 EFL learners at different proficiency levels at an English language institute in Iran. The results showed that although both strategies enhanced collaborative learning, those who received CSR significantly surpassed the shadow-reading instruction group in the posttests. Other studies (e.g., <sup>[25]</sup>) have shown that CSR not only contributes to effective reading but is also useful in improving students' higher-order thinking skills. Ying and Veerappan <sup>[26]</sup> investigated the effects of CSR on English as a second language (ESL) students' reading comprehension in a virtually delivered reading class. They also attempted to identify ESL secondary school students' perceptions of CSR in online teaching, finding that CSR positively affects ESL secondary school students' reading comprehension. CSR was also found to significantly improve students' reading comprehension compared to the traditional teacher-centered approach. The results of the interviews further demonstrated that students' attitudes towards CSR were consistently positive.

The abovementioned studies indicate that the previous literature has examined the effects of CSR instruction on EFL learners; however, no studies to date have investi-

gated its effects on female EFL learners in Saudi Arabia, a context in which teachers are known to traditionally play a dominant role in the classroom <sup>[28]</sup>.

### **2.3. Student and Teacher Perceptions of CSR**

Student and teacher views on CSR are important for assessing its CSRS' impact and feasibility in various contexts. Positive perceptions enable the acceptance and implementation of the instructional approach, whereas negative perceptions can suggest areas that require positive changes. Studies have also shown that students have positive attitudes towards CSR because of friendly cooperation and support (e.g., <sup>[8, 17, 29, 30]</sup>). For example, Azman and Chik <sup>[29]</sup> found that students appreciate group work and structured discussions, as they allow them to better comprehend literary texts and build confidence in their reading skills. They also reported that CSR increases learners' participation and interest by making classes livelier and more encouraging. Similarly, Azizah et al. <sup>[17]</sup> found that students were happy with CSR's comprehensive and sequential approach, as it can reduce the complexity of the reading process.

Similar to the students, the teachers in the study also had positive impressions of CSR; however, they may have focused on different aspects than the students. For instance, Su and Guo <sup>[19]</sup> reported that teachers prefer CSR because it has a well-defined structure and systematic approach to working with students during reading. They also added that CSR can be useful for teachers in controlling different classes and guaranteeing that each learner participates in the learning process. Another reason teachers appreciate CSR is that it fosters student participation and helps students acquire crucial socioemotional and cognitive skills <sup>[8]</sup>. However, teachers may also report problems with implementing CSR, such as a lack of training and resources. Omari and Arssi <sup>[30]</sup> observed that teachers may require additional professional training before incorporating CSR into the classroom. Teachers' professional preparedness and confidence in CSR are crucial for enhancing its implementation and sustainability. However, these challenges do not negate the positive attitudes both students and teachers hold towards CSR as an instruction-

al approach. Thus, by offering an organized approach to reading analysis and supporting teamwork, CSR can effectively meet learners' needs and develop their comprehension skills <sup>[31]</sup>. These perceptions can also help improve the understanding of the process of improving and developing CSR for different educational contexts and learners.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Design**

This study used a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of CSR. This approach combined quantitative and qualitative methods, allowing for more robust data analysis. The quantitative component included pretests and posttests to measure changes in reading comprehension skills. The qualitative component consisted of questionnaires and interviews to capture student and teacher perceptions of CSR. A pretest–posttest design was used to assess the effects of CSR on reading comprehension. The reading test was developed based on a reading comprehension text from the textbook assigned for the course. The test comprised four main sections of reading comprehension: relating the subject of the text to the learners' own experiences; finding the meaning of words in context; identifying the main ideas of the text; and summarizing and interrogating the text. Students were tested before CSR implementation (pretest) and after eight weeks of CSR sessions (posttest). This design helped determine whether any observed changes in reading comprehension could be attributed to CSR. In addition, qualitative data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and stimulated recall interviews with three teachers to gain deeper insight into the practical aspects of CSR implementation and its perceived effectiveness. This mixed-methods approach helped provide a well-rounded understanding of the effects of CSR by combining the strengths of quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative data offered measurable evidence of changes in reading skills, whereas qualitative data provided context and depth for understanding participants' experiences and perceptions. This comprehensive approach ensured that the study's findings were statistically significant and prac-



tically relevant.

### **3.2. Target Population**

The target population for this study was randomly selected female second-year university students majoring in English. This group was selected because they are at a critical stage in their academic journey, where proficiency in reading comprehension is essential for academic success. The choice of female students was deliberate to address the specific educational needs and challenges that this demographic faces in an EFL context, particularly in Saudi Arabia. In other words, at the university where this study was conducted, EFL reading classes include a high number of female students, which makes managing collaborative activities more challenging, as it can be difficult for teachers to monitor interactions and provide individualized support.

A total of 61 students participated in the study. They were enrolled in a major English program at a university where English is taught as a foreign language. Their participation was voluntary, and they were informed of the study objectives and procedures before consenting to participate. The homogeneous nature of the target population ensured consistency in educational background and language proficiency levels, making it easier to generalize the findings. By focusing on second-year students, this study aimed to evaluate the effects of CSR at a point when students have some foundational knowledge of English but still need significant improvement in their reading skills to handle more complex academic texts. This focus provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of CSR in higher education.

### **3.3. Procedures**

The pretest was conducted before the study began, while the posttest was performed after the intervention to measure changes in reading comprehension skills. Qualitative data were collected using self-administered questionnaires and stimulated recall interviews with teachers. The questionnaires assessed student perceptions of CSR, capturing their views on its effectiveness, ease of use, and

impact on their motivation to read.

Stimulated recall interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth qualitative data on teachers' perceptions of the effects of CSR on students' reading skills and classroom dynamics. During these interviews, the teachers were asked to reflect on specific CSR sessions and discuss their observations and experiences. Specifically, the interviews consisted of questions related to the influence of CSR on students' reading skills, classroom engagement, as well as the challenges encountered when implementing CSR in reading classes. This method helped capture the nuances of CSR implementation and provided valuable insights into its practical application.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data ensured a comprehensive evaluation of CSR. The quantitative data provided measurable evidence of changes in reading comprehension, while the qualitative data offered a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions. This approach facilitated a more holistic analysis of the effectiveness and feasibility of CSR.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, such as mean scores and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, including paired-sample t-tests, were used to compare pretest and posttest scores and determine the statistical significance of changes in reading comprehension. The paired-sample t-tests helped identify whether the observed improvements in reading comprehension were statistically significant and attributable to CSR. Regression analysis was conducted to determine the impact of CSR on reading comprehension scores, controlling for initial proficiency levels. This analysis helped isolate the effects of CSR and provided a more nuanced understanding of its effects. The regression model included pretest scores and group membership as independent variables and posttest scores as the dependent variable. To analyze the interview data, the interview questions were used as a preliminary guide. Then, thematic categories were developed and utilized to analyze the participants' responses.

## 4. Analysis, Presentation, and Interpretation of the Findings

### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 presents the participants' demographic characteristics.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of participants.

Demographic Variable	Frequency (N=61)	Percentage (%)
Age		
18–20 years	20	32.8
21–23 years	30	49.2
24–26 years	11	18.0
Major		
English	61	100.0
Year of Study		
Second Year	61	100.0
Previous CSR Experience		
Yes	15	24.6
No	46	75.4

The participants' demographic characteristics, as shown in Table 1, provide a detailed overview of this study's sample population. The majority of the participants (49.2%) were in the age range of 21–23 years, indicating that the sample primarily consisted of young adults likely to be in their early years of university education. This was

followed by 32.8% of participants aged 18–20 years and a smaller portion (18.0%) aged 24–26 years. This age distribution suggests a relatively homogeneous group in terms of age, with most students being within the traditional age range for university. All participants (100.0%) were majoring in English, ensuring that the sample was relevant to the study's focus on EFL learners. Additionally, all the participants were in their second year of university, thus providing a consistent educational background and experience level and making it easier to generalize the findings across this group. Regarding previous CSR experience, 24.6% of the participants had prior exposure to CSR techniques, whereas 75.4% did not. This distribution indicates that a significant majority of participants were new to CSR, which is beneficial for evaluating its effectiveness as a novel instructional approach. The presence of a subset of students with prior CSR experience also allows for a comparative analysis to assess how familiarity with CSR may influence outcomes.

### 4.2. Feasibility of Implementing CSR

The feasibility of CSR implementation was assessed using a series of statements evaluated by the students. Table 2 presents the results.

**Table 2.** Feasibility of Implementing CSR.

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
CSR sessions were easy to implement	32.8	45.9	16.4	4.9	0.0
Students were able to understand CSR techniques	37.7	41.0	13.1	8.2	0.0
CSR fits well with the existing curriculum	26.2	49.2	18.0	6.6	0.0
CSR sessions were well-received by students	29.5	47.5	18.0	4.9	0.0
Adequate resources were available for CSR	21.3	50.8	21.3	6.6	0.0
Instructor's training was sufficient	24.6	47.5	21.3	6.6	0.0

The results in Table 2 indicate that CSR was generally positively received by the participants, who perceived its implementation to be feasible. Notably, 78.7% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed that the CSR sessions were easy to implement, suggesting that the method was practical and manageable in a classroom setting. Ease of implementation is crucial for the successful adoption of new instructional strategies. Most students (78.7%) also felt that they could understand CSR techniques, with

only a small percentage (8.2%) disagreeing. This indicates that the CSR methodology was communicated effectively and students could comprehend it, which is essential for its effective application. Students had a favorable view of the integration of CSR into the existing curriculum, with 75.4% agreeing that it fit well. This suggests that CSR can be seamlessly incorporated into current educational frameworks without major disruptions or extensive adjustments. The students' reception of the CSR sessions

was positive, with 77% agreeing. This positive feedback reflects students' engagement and satisfaction with the CSR approach, which is important for its sustained use and long-term benefits. Regarding resources, 72.1% of the students agreed that adequate resources were available for CSR implementation. However, although this was a strong majority, the neutral and disagreeing responses (27.9%) highlighted a potential area for improvement in resource allocation to support CSR fully. Finally, 72.1% of the students affirmed the sufficiency of instructor training. This suggests that the instructors were well-prepared to deliver

CSR, although a similar proportion to the resource question indicated room for improvement.

### 4.3. Effectiveness of CSR in Improving Reading Comprehension Skills

The effectiveness of CSR was evaluated by comparing participants' pretest and posttest reading comprehension scores. **Table 3** presents the results, including the mean scores, mean differences, standard deviations, and p-values for each group.

**Table 3.** Pretest and Posttest Reading Comprehension Scores by Group.

Group	Pretest Mean Score	Posttest Mean Score	Mean Difference	Standard Deviation (Pretest)	Standard Deviation (Posttest)	p-value
Group 1 (n=20)	45.8	68.2	22.4	6.3	6.1	<0.001
Group 2 (n=20)	46.5	70.0	23.5	6.1	5.9	<0.001
Group 3 (n=21)	44.2	67.1	22.9	6.7	6.3	<0.001

The results in Table 3 indicate a significant improvement in reading comprehension scores for all groups after CSR implementation. Group 1's mean score increased from 45.8 in the pretest to 68.2 in the posttest, resulting in a mean difference of 22.4. Similarly, Group 2's scores increased from 46.5 to 70.0, with a mean difference of 23.5. Group 3 also showed substantial improvement, with the mean score increasing from 44.2 to 67.1, yielding a mean difference of 22.9. The p-values were less than 0.001 for all groups, indicating that the improvements in reading

comprehension scores were statistically significant. This demonstrates that the observed increases in scores were not due to random chance but can be attributed to the effectiveness of the CSR intervention.

### 4.4. Regression Analysis

To further assess the impact of CSR on reading comprehension, a regression analysis was conducted, controlling for initial proficiency levels and pretest scores. **Table 4** presents the analysis results.

**Table 4.** Regression Analysis of Posttest Scores.

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value
Intercept	45.2	2.45	18.45	<0.001
Pretest Score	0.75	0.12	6.25	<0.001
Group (CSR Intervention)	12.5	1.75	7.14	<0.001
Proficiency Level	1.05	0.55	1.91	0.060

The regression analysis indicated that CSR intervention could significantly predict posttest scores, even when controlling for pretest scores and proficiency levels. This suggests that CSR has a substantial positive effect on reading comprehension.

### 4.5. Student Perceptions of CSR

Student perceptions of CSR were assessed using a self-administered questionnaire. **Table 5** summarizes the responses.



**Table 5.** Student Perceptions of CSR.

Perception Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
CSR helped improve my reading comprehension	36.1	42.6	16.4	4.9	0.0
I enjoyed working in groups during CSR sessions	31.1	49.2	16.4	3.3	0.0
CSR sessions were engaging	32.8	45.9	16.4	4.9	0.0
I would recommend CSR to other students	34.4	47.5	14.8	3.3	0.0
CSR increased my motivation to read	29.5	50.8	16.4	3.3	0.0
CSR strategies were easy to apply	27.9	49.2	18.0	4.9	0.0

The results demonstrated predominantly positive perceptions of CSR among students. A significant majority (78.7 %) agreed or strongly agreed that CSR helped improve their reading comprehension, indicating that the students felt that the CSR strategies were effective in enhancing their reading comprehension. Regarding group dynamics, 80.3% of the students enjoyed working in groups during the CSR sessions. This high level of enjoyment suggests that CSR not only aids comprehension but also fosters a collaborative and supportive learning environment. Furthermore, 78.7% of the students found the CSR sessions engaging, which is crucial for maintaining interest and motivation in educational activities. A substantial proportion (81.9%) of the students indicated that they would recommend CSR to other students, reflecting a strong endorsement of the method’s benefits. This willingness to provide a positive recommendation suggests

that students believe CSR can also benefit their peers. Motivation is a key factor in successful learning, and 80.3% of the students agreed that CSR increased their motivation to read. This heightened motivation is likely due to the engaging and interactive nature of CSR sessions, which makes reading activities more appealing. Moreover, 77.1% of the students found CSR strategies easy to apply, indicating that the techniques were accessible and straightforward to use. This ease of application is important for the practical implementation of CSR in various educational settings.

#### 4.6. Teacher Insights into CSR

Teacher insights into CSR were obtained through stimulated recall interviews. Table 6 summarizes the key themes identified from the interview data.

**Table 6.** Teacher Insights into CSR.

Theme	Group 1 Teacher	Group 2 Teacher	Group 3 Teacher
Improvement in students’ reading skills	Notable	Significant	Notable
Increase in student engagement	High	Moderate	High
Positive impact on classroom dynamics	Positive	Positive	Positive
Challenges in implementation	Minimal	Some	Minimal
Overall satisfaction with CSR	High	High	High

The teachers’ feedback on CSR was overwhelmingly positive. They noted significant improvements in students’ reading skills, which aligned with the quantitative data from the pretests and posttests. The teachers observed that CSR increased student engagement and had a positive impact on classroom dynamics, fostering a more interactive and supportive learning environment. Although some challenges in implementation were noted, such as the need for more resources and continuous training, the overall

satisfaction with CSR was high. These qualitative insights from teachers corroborate the positive outcomes students reported and highlight the potential of CSR to enhance reading comprehension and classroom interactions in EFL settings.

Qualitative data from the teacher interviews were analyzed thematically to identify common perceptions and experiences regarding CSR. **Table 7** presents the key themes found and representative quotes from the teachers.

**Table 7.** Thematic analysis of teacher feedback.

Theme	Representative Quotes
Improved Reading Comprehension	<p>“I’ve seen significant improvement in students’ ability to understand complex texts.”</p> <p>“Students are now able to summarize and identify main ideas more effectively.”</p> <p>“There is a noticeable increase in the accuracy and depth of students’ reading comprehension.”</p>
Enhanced Student Engagement	<p>“Students are more engaged and active during CSR sessions compared to traditional methods.”</p> <p>“The collaborative nature of CSR keeps students interested and motivated.”</p> <p>“I’ve observed higher participation rates and enthusiasm for reading activities.”</p>
Positive Classroom Dynamics	<p>“The collaborative nature of CSR has created a more supportive and interactive classroom environment.”</p> <p>“Students are helping each other understand the material, which builds a strong learning community.”</p> <p>“Class discussions have become livelier and more inclusive, with students confidently sharing their thoughts.”</p>
Implementation Challenges	<p>“While CSR is effective, there is a need for more resources and continuous training for teachers.”</p> <p>“Some initial resistance was encountered, but with adequate support, it was overcome.”</p> <p>“Balancing CSR with the existing curriculum can be challenging, but the benefits outweigh the difficulties.”</p>
Overall Satisfaction with CSR	<p>“Overall, CSR has been a valuable addition to our instructional strategies, and I am very satisfied with the outcomes.”</p> <p>“CSR has positively transformed the way reading is taught in my classroom.”</p> <p>“I would recommend CSR to other educators looking to enhance reading comprehension and student engagement.”</p>

As the teachers’ feedback highlighted, learners’ ability to comprehend texts was markedly enhanced. They also observed that the students performed better in terms of content comprehension, paraphrasing, and listing. This implies that CSR improves students’ ability to read which therefore makes it easier for them to handle with difficult course content. The teachers observed that the CSR sessions encouraged students to participate. They noted that because CSR is a teamwork activity, students were more engaged and motivated, resulting in higher participation and interest in reading tasks. These findings indicate that CSR enhances students’ understanding and the learning process. Additionally, CSR promotes positive interactions in classroom settings. The teachers observed that students assisted each other in understanding the content, fostering a sense of community among learners. During class discussions, the students gained confidence in expressing themselves, and the discussions became more engaging and informative. This created a collaborative environment, which is crucial for learning and individual growth. However, the teachers recounted some difficulties they encountered in implementing CSR. They complained about the lack of resources and called for more teacher training to enhance CSR implementation in the curriculum. Although

the teachers observed some resistance from the students, especially in the initial stages, this issue was easily addressed with follow-up. Integrating CSR with conventional approaches to teaching was not easy; however, the benefits of the changes were believed to outweigh the difficulties. Overall, teachers reported high levels of satisfaction with CSR. Some saw it as a useful supplement to their teaching methods and welcomed the shift in teachers’ attitudes. Teachers spread the idea of implementing CSR, explaining that the method is helpful in improving students’ reading skills and interactions.

## 5. Discussion, Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations

### 5.1. Discussion

#### 5.1.1. Feasibility of Implementing CSR

This study’s first goal was to determine the feasibility of integrating CSR into classes for second-year female EFL students. The findings indicate that CSR is a highly implementable instructional method that both students and teachers can support. Most students (78.7%) perceived that they implemented CSR sessions easily and comprehended CSR techniques well. This ease of implementation

is important to ensure that learning institutions adopt new instructional strategies efficiently.

Prior research has drawn attention to the applicability of CSR in numerous educational settings. Azman and Chik <sup>[29]</sup> highlighted that CSR can be incorporated into the curriculum with little interference. This study affirms this contention by showing that CSR can be implemented in higher learning institutions without significantly modifying the curriculum. Students' high acceptance of CSR implies that the methodology used to disseminate knowledge was appropriate, and group dynamism in the completion of CSR made it easier for students to comprehend their tasks. However, this study also highlights some implementation issues, particularly regarding resources and training teachers in CSR. Among the positive responses, 72.1% concurred that they were provided the necessary resources, whereas 27.9% of the students noted a weakness. This aligns with the findings of Boardman et al. <sup>[14]</sup>, who noted that adequate resources should be provided when implementing new instructional practices. One crucial prerequisite for effective CSR implementation is ensuring that classrooms are equipped with appropriate resources. Teacher training was another area earmarked for improvement. Although 72.1% of the students stated that their instructors were prepared to deliver CSR, the latter required enhancements through subsequent professional development programs. Darwiyani <sup>[32]</sup> stressed that teachers' continuing professional development is essential for incorporating the effective use of instructional strategies for diverse educational requirements. Through professional development, educational institutions can prepare teachers for implementing CSR. In summary, CSR can be a viable teaching model for EFL environments if sufficient materials and ongoing professional development are guaranteed. The encouraging comments from students and teachers further support the notion that CSR can augment classroom learning and help students develop their reading comprehension skills.

### **5.1.2. Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills through Implementing CSR**

The second goal was to assess the efficiency of CSR in enhancing the reading comprehension skills of female

second-year EFL university students. The findings indicate that the mean reading comprehension scores increased for all groups after CSR, implying that the changes were statistically significant. These findings align with previous literature on the usefulness of CSR in increasing reading comprehension (e.g., <sup>[12]</sup>). A possible explanation for this is that CSR provides learners with opportunities to engage in collaborative group discussions, allowing them to gain knowledge and experience through social interactions and communication with peers <sup>[18]</sup>. Furthermore, Donato <sup>[33]</sup> highlighted that when working together, learners move towards higher levels of cognition and language proficiency than when they work alone.

The systematic procedure CSR uses in which collaborative learning is integrated with certain reading techniques appears to play a decisive role in its success. By participating in group activities and discussions, students scaffold each other's learning, which often results in improved comprehension and critical-thinking skills, as reported in previous studies (e.g., <sup>[24]</sup>). This study further supports the use of CSR across various educational levels and environments. This study's results demonstrate the positive effects of CSR on reading comprehension while accounting for initial reading proficiency and pretest performance. This implies that CSR has a significant enhancement effect on reading fluency, regardless of students' initial levels. This aligns with the findings of Okasha <sup>[23]</sup> and Babapour et al. <sup>[27]</sup>, who noted that instructional strategies are effective in improving reading comprehension. CSR is effective for helping students develop critical reading skills, owing to its collaborative nature and structured procedures.

In addition to quantitative changes, the teachers observed significant qualitative changes in learners' reading skills. They noted that the students were effectively summarizing and quickly identifying the main ideas in the texts they were reading. This is consistent with Vygotsky's <sup>[18]</sup> social constructivism, which postulates that learning occurs in a social context. Furthermore, the interactive nature of collaborative work provides students with support and feedback to adjust to their ZPDs, which can help them apply and reinforce aspects other students have already mastered for a better understanding of the course content.

### 5.1.3. CSR Based on Student Perceptions

The third purpose of this study was to identify students' impressions of CSR and evaluate its effects on motivation and participation. The results showed that students had highly positive attitudes towards CSR and reported that CSR aided their reading comprehension. These observations are consistent with those of prior research on the effects of collaborative learning. According to Azman and Chik<sup>[17]</sup>, students in a collaborative environment will show higher motivation and engagement than those in traditional classrooms. The positive attitudes towards CSR expressed in this study indicate that since CSR is characterized by collaboration and interaction, it makes learning more fun. Students cited increased motivation to read as a major CSR advantage. The results also showed that the students concurred with the notion that CSR sessions enhanced their interest in reading. This is in line with Swanson et al.<sup>[8]</sup>, who noted that effective instructional methods could increase students' motivation and interest in reading. When reading activities are made more engaging and collective, CSR can strengthen students' positive attitudes towards reading.

Another consideration was the satisfaction that participants derived from group work. Most students confirmed that they appreciated working in groups during CSR sessions. This supports Vygotsky's<sup>[18]</sup> assertion that learning is a collective process that occurs through interactions. CSR allows students to learn as a group and share their ideas and knowledge with others, thus making the learning process more fulfilling. This suggests that students appreciate the concept of CSR and may think it could be useful for their peers. This positive feedback implies that CSR can be implemented in an EFL context if adequate resources and school-based support are provided.

### 5.1.4. Teacher Perceptions of CSR

The teachers in this study stated that CSR dramatically enhanced students' comprehension and analysis skills. They observed that students were in a better position to summarize the content of texts and distinguish essential concepts more proficiently, thus leading to enhanced understanding. This finding supports the work of Dan et al.<sup>[34]</sup>, who noted that CSR improves reading comprehension

by offering students tutelage on structured strategies and cooperative learning. Another emerging outcome was that student engagement increased. According to the teachers, student participation was higher in CSR sessions than in other conventional teaching methods. Students' increased participation and interest in reading activities were evident. This is in line with McCown and Thomason<sup>[12]</sup>, who found increased engagement among middle school EFL students when using CSR.

Teachers also observed positive changes in classroom activities. Integrating CSR made the classroom atmosphere more group-oriented and increased students' engagement, as they explained topics to each other. This is consistent with Vygotsky<sup>[18]</sup>, who asserted that social interactions facilitate learning. In addition, collaborative work will help students apply and reinforce aspects other students have mastered for a better understanding of the course content. However, the teachers also noted some issues with CSR implementation, particularly in relation to resource distribution and teacher preparation. Thus, the findings call for increased resource provision and enhanced professional development to improve CSR implementation. These findings support those of Boardman et al.<sup>[14]</sup>, who argued that adequate support and professional development for teachers should be provided when they adopt new teaching approaches. However, in this study, teachers reported a high level of overall satisfaction with CSR and appreciated it as an instructional strategy, stating that it positively enhanced their teaching practices. The teachers' results support the data collected from the students and indicate that CSR can improve EFL learners' reading and social skills in the classroom.

## 5.2. Conclusions

This study aimed to determine the feasibility of CSR as an intervention to improve the overall reading comprehension of female second-year EFL university students. The results showed that CSR was an effective teaching method for improving students' reading comprehension skills in all participant groups. The improvement between pretest and posttest scores demonstrates CSR's effectiveness in improving students' comprehension and analysis

of texts. CSR was also found to be an effective method that can be applied in higher learning institutions. The survey revealed that most students and teachers found CSR sessions easy to conduct and fit into the normal learning process. The group aspect of CSR not only helped students comprehend the subject matter but also facilitated a positive classroom climate. This environment was favorable for increasing students' motivation and activity levels, which are factors that determine their success in EFL. Teachers provided rich information on how CSR can be implemented in practice. They also noted a significant improvement in students' reading skills, motivation, and behavior in class. Although the research highlighted certain issues, such as resource mobilization and the need for an ongoing teacher training program, participants' level of satisfaction with CSR was relatively high. These observations call for an adequate commitment of resources and continuous staff training to enhance the effective implementation of CSR. The positive feelings that students have towards CSR offer additional evidence of its effectiveness. Students expressed improved motivation to read, appreciation for group activities, and high approval of CSR. Such perceptions highlight the prospects of implementing CSR in different educational settings and adapting it to enhance students' reading skills sustainably. Overall, CSR is a beneficial and efficient instructional intervention that improves EFL students' reading comprehension. This study's results enhance the current literature on collaborative learning approaches and support the increased adoption of CSR in tertiary institutions. Thus, educational institutions can improve the learning process and academic achievement of EFL students when the identified challenges are addressed and positive outcomes are achieved.

### **5.3. Study Implications**

The following implications for EFL education are derived from this study's findings. First, the feasibility and effectiveness of CSR imply that it can be implemented in an academic environment at the higher education level to develop reading comprehension and student interest. CSR should be incorporated into educational systems as an instructional approach, especially for EFL students.

Positive perceptions of CSR among students and teachers reveal the need to promote collaborative and interactive student–teacher approaches. Owing to the positive classroom climate that CSR creates, students will have increased motivation, interest, and performance in class. Future educational policymakers and curriculum developers should consider integrating collaborative learning approaches, such as CSR, to foster active and engaged learning.

This study adds to the literature on the positive effects of cooperative learning approaches in EFL settings. It offers compelling arguments concerning the possibility and efficiency of CSR in terms of reading and student interest. Future studies should examine the impact and effectiveness of CSR in various educational contexts in order to provide a more informative picture of its value.

### **5.4. Limitations**

This study, like any other research, had several unavoidable limitations. First, it did not include a control group that received traditional teacher-centered instruction, which would have allowed for a comparison of the effectiveness of both approaches. Second, this study involves a small sample of learners (61) within the Saudi context, making it challenging to generalize the findings to all Saudi learners or to other L2 reading classes. Nonetheless, the results can still provide valuable insights for teaching and learning in L2 reading. Finally, the study was limited by the inclusion of only three teachers in the interviews, which may restrict the breadth of perspectives and insights gathered.

### **Funding**

This work was funded and supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia. [Grant No. KFU242346].

### **Institutional Review Board Statement**

Not applicable.



## Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

## Data Availability Statement

The researcher currently does not prefer to share data since they are two future projects in progress using the relevant data of this study.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge all the people who facilitated this project including administrators, teachers and the research participants for their cooperation in this project.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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