

Exploring EFL Teachers' Strategies to Overcome Students' Boredom in Reading English Texts: A Case Study at Junior High School Level

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A B S T R A C T

This study examines the strategies utilized by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators to mitigate students' boredom during the reading of English texts. The research, executed as a qualitative case study at a junior high school in Probolinggo, Indonesia, featured three EFL teachers possessing considerable teaching experience. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews and analyzed via theme analysis. The findings identify three primary strategies: (1) employing visual aids, including images and colors, to augment engagement, (2) implementing vocabulary scanning techniques to facilitate comprehension, and (3) integrating technology via videos and song lyrics to foster interactive learning experiences. These strategies were implemented in accordance with students' learning styles and classroom environments. The study concludes that diverse and engaging pedagogical methods can significantly diminish boredom, elevate student motivation, and promote reading comprehension in EFL contexts.

Keywords: *Teachers' Strategies; Boredom Reading; English Text; EFL Teachers*

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental ability in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) study, significantly contributing to language acquisition and academic advancement. For numerous students in EFL situations, reading English texts is frequently regarded as a tedious and challenging endeavor. In contrast to speaking or listening tasks, reading necessitates prolonged focus, language proficiency, and cognitive involvement, posing difficulties for learners who lack motivation or perceive the content as unrelated to their interests. This scenario often results in ennui, a prevalent emotional obstacle that impedes student concentration and obstructs reading comprehension.

Boredom in reading is not simply a lack of interest; it is a multifaceted emotional reaction shaped by pedagogical approaches, text intricacy, and the classroom atmosphere. (Kholili, 2023) highlighted that boredom in English learning might stem from various factors, including unengaging classroom environments, monotonous teaching methods, and students' difficulties with challenging vocabulary. This topic is particularly pertinent in Indonesia due to the nation's low levels of reading interest and habits. A 2016 survey conducted by Central Connecticut State University revealed that Indonesia placed 60th out of 61 countries in terms of reading interest. A UNESCO report indicated that hardly one in a thousand Indonesians engages in regular reading (Sebastian Partogi, 2023). These data underscore the pressing necessity for more captivating and efficacious reading instruction in EFL courses.

Research indicates that innovative and diverse instructional methods might alleviate pupils' reading ennui. Putri Jasmin (Putri Jasmin Alyani et al., 2024) suggest that educators might mitigate boredom by integrating dynamic activities, engaging learning materials, and suitable instructional methods. Nevertheless, the majority of current research concentrates on enhancing reading comprehension or investigating motivational elements, without precisely analyzing how educators mitigate boredom during reading activities. For example, (Basri et al., 2020) examined EFL teachers' methodologies for instructing reading in resource-constrained environments, although did not specifically address the mitigation of boredom.

This study examines the tactics employed by junior high school EFL teachers in Indonesia to mitigate pupils' ennui when reading English texts. This study aims to provide significant ideas for enhancing the reading environment and improving students' reading motivation and outcomes by analyzing the lived experiences and practical approaches of these educators.

METHOD

This research utilized a qualitative case study methodology to thoroughly examine the tactics employed by EFL educators to mitigate student ennui when reading English texts. A qualitative approach was deemed suitable as it facilitates the examination of participants' life experiences, viewpoints, and pedagogical practices in a natural environment (Creswell, 2018).

The study was performed at a junior high school in Probolinggo, East Java, Indonesia. The school was chosen for its proactive execution of English language programs, encompassing English camps and literacy efforts. Three EFL instructors from this institution engaged in the study. Participants were chosen using purposive sampling, considering their teaching experience and readiness to engage in the study.

Table 1. Present the demographic data of the participants:

Participants	Gender	Length of Teaching
T1	Female	20 years
T2	Male	15 years
T3	Female	16 years

These teachers have extensive experience in teaching English at the junior high school level and regularly engage in reading instruction.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, facilitating response flexibility while maintaining the coverage of critical themes. The interviews were administered in Bahasa Indonesia to guarantee clarity and facilitate speech. Each interview lasted roughly 30 minutes and was conducted either in person or by WhatsApp, contingent upon the participants' availability. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data, which entails reviewing a data set and looking for patterns in its meaning to identify themes. This thematic method seeks to grasp "what is being told," rather than the framework of the tale, and identifies difficulties and experiences based on established themes. The study focuses on reading the interview transcripts several times to better comprehend the meaning and discourse of the experiences. The transcripts were then classified based on their themes and subthemes. (Rahayu et al., 2022). To examine the data, the writer used theme analysis: (1) getting to know the data and transcribing it all, (2) generating codes, (3) categorising codes into topics, (4) examining and refining themes, and (5) clearly outlining and designating topics. (6) Creating a report on developing topics (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

The interview focused on problems with reading activities and obstacles encountered during the reading learning process. In addition, the writer interviewed instructors to learn about their perspectives on teaching reading and the learning process and what challenges students may have while interpreting English reading materials.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are divided into two main parts based on the research questions: 1) What is a teacher's strategy for overcoming boredom in reading English text? 2) How do teachers use this strategy?

Reading with Visual Aids

Teacher 1 (T1) indicated that pupils frequently experience disconnection from reading English texts due to challenges with pronunciation and the incongruence between English spelling and phonetics. To remedy this, she employed texts augmented with colors and images to engage students attention. She integrated song lyrics to enhance the engagement and enjoyment of reading.

T1 introduced reading materials that integrated visual and textual components.

"I give text that the children are interested in, namely by giving it colour and pictures, so that the children who see the writing and pictures feel interested in reading it." She also played songs with English lyrics and guided students to sing along while reading the lyrics.

(Murphy, 2009) asserts that the utilization of visual aids, including images and color, can significantly improve students' engagement and comprehension through picture books. (Samuels, 1970) asserts that drawings can cultivate favorable attitudes toward reading, particularly among early teenage learners. In this environment, pictures alleviated reading anxiety and encouraged active engagement.

Vocabulary Scanning Strategy

Teacher 2 (T2) emphasized the significance of comprehending students' learning styles prior to the selection of teaching approaches. He employed scanning techniques aimed at recognizing and analyzing foreign terminology to render reading less daunting and more engaging.

T2 guided students to scan texts for difficult words and interpret their meanings collaboratively:

"One of them is a reading strategy in the form of scanning, namely interpreting vocabulary that is considered difficult. The teacher explains the difficult words, and the easy ones; students look for themselves." He also incorporated song lyrics, games, and English comedy films to make the learning atmosphere more enjoyable.

Vocabulary is fundamental to reading comprehension (Irwan Ro'iyah Ali, 2010). The scanning approach enables pupils to concentrate on essential words, thus enhancing their comprehension. This strategy corresponds with the constructivist approach, wherein learners develop comprehension via active engagement with the subject. Moreover, the integration of comedy and music cultivates a calm atmosphere, reducing students' affective filters and enhancing motivation.

Reading with Technology Integration

Teacher 3 (T3) identified pupils' difficulties with pronunciation and understanding of important concepts. To resolve this, she escorted pupils to the computer lab to engage with texts via English videos featuring subtitles. This multimodal method enabled learners to see, hear, and read concurrently.

T3 explained:

"I bring it to the lab so that students can read through videos. For example, about reports, I look for videos with the same theme. That way, they are more into the visual and listening, and that can later be drawn into reading." This approach bridged listening and reading skills while reducing the monotony of textbook-based reading.

The implementation of technology in reading instruction enhances digital literacy and multimodal learning. (Schmar-dobler, 2010) contends that online reading facilitates the improvement of pupils' literacy via visual and interactive stimuli. (Zhou et al., 2021) Affirm that digital picture books and video-based reading can enhance interest and cultivate reading

Exploring EFL Teachers' Strategies to Overcome Students' Boredom in Reading English Texts: A Case Study at Junior High School Level habits. T3 utilized themed movies to assist students in connecting prior knowledge with textual comprehension, a crucial element in enhancing understanding (McDonough, 1999).

Despite employing various methodologies, each educator had the objective of enhancing reader engagement and mitigating monotony. All solutions encompassed the principles of student-centered learning, multisensory engagement, and cognitive support (e.g., visual aids, vocabulary emphasis, contextualized information). These methodologies correspond with Raqqad et al. (2019), who observed that reading methods facilitate the integration of past knowledge with new information, resulting in enhanced understanding.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the methods used by EFL instructors to address students' disinterest in reading English texts at the junior high school level, identifying three key strategies: the use of visual aids (such as images and color-enhanced texts), vocabulary scanning techniques, and the integration of technology (including videos and song lyrics). These approaches varied based on individual teaching styles and classroom contexts but shared a common goal of increasing student engagement and motivation during reading activities. The findings highlight that when educators adapt their methods to align with students' interests, learning preferences, and needs, students are more likely to participate actively and develop a more positive attitude toward reading. These strategies not only reduce boredom but also improve comprehension and support language development. Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of creative and responsive teaching practices in transforming reading tasks into enjoyable and meaningful experiences in the EFL classroom.

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