

EFL Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of Active Learning in Reading Classroom

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, scholars and educators of the English language have shown a lot of interest in the active learning approach. Although a few studies have been conducted on teachers' perceptions and practices of active learning in classrooms, few studies have been conducted in Vietnamese contexts on teachers' perceptions and practices of the function of active learning in reading classrooms. Due to that gap, the current study was conducted to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding active learning techniques used in reading classrooms and the role active learning plays in reading instructions. The paper conducted a descriptive study in order to identify the active learning approaches employed by EFL teachers in reading classrooms at private language centers and investigates their perspectives on the role of active learning in reading instruction. The questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from two sources. The participants were twenty-six teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) from the province of Vinh Long. The result reveals that the participants had a favorable view of the role of active learning. In particular, they felt that active learning allows students to improve their critical thinking and reading comprehension, as well as teamwork, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving abilities. These findings have a number of educational implications.

Keywords: active learning, active learning techniques, reading comprehension

Introduction

In the era of globalization, English has become one of the means of communication between individuals and nations in business and in technology collaboration (Guillen, 2001; Seidlhofer, 2005). Therefore, everyone needs to acquire English, especially the oral and written communication requirements in their workplace. Reading is regarded as the most essential among the four primary language abilities. According to Zhang (2010), reading plays a crucial part in succeeding in many areas such as business, medication, science, etc. Due to its significance, it can be inferred that good education must be utilized when teaching reading.

Active learning has earned the attention of a large number of English scholars and educators. It is considered to have positive effects on the teaching and learning of English. (Kim, 2009;

Watters, 2014; Tran, 2015; Mulatu, Bezabih, 2018). However, the implantation of an active learning approach in teaching reading in Viet Nam is still low. Stephen et al. (2006) and Tran (2013) harshly criticized Vietnamese students' passive learning techniques. Despite the fact that both Vietnamese teachers and students may be aware of the benefits that active learning brings to the classroom, they are relatively successful in creating an active learning environment for their pupils (Tran, 2013). The researcher's observation only provides a small portion of reality; therefore, it is imperative to conduct an academic investigation of how teachers in English language teaching perceive the role of active learning in reading instruction in order to enhance the effectiveness of active learning on students.

Reading is seen as a fundamental necessity for Vietnamese students to master due to the national development vision of the Vietnamese government (Nguyen, 2022). Although a few studies have been conducted on teachers' perceptions and practices of active learning in classrooms (Teshome, 2013; Mulatu & Bezabih, 2018; A-Rahmane & Rubaii, 2018), few studies have been conducted in Vietnamese contexts on teachers' perceptions and practices of the function of active learning in reading classrooms. Due to that gap, the current study, titled "EFL teachers' perceptions of the implementation of active learning in reading classrooms," was conducted to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding active learning techniques used in reading classrooms and the role active learning plays in reading instructions.

Literature review

L2 reading in EFL settings

The following section gives the definition of reading comprehension, describes the levels of reading comprehension, and presents some major factors influencing readers' reading comprehension.

Definition of reading comprehension

Numerous academics have given the definition of reading comprehension. In the early stages, Goodman (1988) defines reading as a decoding process in which readers reconstruct what the author intends to communicate by developing meaning from the smallest textual units (letters and words) at the bottom to bigger and larger units (phrases and sentences) at the top (phrases, clauses, intersectional linkages). After that, Nutall (1996) gave scholars and educators a fresh approach to reading comprehension that he considers a process of interaction with the text to receive the author's intended message. Nowadays, the definition provided by Pardo (2004) is accepted widely and is the viewpoint that the researcher finds most fit for this research. Pardo (2004) states that reading comprehension is the process by which readers interact with the text and extract meaning by utilizing their prior knowledge and information. For the purposes of this study, the researcher has developed the definition of reading comprehension based on Pardo (2004), which reading comprehension is defined as the ability to interact with the text in order to generate meaning using higher-order thinking skills.

Factors affecting EFL students' reading comprehension

Several scholars have identified various characteristics that affect students' reading comprehension (Tran, 2021). Here, the significance of background knowledge, attitudes, and

motivation on reading ability is considered the major ones that actually have an impact to students' performances.

Prior knowledge is a primary factor affecting readers' reading comprehension (Stevens, 1980; Vacca, 2002; Nozen et al., 2017). According to Pearson et al. (1979), learners with topic-related expertise read the material more effectively than those with limited knowledge. Therefore, the absence of prior knowledge regarding the issue may limit readers' ability to comprehend the material (Carrell, 1984; Besoussan, 1998). It was confirmed by Alfaki and Siddiek (2013) that prior knowledge activation significantly improves the reading comprehension of readers.

Attitude is another component determining how well readers perform. Attitude toward reading refers to a person's perception of reading, which may stimulate or inhibit the activity (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1998). This is substantially confirmed by the findings of Martínez et al. (2008) and Pamuji (2015) that students with more positive attitudes were more likely to have superior text comprehension skills.

Finally, reading motivation is recognized by scholars as a component that influences the reading comprehension of students (Hermosa, 2002). According to Dennis (2008), motivation is crucial to the growth of reading comprehension skills. Multiple studies after that also demonstrate a significant positive correlation between reading motivation and accomplishment. (Ahmadi, Ismail & Abdullah, 2013; Ghaedrahmat, Entezari & Abedi, 2014, Ningrum & Matondang, 2017).

Active Learning

Definition of active learning

The early definition of active learning was given by Adler (1999). The author defines active learning as the process in which learners are accountable for their own education rather than the instructor. Bonwell and Eison (1991) emphasize that active learning extends beyond memorizing to examine, synthesize, and assess complex problems with the possibility of discovering several answers. In addition to that, Skinner (2010) proposes three characteristics of active learning: active involvement in learning (not physically active engagement), learning by experience, and cognitive engagement. In this study, active learning is described based on the definition of Bonwell and Eison (1991) as an educational strategy in which students engage in meaningful activities, participate in the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation processes, and generate knowledge through interaction with their peers or instructors.

Characteristics of active learning

According to Bonwell & Eison (1991), four characteristics of active learning are presented below.

The first characteristics of active learning are it allows students to do more than listen to lectures, and it involves them in activities (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). This means when students discuss what they are learning, it usually connects with prior experiences that they are learning. This statement is consistent with that of Cross (1987), in which learners actively participate in tasks when they learn more than passively receive information from the teacher. In addition to acquiring more information, their retention and recall of information can be improved

(Yazedjian & Kolkhorst, 2007; Berry, 2008; Cherny, 2008).

Secondly, active learning places less focus on information transmission and more emphasis on skill development (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). This was confirmed by Kember and Leung (2005) that learners in an active learning environment could develop their communication and interpersonal abilities. In addition, they also suggest that skills in critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and flexibility could be improved through active learning. In addition to that, group work, a special active learning style, can also enable students to strengthen their skills in working effectively with others and determining the correct response (Jackson et al., 2014).

The third characteristic of active learning is that it engages students in higher-order thinking (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). The level of critical thinking may influence students' reading comprehension, as Ramezani, Modaberi, and Moonesan (2016), as well as Zare and Biria (2018), demonstrated that critical thinking and reading comprehension have a statistically significant positive link to each other. It can be inferred that students with superior critical thinking skills are more likely to have superior comprehension.

Finally, active learning places a significant emphasis on the learners' investigation of their attitudes and values (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). According to a document published by The National Council of Educational Research and Training, the implementation of a number of active learning techniques provides students with the opportunity to discover novel ways of thinking about problems.

Active learning techniques

The techniques described below allow teachers to make use of students' background knowledge prior to reading so as to help students better comprehend texts by expressing their thoughts on texts after reading (Nguyen, 2022).

1. One-minute paper

One-minute papers are a good strategy for increasing student engagement in the learning process (Angelo & Cross, 1993). Stead (2005) states that a one-minute paper is recognized as a highly successful technique for tracking learners' progress and interacting with them since it provides the instructor and the class with fast and thorough feedback. Specifically, student replies reveal which concepts are not understood or are misconstrued.

2. Daily (or Weekly) Journal

The purpose of the Daily (or Weekly) Journal is to inspire students to apply what they have learned to their everyday lives and to explore the substance of the materials in broader contexts (Faust & Paulson, 1998). According to Nilson (2016), journal writing allowed students to record their intellectual and emotional reactions to lectures, dialogues, and readings. This strategy allows students to interact with what they have learned in the classroom in their own way.

3. Discussion

Discussion is regarded as one of the most effective techniques for promoting active learning (Gall, 1985). When a teacher employs this strategy, Engle and Ochoa (1988) suggest they make various forms of questions such as definitional questions, evidentiary questions, speculative

questions, or policy questions to encourage students' reasoning.

4. Concept Mapping

Concept mapping is a technique that enables students to find the relationship between course concepts (Faust & Paulson, 1998). As Lee et al. (2013) asserted that it aids them in synthesizing information, perceiving the big picture, and enhancing critical thinking skills and methods. When the teacher employs this technique, the students will create a list of ideas or facts for a certain topic through brainstorming, and from that, they can draw lines to demonstrate potential connections between related elements.

5. Visual Lists

In the visual lists technique, students make divergent ideas or perspectives on the blackboard or on paper. Faust and Paulson (1998) stated that this strategy is highly effective when used to encourage students to compare and contrast different perspectives and identify the merits and disadvantages of a position.

6. Role-Playing

Several educators believe role-playing is an effective method of active learning because it encourages the students to engage more, adds energy and enthusiasm to the classroom, and improves students' recollection of the information (Stevens, 2015). In the process of role-playing, pupils portray various personalities in a given setting. Role-playing can take the form of play depending on the availability of time and resources.

7. Panel Discussion

According to Faust and Paulson (1998), panel discussions are extraordinarily effective techniques for involving the entire class in the lesson since students are present in front of the class. In this method, each group is allocated a topic and tasked with researching it and preparing a presentation. Following the presentation, the audience may submit questions. Moreover, they argue that the instructor could assign students to assume a variety of roles when preparing the audience for this technique.

8. Debates

Debates are seen as a valuable technique that encourages learners' active participation in the learning process (Faust and Paulson, 1998). As a means of practicing the debating technique, the teacher splits the students into debate teams, assigns each team a position to defend, and requires the teams to provide justifications for their stance. After participating in the debate activities, students can not only master the material's substance but also improve their argumentation abilities (Seech, 1984; Johnson & Johnson, 1994).

9. Jigsaw Group Projects

Jigsaw Group Projects are also regarded as an active learning technique. The teacher and students progress through four phases of the jigsaw project (Clarke, 1994), including 1) students are first organized into home groups, 2) students are afterward expected to reform into focus groups, 3) these focus groups cease to exist, and the original groups' reform, 4) each member delivers their results to the rest of the group, followed by an in-depth discussion of the section's

subject.

10. Questioning

Questioning is considered one of the most popular active learning techniques. As part of introducing questioning, the teacher sets specific questions to assess students' knowledge during class (Faust & Paulson, 1998). If a student cannot correctly answer a question, the teacher can then ask another one and continue until he or she receives the correct response. Ajideh (2003) stated that both the teacher and the students could pose questions using this method.

Implementation of active learning techniques in reading instruction

A multitude of studies on the implementation of active learning techniques in reading classrooms has been conducted in the past decades. These studies below are chosen since it is most related to the present research.

In Ameli's (2016) study, the author investigated whether the think-pair-share technique improves vocabulary and reading comprehension achievement. Seventy individuals were separated into two groups: the treatment group (n=35) and the control group (n=35). The results show that vocabulary and reading comprehension skills have increased. Moreover, two sorts of the treatment group's accomplishments were significantly different from those of the control group.

Phan (2017) conducted experimental research on the influence of concept mapping on reading comprehension and students' attitudes toward the implementation of this technique. The participants were English majors from a Vietnamese university in the Mekong Delta. They were separated into experimental (n=32) and control (n=16) groups. Participants received treatment within five weeks. Based on the results of the post-test, individuals who received concept mapping had a greater level of reading comprehension than those who received the standard method. The majority of the experimental group participants considered idea mapping as a valuable tool for reading, according to the results of the questionnaire.

Phuong and Tran (2018) discovered the impact of pre-reading inquiry and semantic mapping on the reading comprehension of Vietnamese 12th graders. Fifty-two science-gifted high school students participated in the study. The 10-week intervention included three topics, employment, endangered species, and women in society. The results indicate that these two strategies enhanced the participants' reading comprehension. Particularly, those taught with semantic maps outperformed those taught with an inquiry.

Adeboju B. H. (2018) evaluated active learning techniques used by teachers during English reading comprehension courses in six Nigerian primary schools. Six head teachers, six primary VI teachers, two members of the School Basic Committee, the Director of Local Government Education Authority, and six focus groups were chosen using the purposive sample approach. The study collected data via interviews, documentation, and focus group interviews. According to the study, teachers have a good understanding of active learning strategies and use them in teaching English reading comprehension lessons, but they face some daunting challenges such as a lack of instructional materials, a lack of a library, a lack of qualified teachers, and a lack of time.

Sibarani J. K. (2020) found the impact of the Jigsaw strategy on reading comprehension at SMA 4 Negeri Pematangsiantar grade ten. The study utilized a descriptive quantitative research approach with a quasi-experimental methodology. This study focused on grade 10 students (X PMIA 4 and X PMIA 5) at SMA Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar. The researcher employed a cell phone as an instrument to capture video of the instructor and students' activities in the classroom throughout the teaching and learning process. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, whilst the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means the use of the Jigsaw teaching technique has a considerable impact on the student's capacity to read comprehension of recount text in grade ten at SMA Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar.

Research Questions

The research aims to (1) investigate types of active learning techniques EFL teachers exploit in their reading classrooms and (2) explore their perceptions of the role of active learning in teaching reading.

The aims of the study will be obtained by finding out the answers to the following questions:

1. What classifications of active learning techniques are employed by EFL reading teachers?
2. What are the perceptions of EFL teachers on the role of active learning in teaching reading?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

Respondents to the questionnaire

The main criterion for selecting participants in this study was that they taught in private language centers. The reason for this choice is that students who choose to learn English at these institutions may desire to achieve high levels of English proficiency in four skills, including reading, and therefore, teachers have more obligation to satisfy their high expectations by employing contemporary methods than in public centers. The respondents consisted of 26 EFL teachers from 4 language centers in Vinh Long province. In terms of gender, 84.6 percent of participants were female. Regarding age, most of the respondents (80,5 %) were teachers under 30 years of age, while just 19.5 % were teachers over 30. In terms of years of English teaching experience, 65.4% of respondents had less than five years of experience, while 34.6% had more than five years of experience. Regarding their educational background, 65.4% of teachers hold Bachelor's degrees, while the remainder holds Master's degrees.

Interviewees

The respondents were selected using a convenient sampling method, and the selection criteria were who have a Master's degree in Principles and Methods in English Language Education or a Bachelor's degree in English Education. The interviewees were 3 English language teachers who indicated a willingness to share their practical knowledge of reading instruction. Particularly, one participant has been teaching English for nearly 15 years, another for approximately six years, and the third for approximately three years. All three teachers who held degrees from Can Tho University were two females and one male.

Design of the Study

The research was designed as a descriptive study, which attempts to answer the questions "who, what, when, where, and sometimes how" (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). In addition, the current study employed a mixed-method combining quantitative method (numerical data was primarily collected) and qualitative method (narrative and visual data were primarily collected) as Creswell and Clark (2018) asserted that the use of a mixed-method enables researchers to comprehend the research problem much thoroughly. In addition, Fraenkel and his colleagues (2012) state that a study that combines quantitative and qualitative methods could help researchers gain a deeper understanding of the correlations between variables.

Data collection & analysis

Research instruments

For the purpose of answering the research questions, questionnaires and interviews were used as data collection instruments.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire has numerous advantages, including a high response rate, reliable sampling, and minimal bias (Oppenheim, 2005). It is also regarded as a highly efficient method of collecting data from a large number of respondents (Takac, 2008). As a result, the present study used the questionnaire to collect data regarding active learning techniques employed by EFL teachers in their reading classrooms and their perspectives on the role of active learning in reading teaching. The questionnaire had 30 items, divided into three sections. It included closed-ended questions and open-ended questions since these questions allow the researcher to acquire additional information pertinently.

The purpose of the first component was to collect demographic information, including gender, age, teaching experience, and educational background. The second component, which consisted of 10 closed-ended questions, was designed to collect information about the active learning techniques employed by EFL reading instructors. With 16 closed-ended questions, the third portion explored EFL teachers' perspectives on the role of active learning in teaching reading. These questions were related to five traits promoted by Bonwell and Eison (1991). A five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree) was employed in this questionnaire. The information supplied in this section is presented in the table below.

Table 1. The detailed illustration of the section of EFL teachers' perceptions towards the role of active learning in teaching reading

Clusters	Total items	Items
1, 2. Involvement in the learning process and participation in activities.	4	1, 2, 3, 4
3. Skills development	6	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
4. Critical thinking	4	11, 12, 13, 14
5. Exploration of attitudes and values	2	15, 16

The interview

Interviews were another method included in this investigation. After evaluating three types of interviews, the semi-structured interview was chosen because it provides the interviewer with a great deal of flexibility to fulfill its purpose (Nunan, 2005). In this study, the semi-structured interview was developed based on the questionnaire replies of the participants. Overall, the interview consisted of 10 questions organized into 2 clusters: (1) active learning techniques EFL teachers employ in their reading classrooms and (2) EFL teachers' perspectives on the role of active learning in reading instruction. The first cluster consists of questions 1 and 2, whereas the second cluster comprises questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. The interview was done in Vietnamese to reduce the potential for negative effects of speaking English on the expression of participant ideas. The interview was taped and then transcribed. The translation data was written in English afterward.

Data collection procedure

The main research activities are presented in the table below. According to the first schedule, in week 3, 50 participants were invited to participate in the questionnaire to investigate their perceptions and classroom practice in teaching active learning in reading. Then in week 8, 03, interviewees were invited to participate in the interviews to explore more about their perceptions and classroom practice based on the questionnaire result. Then, in weeks 11 to 13, the researchers could have enough data for analyzing and writing the thesis. In total, thirteen weeks were needed to complete the data collection procedure of this current research.

Data analysis

Following the data collection stage, each data set from the questionnaire and the interviews were analyzed. For the quantitative data, the SPSS software was used to analyze the answers to the questionnaire. For the qualitative data, the transcriptions of the interviewees were divided into themes to be analyzed. The notes were focused on the instructional activities that the participants use in their real classrooms in order to compare to what teachers have reported in the previous questionnaire. Therefore, the data can provide full EFL teachers' perspectives on the role of active learning in reading instruction.

Results/Findings and discussion

Types of active learning techniques EFL teachers exploit in their reading classrooms

Quantitative data

The first section of the questionnaire comprised ten items associated with types of active learning techniques applied in EFL reading classroom, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The percentage of the respondent's responses to items in the section 1.

No.	Items	Never	Rarely+ Sometimes (%)	Often + Always (%)
1	I ask my students a specific question and allow them one to two minutes to compose their responses.	0	61.5	38.5
2	By the end of the lesson, I have my pupils write their thoughts on the reading.	11.5	61.6	26.9
3	I pose a question and require my pupils to engage in group discussion to determine the answer.	0	26.9	73.1
4	Students generate a list of ideas for a certain topic through brainstorming, and then create a mind map to illustrate the probable connections between the ideas.	3.8	69.3	26.9
5	On the paper, I have my students list and contrast opposing concepts. The students are then obliged to assess the lists by posing pertinent questions.	7.7	69.3	23
6	Students participate in a role play.	0	53.9	46.1
7	Students are permitted to present in front of the class. The remaining students may ask questions.	0	46.2	53.8
8	I split the students into debate teams, assign each team a viewpoint to support, and require each team to provide justifications for its standpoint.	11.5	57.7	30.8
9	To complete a task, I require my students to read different sections of a text and communicate knowledge.	3.8	53.8	42.4
10	I ask questions at various cognitive levels.	3.8	46.1	50.1

According to table 4.1, the majority of participants (100%) used items 3 (Discussion), 7 (Panel Discussion), 6 (Role-Playing), and 1 (One-minute paper). In addition, more than half of the participants utilized the subsequent items, specifically 73.1% for item 3 (Discussion) and 53.8% for item 7 (Panel Discussion). Moreover, item 2 (Journal writing) with 11.5% and item 8 (Debates) with 11.5% were the least utilized techniques.

Qualitative data

The quantitative and qualitative data powerfully reinforce the fact that the participants appeared to have an understanding of active learning techniques and have been implementing some of them in their teaching environment. These techniques consist of one-minute paper, journal writing, discussion, concept mapping, visual lists, role-playing, panel discussion, debates, jigsaw reading, questioning, and other techniques.

In particular, the discussion was implemented by a large majority of the participants (90%). Moreover, two out of three interviewed teachers mentioned discussion as a technique when teaching reading skills.

“I usually create some minutes for my students to discuss issues related to the reading texts.” (Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 3)

Roughly three-quarters of the respondents, 72% of the respondents exploited concept mapping techniques in their reading lessons. However, none of the interviewees cited examples of the employment of this technique. The same as concept mapping techniques, the interviewed

teachers did not refer to the utilization of one-minute paper and visual lists, although more than 30% of the respondents reported the exploitation of these techniques in the survey.

Besides that, 70% of the participants in the questionnaire utilized questioning as an active learning technique in their reading lessons. This was also reported as one of the most particularly prevalent techniques among three interviewees.

“I usually ask some additional questions to check whether my students thoroughly understand the texts or not.” (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2 and Interviewee 3)

In addition, more than half of the participants (62%) exploited the role-playing technique, whereas only one interviewed teacher stated that she taught her reading lessons by having her students play a role.

“I have used role play to make the reading more appealing. Then I asked my students to have a discussion on how they understand and feel about the text before and after the play.” (Interviewee 1)

The panel discussion technique was used only by 54% of the respondents in their reading classrooms. However, only one interviewee recounted the implementation of this technique in their reading classrooms.

“I once asked my students to have a presentation about the reading text.” (Interviewee 2)

Moreover, journal writing was reported as the least frequently used technique according to the quantitative data.

Finally, Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2 also mentioned the use of other active learning techniques.

“When dealing with long reading tasks, I allowed my students to play games to motivate them.” (Interviewee 1)

“I ask my students to watch a video relevant to some reading text that hard to explain by words before the lessons in order to help them read easily” (Interviewee 1)

In short, the exploitation of the active learning techniques in the EFL reading classrooms embracing one-minute paper, journal writing, discussion, concept mapping, visual lists, role-playing, panel discussion, debates, jigsaw reading, questioning, and other techniques is named in the answers. Among these techniques, discussion and questioning are implemented by the majority of the participants.

EFL teachers' perception of the role of active learning in teaching reading Quantitative data

The second section of the questionnaire was comprised of sixteen items regarding EFL teachers' perceptions of the role of active learning in teaching reading, as reported in Table 3.

Table 3. The percentage of the respondent's responses to items in the Section 2

No.	Items	Disagreement (%)	Neutral (%)	Agreement (%)
1	Active learning encourages students to participate in activities rather than simply sitting in class, listening, and memorization assignments.	3.8	0	96.2
2	Active learning supports students in incorporating what they have learned into their identities.	0	15.4	84.6
3	Participation in activities allows students to retain information better.	0	3.8	96.2
4	Active learning reduces the capacity of students to receive knowledge from teachers.	19.2	30.8	50
5	Active learning can promote interaction amongst students.	3.8	3.8	92.4
6	Active learning can promote interaction between teachers and students.	3.8	11.5	84.7
7	Active learning facilitates the growth of students' interpersonal skills.	0	3.8	96.2
8	Active learning allows pupils to develop their problem-solving abilities.	0	7.7	92.3
9	Active learning allows students to hone their abilities to collaborate effectively with others.	0	7.7	92.3
10	Active learning enhances pupils' decision-making abilities.	0	15.4	84.6
11	Active learning affords students the opportunity to develop higher-order thinking skills.	0	7.7	92.3
12	Enhancement of critical thinking skills enhances students' comprehension of the text.	0	11.5	88.5
13	Due to their enhanced abilities to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate, pupils can quickly interpret what is communicated implicitly in a text.	0	15.4	92
14	Due to the development of critical thinking skills, pupils are able to analyze, evaluate, and critique textual information and ideas.	3.8	11.5	84.7
15	Active learning provides students with the opportunity to discover new ways of thinking about a subject.	0	15.4	84.6
16	Active learning allows pupils to investigate their own feelings about a topic.	0	23.1	76.9

The results indicate that the respondents have favorable views on the role of active learning in reading instruction. Particularly, all respondents (100%) agreed that active learning encourages students to engage in more activities as opposed to sitting in courses, listening, and memorizing tasks. There are 96 % agreed with the statements, "Active learning encourages students to participate in activities rather than simply sitting in class, listening, and completing memorization assignments," "Participation in activities allows students to retain information better," and "active learning facilitates the development of students' interpersonal skills." Similarly, most of the respondents (more than 92%) agreed that active learning could promote student interaction, which allows students to develop problem-solving skills and the ability to collaborate effectively with others, and which provides students with the opportunity to develop

higher-order thinking skills. According to 92% of respondents, the percentage of respondents agreed with the statement "Due to their heightened ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate. Students are able to interpret what is communicated implicitly in a text" rapidly is also very high. There is only 88.5 percent of participants, compared to other items, believed that active learning provides students with the opportunity to develop critical thinking abilities and boosts students' text comprehension. About four-fifths of respondents agree or strongly agree that active learning helps students incorporate what they have learned into their identities, and active learning can promote interaction between teachers and students. In short, over one-fourth of respondents agreed with the notion that active learning diminishes students' ability to receive knowledge from teachers.

Qualitative data

Both quantitative and qualitative data reveal that the participants held positive perceptions towards the role of active learning in teaching reading.

EFL teachers' perceptions towards the role of active learning referring to critical thinking

Both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that active learning can assist learners with honing their critical thinking skills. All three interviewed teachers concurred that critical thinking can be developed through the implementation of active learning techniques in reading classrooms.

"My students' critical thinking was developed through the process of evaluating their friends' opinions and offering cogent explanations for these." (Interviewee 1)

"Questioning techniques help my students to develop their critical thinking skills related to personal experiences." (Interviewee 2)

"Participating in the presentation is one of the most effective activities that help my students to improve their critical thinking skills." (Interviewee 3)

Additionally, two interviewees articulated that students' level of English proficiency was positively correlated with their critical thinking abilities.

"The improvement of critical thinking through these activities depends on students' levels." (Interviewee 2)

"Critical thinking can be improved through time, but it greatly depends on students' level." (Interviewee 3)

Besides the development of critical thinking through the employment of active learning in reading lessons, EFL teachers show the belief that improvement in critical thinking skills assists students with bettering learners' reading comprehension abilities. This finding was evidenced in the quantitative and qualitative data. Moreover, two out of three interviewed teachers arrived at an agreement on this belief.

"In the final test, the percentage of my students can choose the correct answers was increased." (Interviewee 1)

"My students performed tasks which required them to grasp main points, scan lexical

items and summarize the text better." (Interviewee 2)

On the whole, the participants assume that active learning performs an essential role in developing learners' critical thinking skills. The development of this skill may lead to the improvement in reading comprehension skills.

EFL teachers' perceptions towards the role of active learning appertaining to skill development

One of the principal characteristics of active learning is more emphasis on upgrading learners' skills. Thus, one of the fundamental roles of active learning is that learners can develop skills, which was strongly supported by the quantitative and qualitative data. More than 80% of the respondents showed that active learning enables learners to develop other skills in reading classrooms. Additionally, two out of six interviewed teachers mentioned the improvement in different skills, thanks to the implementation of active learning techniques.

To analyze the data in some depth, a number of skills that embrace teamwork, communication, problem-solving, negotiation, creativity, and presentation skills can be sharpened through the application of active learning techniques in reading classrooms.

Regarding teamwork skills, two out of three interviewees stated that this skill could be enhanced since in-class activities are conducted in groups.

"Teamwork can be improved since most of the activities were carried out in groups." (Interviewee 2)

"After working in teams several times, my students have learned how to work with each other effectively." (Interviewee 1)

In terms of problem-solving skills, none of the interviewed teachers reported an improvement of this skill because of the difficulty of implementing it in class.

Aside from these skills, the interviewee suggested that communication skills and negotiation skills can be developed thanks to the implementation of active learning techniques in reading classrooms.

"Students mostly work in pairs or groups, hence the development of communication skills." (Interviewee 2)

"I am not the kind of teachers that decide everything in class. I usually ask students to choose from what I offer them and try to convince the classmates to all agree to that. Therefore, they have to apply skills like negotiating skills to convince everyone in class." (Interviewee 3)

To sum up, active learning allows learners to develop different skills except for language skills.

EFL teachers' perceptions towards the role of active learning germane to involvement in the learning process and participation in activities

Besides the role appertaining to skill development, both quantitative and qualitative data prove that active learning plays a role germane to involvement in the learning process and participation in activities. All the respondents (100%) reached the agreement with the fact that active learning allows learners to engage more in activities instead of sitting in classes, listening,

and memorizing assignments. In addition, one interviewed teachers mentioned this role as sharing their hands-on experiences in teaching reading.

“They have much interaction so they can learn from their partners.” (Interviewee 3)

EFL teachers’ perceptions towards the role of active learning pertinent to the exploration of attitudes and values

Apparently, active learning offers learners ample opportunities to put forward novel views and explore their own feelings about something since active learning creates a learning environment in which learners express their feelings about topics of reading texts. This finding was reinforced by the majority of the respondents (more than 70%) and all of the interviewees.

“They have to respond to leading questions based on their understanding”. (Interviewee 1)

“I have my students think of it and give their personal perspective toward it” (Interviewee 2)

“I let my students think about the topic first then require them to discuss their opinions before class.” (Interviewee 3)

Findings from the questionnaire and the interviews indicate that active learning techniques EFL teachers employ in reading classrooms are widely varied. The most frequently implemented techniques are discussion and questioning. Additionally, the findings reveal that active learning plays different roles in reading classrooms. Specifically, it helps learners to develop critical thinking and other skills, gets learners involved in the learning process and participate in activities, and allows learners to put forward novel views and explore their feelings about something.

Discussion

Firstly, the findings indicate that the teachers adopted a wide range of active learning techniques, but the most popular are discussion and questioning. The results in the current study are similar to Ameli's (2016) study, where discussion is considered the most useful active learning technique in the learning classroom. Besides that, it was found that questioning was one of the techniques exploited in reading classrooms at the School Basic Committee (Adeboju, 2018). According to what was found in this research, the implementation of questioning and discussion in classrooms aims to render students more active since they have to make questions and respond to their classmates.

Secondly, the findings show that all teachers believe that applying these techniques helps students develop critical thinking and other skills, gets learners involved in the learning process, and participate in activities. The qualitative data fit the research of Ramezani, Modaberi, and Moonesan (2016), as well as Zare and Biria (2018). These authors state that critical thinking and reading comprehension have a statistically significant positive link to each other. It can be inferred that students' level of English proficiency was positively and strongly correlated with their critical thinking abilities.

Conclusion

The study aims to (1) explore the types of active learning techniques EFL teachers employ in their reading classrooms and (2) discover their perceptions towards the role of active learning in teaching reading. The results from the data collected showed that the participants applied a great diversity of techniques. However, only discussion and questioning are the most frequently used in EFL reading classrooms. In addition to that, the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that the participants hold positive perceptions towards the role of active learning in teaching reading. Particularly, the teacher participants believe that active learning can help learners to upgrade their critical thinking skills. Remarkably, the more proficient in English learners are, the better critical thinking skills they possess.

Like most of the research, the current study revealed a handful of unavoidable limitations. The small sample size, 26 participants, imposed the first limitation. Due to the sample size, the findings of the study can not be generalized to all EFL teachers at private language centers in Mekong Delta. Another possible limitation of the research is that the target participants were EFL teachers at private language centers. Thus, the findings just uncovered a minor part of the overall picture regarding the implementation of active learning techniques by EFL Vietnamese teachers.

Some suggestions for further research are put forward based on the limitations of the current research. Firstly, it is recommended that future research should be undertaken with a larger sample size to render the findings of the study more reliable and valid. Besides that, future studies should be carried out with teachers from different institutions such as high schools and universities.

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Biodata

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