Traditional Reading Methods and Neil Anderson's Active Reading Approach: Its Application in EFL Context

Pedro Fernandes Lukeba[1*], Agnaldo de Assunção Cardoso Fernando[2]

[1]ISP-Bengo, Department of BA, Angola

[2]ISP-Bengo, Department of AS, Angola.

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Reading is widely acknowledged as a core component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy, particularly in contexts where learners' exposure to spoken English is limited and written texts represent the main source of language input. Despite its importance, reading instruction has traditionally been dominated by teacher-centred practices such as reading aloud, translation, and post-reading comprehension questions, which often emphasise decoding and accuracy rather than strategic and metacognitive development (Harmer, 2007, p. 99; Wallace, 2001, p. 21). The main objective of this article is to comparatively examine traditional reading methods and Neil Anderson's ACTIVE Reading Approach in order to identify their theoretical foundations, pedagogical orientations, and implications for effective EFL reading instruction. Adopting a bibliographical and conceptual research design, the study is based on a critical review and synthesis of seminal and contemporary literature in applied linguistics and reading pedagogy. Key theoretical works on traditional reading instruction and strategy-based approaches were analysed to establish points of convergence and divergence between the two models. The analysis indicates that traditional reading methods provide structural organisation and teacher guidance but tend to treat reading as a product to be tested, offering limited support for learner autonomy and strategic awareness. In contrast, the ACTIVE Reading Approach conceptualises reading as an active and self-regulated process, explicitly integrating strategy instruction, vocabulary development, comprehension monitoring, reading fluency, and self-evaluation (Anderson, 2003, p. 5; Anderson, 2020, p. 3). As a result, ACTIVE reading is more responsive to cognitive and metacognitive dimensions of reading. The article concludes that while traditional reading methods retain pedagogical value, they are insufficient on their own to meet the demands of contemporary EFL pedagogy. Integrating strategy-based principles from the ACTIVE Reading Approach can contribute to more effective, learner-centred, and sustainable reading instruction across diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: traditional reading methods; active reading; bibliographical analysis; efl pedagogy; reading instruction.

INTRODUCTION

Reading occupies a central position in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy, serving as a primary source of linguistic input and academic knowledge for learners in contexts where opportunities for oral interaction in English are limited. Through reading, learners develop vocabulary, grammatical awareness, discourse competence, and critical thinking skills, making reading instruction a key component of language education (Harmer, 2007, p. 68; Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 273).

Despite its acknowledged importance, reading instruction in EFL classrooms has often been characterised by traditional, teacher-centred methodologies. These methodologies typically involve reading aloud, translation, vocabulary explanation, and the use of comprehension questions to test understanding after reading (Wallace, 2001, p. 21). While such practices may assist learners in decoding texts, they frequently treat reading as a product

to be evaluated rather than as a process to be developed, offering limited opportunities for learners to engage actively and strategically with texts (Debat, 2006, p. 10).

Research in applied linguistics increasingly emphasises that effective reading is not a passive activity but a complex cognitive and metacognitive process. According to Grabe (2002, p. 12), reading comprehension requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, background knowledge, and strategic processing. When learners are not explicitly guided in how to approach texts, they may rely on inefficient strategies such as word-by-word translation, which can hinder comprehension and reading fluency (Harmer, 2007, p. 100).

In response to the limitations of traditional reading methods, strategy-based approaches to reading instruction have gained prominence. One influential framework is Neil Anderson's ACTIVE Reading Approach, which conceptualises reading as an interactive and self-regulated process. ACTIVE reading encourages learners to activate prior knowledge, monitor comprehension, and evaluate their reading performance, thereby promoting learner autonomy and deeper understanding of texts (Anderson, 2003, p. 4). Anderson (2020, p. 2) further argues that strategic awareness enables learners to become more effective and confident readers across diverse reading contexts.

Against this theoretical background, the present article offers a comparative bibliographical analysis of traditional reading methods and the ACTIVE Reading Approach. Rather than reporting empirical data, the article synthesises and critically examines existing literature to highlight the pedagogical strengths and limitations of each approach. By doing so, it aims to contribute to ongoing discussions in EFL pedagogy regarding effective reading instruction and to provide insights for educators seeking to adopt more learner-centred and strategy oriented reading practices.

Background To Reading Skills

While scholars define reading in various ways, the underlying meaning remains consistent. Richards & Schmidt (2010, p. 483) state that "reading is the process of comprehending the meaning of a written text, which involves interpreting symbols and words to extract information and gain knowledge". Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning (Anderson, 2003, p. 68). It involves decoding words, understanding vocabulary, and making connections between ideas to comprehend the text. This process allows readers to engage with the material and draw conclusions based on their interpretation.

Reading is a process that occurs in a context rather than in isolation. This includes considering the author's background, the time period in which it was written, and any cultural or societal influences that may have shaped the text (Cook, 2008 , p. 132). Wallace (2001, p. 21), understands reading in three broad ways: as practice, product, or process.

Figure 1- Different view of reading
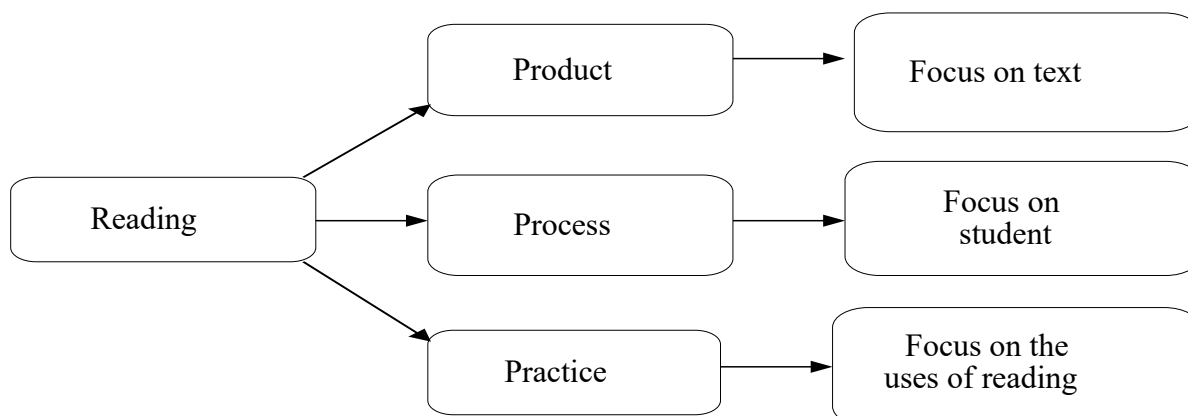
Source: adapted from Wallace (2001, p. 22).

Reading as Practice

This perspective is often explored by anthropologists and social psychologists (Wallace 2001, p. 21). They are interested in how reading and writing are used in everyday life, beyond just educational contexts. This includes examining how people engage with texts in various social and cultural settings.

Reading as Product

This approach focuses on the form and meaning of written texts themselves. It involves analysing the structure, content, and components of texts to understand their meaning and how they are constructed (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 483).

Reading as Process

This perspective emphasizes the active role of the reader in making sense of written language (Wallace, 2001, p. 21). It looks at the strategies and mental processes readers use to interpret and understand texts. This approach considers reading as an ongoing, dynamic activity where meaning is constructed by the reader.

The goal of reading is comprehension (Anderson, 2003, p. 69). Comprehension involves aspects of the world around us—including what we read—to the knowledge, intentions, and expectations we already have in our head. It is clearly the purpose of reading and of learning to read (Smith, 2004, p. 13). It also involves summarize and analyse the information presented (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 483). It requires practice and active engagement with the material being read. Reading can be done for pleasure, education, or to stay informed about current events (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 273). Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas (1980, p. 90) associates reading skill to three components:

- The recognition of black marks;

- The correlation of these with formal linguistic elements;

- The further correlation of the result with meaning.

The authors collectively emphasize that the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension. According to Anderson (2003), comprehension is the central objective when reading, which involves summarizing and analysing the information provided. Richards and Schmidt (2010) extend this idea by highlighting that comprehension requires active engagement with the text, which is a skill that develops through practice. They also note that reading serves various purposes, including pleasure, education, and staying informed, as stated by Richards and Renandya (2002).

Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, and Pincas (1980) provide a more technical breakdown of the reading process, identifying three essential components: first, recognizing the visual symbols (black marks); second, linking these symbols to formal linguistic elements; and third, associating the processed linguistic information with meaning. In summary, these authors collectively view reading as an active process aimed at comprehension, which involves both the technical decoding of text and the cognitive interpretation of its meaning, with various purposes for engaging in the act of reading.

Different Kinds of Reading

There are various types of reading that students can engage in both inside and outside the classroom.

For this research, we focus on skimming, scanning, intensive reading, and extensive reading. Each type of reading serves a different purpose and requires different strategies to effectively comprehend and retain information. Understanding the differences between these types of reading can help teachers determine what strategies to use to develop students' reading skills in English language.

Extensive Reading

Extensive reading means reading for pleasure or general understanding. It usually involves longer texts, like novels or articles (Scrivener, 2011, p. 268). The reader's goal is to enjoy the content or improve language skills rather than focusing on every detail (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 212). Students enjoy extensive reading because they choose themselves what to read (Bamford & Day, 2004, p. 2).

Shin (2013, p. 163) offers a clear distinction between extensive and intensive reading by focusing on the cognitive aspects of the reading process. He emphasizes that extensive reading involves the automatic and rapid recognition of vocabulary, which allows learners to construct meaning based on prior knowledge and reasoning.

This contrasts with intensive reading, which is characterized by a slower, more deliberate approach to word recognition. The author underscores the importance of automaticity in extensive reading, suggesting that it facilitates comprehension and information acquisition without the need for laborious, letter-by-letter decoding. Extensive reading is a simple yet powerful way for learners to engage deeply with English, improving their language skills through regular and meaningful interaction with the text (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas, 1980, p. 110). The aim of extensive reading is to foster good reading habits, enhance vocabulary and structure knowledge, and foster a love for reading (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 212). Furthermore, Teachers also aim to cultivate a reading culture where students engage in reading large amounts of material (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002, p. 295)

We understand that extensive reading is primarily focused on pleasure and general understanding, often involving longer texts like novels or articles. Teachers play a crucial role in promoting a reading culture, encouraging students to engage with a large volume of material.

Intensive Reading

Reading carefully to understand every detail, often used when studying or analysing a text. This involves a deeper understanding of the structure, vocabulary, and meaning (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 212).

Intensive reading involves study activities, requiring students to identify the text type, understand its meaning, examine grammar and vocabulary usage, and apply the information to subsequent learning activities (Harmer, 2007, p. 100). This type of reading is typically done with shorter texts and focuses on comprehension and analysis rather than speed (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 212). It is often used in language learning to improve understanding and retention of new vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Harmer (2007) and Richards & Schmidt (2010) both emphasize the analytical and detailed nature of intensive reading. Harmer highlights how this approach involves study activities that require students to engage deeply with the text, focusing on understanding its meaning, identifying text types, and examining grammar and vocabulary. This method is not just about reading but also about applying what's learned to future learning activities.

Richards & Schmidt (2010) complement Harmer's view by pointing out that intensive reading typically involves shorter texts and prioritizes comprehension and analysis over speed. This slow, deliberate approach is particularly effective in language learning because it aids in the understanding and retention of new vocabulary and grammatical structures. Harmer and Richards & Schmidt underscore the importance of comprehension and the detailed examination of language, making intensive reading a critical tool for building a solid foundation in vocabulary and grammar.

Skimming and Scanning

Skimming and scanning are both reading strategies (Baharuddin, 2017, p. 37). Skimming is a kind of reading where the reader quickly goes through text to get a general idea of the content. This is useful for getting an overview without focusing on details (Harmer, 2007, p. 101). This means to figure out where the key points in a text might be and then focusing on those parts with basic reading skills to get a general sense of what the text is about (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 532). We understand that skimming is particularly useful because it can help save time by allowing to efficiently locate key information without reading every word.

The two definitions provided for skimming complement each other by highlighting different aspects of the reading technique. Harmer's definition emphasizes the speed and purpose of skimming—quickly reading to gain a general understanding without delving into details. On the other hand, Richards and Schmidt's definition focuses on the strategies involved in skimming, particularly how a reader identifies key information and uses basic comprehension skills to extract the main ideas. In sum, skimming strategy means skip details, minor ideas, and examples as a method in reading quickly (Baharuddin, 2017, p. 37).

Scanning is a type of reading strategy which is used when the reader wants to locate a particular piece of information without necessarily understanding the rest of a text or passage (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 508). This technique involves quickly moving the eyes over the text to identify keywords, phrases, or specific details. Scanning is particularly useful when looking for dates, names, statistics, or other specific information within a larger body of text (Baharuddin, 2017, p. 37). The combination of these strategies into the EFL classroom can improve reading skills, and enhances overall language proficiency, making students more effective communicators and learners in English.

We understand that scanning, skimming, and intensive reading are all distinct techniques that serve different purposes in comprehension. Scanning allows learners to quickly locate specific information, skimming provides an overview of the text, and intensive reading helps with detailed understanding. This means that learners should be taught to choose the appropriate reading strategy depending on their goal is crucial. Teachers should practice these different techniques with students to enhance their overall reading proficiency and better manage their reading tasks across different contexts.

The Relevance of Teaching Reading Skills in Efl Contexts

There are two key aspects involved in teaching reading skills: First, it involves helping learners who are learning to read for the very first time. Second, it involves teaching learners who already know how to read in their first language (Anderson, 2003, p. 68). Teaching reading skills to learners who are learning to read for the first time requires a focus on phonics, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies (Wallace, 2001, p. 22). On the other hand, teaching learners who already know how to read in their first language involves building upon their existing skills and helping them transfer those skills to a new language.

The ability to read in a foreign language is crucial for professional success, personal growth, and academic studies in many regions worldwide, particularly in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) (Shin, 2013, p. 159). It helps people develop the skills necessary for a functional society by enhancing their capacity for lifelong learning, stimulating their visual and physical experiences and improving their social cognition and social competence (Muhamad, Hoang, & Chu, 2023, p. 13).The statements highlights crucial key roles in teaching reading in EFL context:

1. The ability to read in another language can open up job opportunities and enhance career advancement, particularly in globalized industries (Nuttall, 1996, p. 3);

2. it can also allow individuals to access a broader range of literature, media, and cultural insights, enriching their understanding and appreciation of different cultures.

3. Academically, reading enables students to engage with a wider array of scholarly resources, which is especially important in EFL education settings where English serves as a gateway to global knowledge and communication.

4. Reading can increase one's knowledge (Fauzi, Saman, Nurul, Octaviani, & Winey, 2022, p. 32)

Reading In Efl Contexts

Reading is a complex cognitive process that involves the interaction between the written text and the reader's background knowledge, linguistic competence, and strategic processing abilities. Anderson (2003, p. 3) defines reading as an active and fluent process in which readers construct meaning by integrating information from the text with their prior knowledge. This view is also supported by Wallace (2001, p. 9), who argues that reading is not a passive activity but an interactive process shaped by the reader's purpose and context.

In EFL contexts, reading often represents the primary means through which learners are exposed to the target language. Richards and Renandya (2002, p. 273) note that reading plays a central role in foreign language learning because it contributes significantly to vocabulary development, grammatical awareness, and overall language proficiency. However, EFL learners frequently encounter difficulties related to limited vocabulary knowledge, unfamiliar text structures, and lack of effective reading strategies, which may hinder comprehension.

Grabe (2002, p. 11) emphasises that successful reading requires the coordination of multiple skills, including word recognition, syntactic processing, inferencing, and strategic monitoring. When these skills are not adequately developed, learners may struggle to construct meaning and to engage with texts in a meaningful way. This challenge is particularly evident in contexts where reading instruction focuses primarily on surfacelevel comprehension rather than on strategic processing.

Traditional Reading Methods

Traditional reading approaches typically include bottom-up and top-down. The top-down approach has significantly shaped ESL/EFL teaching methods for many years. (Debat, 2006, p. 8). These approaches, developed and refined over centuries, aim to equip readers with the ability to understand and interpret written texts effectively.

Bottom-Up Approach

Bottom-up approach to reading involves focusing on the smallest elements of reading before understanding the larger context. The main method associated with the bottom-up approach to reading is known as phonics, which requires the learner to match letters with sounds in a defined sequence (Debat, 2006, p. 9). The phonics method linked to bottom-up approach involves:

1. **Word Recognition**: Start by learning to recognize and understand individual words. This includes phonics (sounds) and vocabulary building.

2. **Sentence Structure**: Once comfortable with words, move on to understanding how words form sentences. This involves grasping grammar, punctuation, and syntax.

3. **Paragraph Comprehension**: After mastering sentences, focus on understanding paragraphs as a whole. This includes recognizing main ideas, supporting details, and how sentences work together.

4. **Overall Text Understanding**: Finally, piece together the paragraphs to understand the larger text. This includes identifying themes, arguments, and the author's purpose.

The teaching methodology related to it is phonics, which consists of emphasizing the relationship between letters and sounds (Debat, 2006, p. 9). Furthermore, it emphasizes that bottom-up approach centres on phonics, focusing on decoding and understanding text by building from individual sounds and letters. The teacher plays a key role in providing explicit instruction on phonics rules and decoding strategies, while students follow structured lessons to develop skills like reading accuracy, word recognition, and pronunciation. Activities include letter-sound matching and word-building exercises, with assessments focusing on correct pronunciation and decoding accuracy. The learning environment is teacher-directed with lower student autonomy and engagement, and there is minimal use of students' background knowledge.

Top-Down Approach

The top-down approach to reading emphasizes understanding the overall meaning and structure of a text before focusing on the details (Anderson, 2003, p. 71). This method is particularly useful for grasping the main ideas quickly and effectively. Top-down reading approach is based on the idea that understanding a text begins with the reader's own knowledge and experiences. This means that instead of starting with individual words or sounds (as in a bottom-up approach):

• The reader uses their background knowledge;

•   Makes predictions about the content;

•   And then reads to see if these predictions are correct.

In a classroom setting, this means that a top-down approach should prioritize activities that help students generate meaning from the text, such as discussing the main ideas, making inferences, or connecting the text to what they already know (Nadea, Jumariati, & Nasrullah, 2021, p. 32). The key to joyful reading is allowing students to choose both the genre and the difficulty level of what they read. When students select their own reading material, they are more likely to engage with it enthusiastically (Harmer, 2007, p. 110).

Top-down approach provide joyful reading because it focuses less on perfect word recognition and more on understanding the overall message. This approach encourages students to become active, engaged readers who use their own knowledge and intuition to make sense of what they are reading.

Implication of traditional approaches in EFL Classroom

Traditional reading approaches have significantly influenced how reading is taught in the classroom. In many

EFL settings, "the typical EFL reading class revolves around a textbook reading passage" (Stoller, Anderson, Grabe, & Komiyama, 2013, p. 2). Teachers often employ techniques such as choral reading and reading aloud as part of their instructional strategies. These activities may follow the following procedures:

Prereading phase

•   The lesson typically begins with the teacher presenting the text or writing it on the board.

•   The teacher introduces key vocabulary relevant to the passage.

•   At this stage, students might be asked to preview the passage, predicting its content based on the title, photos, captions, and section headings.

Reading phase

Students then read the passage independently. This reading is often assigned as homework but may sometimes be completed in class.

Post reading phase

•   After reading, students typically answer a set of comprehension questions. These questions might be in various formats, such as true/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or short answer.

•   Students also complete vocabulary and/or grammar exercises related to the passage.

•   The teacher checks and corrects the answer.

Choral and reading aloud

Choral reading is an instructional strategy where a group of students reads a text aloud together, in unison (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 76). This technique is often used in language learning classrooms to help students improve their fluency, pronunciation, and confidence in reading.

Reading aloud is a teaching technique where a student or teacher reads a text out loud, usually to an audience or a class (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 483). Both activities help improve pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension skills in language learners. However, it is important for teachers to also incorporate other types of reading activities such as silent reading, paired reading, and guided reading to provide a well-rounded

approach to literacy development. These additional activities can help students practice different reading strategies and engage with texts in various ways.

Traditional reading instruction in EFL classrooms has historically been influenced by bottom-up and top-down models of reading. Bottom-up approaches emphasise the decoding of letters, words, and sentences as the foundation of comprehension, while top-down approaches focus on the use of background knowledge and prediction to interpret texts (Debat, 2006, p. 9). In practice, many classrooms adopt a combination of these approaches, often without explicit attention to strategy instruction.

Wallace (2001, p. 21) observes that traditional reading lessons typically follow a fixed sequence: pre-teaching vocabulary, reading the text aloud or silently, and answering comprehension questions. While this structure may provide a sense of order and teacher control, it often positions learners as passive recipients of information. As a result, students may become dependent on the teacher for meaning clarification rather than developing independent reading skills.

Harmer (2007, p. 99) further argues that traditional methods frequently treat reading as a test of comprehension instead of a process of learning. Learners are often evaluated on their ability to answer questions correctly rather than on how they approach the text. This emphasis on product over process may limit opportunities for learners to reflect on their reading strategies and to improve their reading efficiency.

Strategy-Based Reading Instruction

In response to the limitations of traditional reading methods, strategy-based instruction has gained increasing attention in EFL pedagogy. Strategy-based approaches view reading as an active process that requires learners to consciously apply cognitive and metacognitive strategies to construct meaning. According to Grabe (2002, p. 15), explicit instruction in reading strategies enables learners to become more flexible and effective readers.

Anderson (2003, p. 4) highlights the importance of teaching learners how to activate prior knowledge, make predictions, monitor comprehension, and evaluate reading outcomes. These strategies help learners manage reading tasks more effectively and foster greater autonomy. Stoller et al. (2013, p. 45) also emphasise that strategic reading instruction supports learners in transferring reading skills across different texts and academic contexts.

Shin (2013, p. 38) argues that strategy-based instruction is particularly beneficial in EFL settings where learners have limited exposure to authentic language use. By explicitly teaching reading strategies, teachers can compensate for these limitations and support learners in developing confidence and competence in reading.

Neil Anderson's Active Reading Approach

Neil Anderson's ACTIVE Reading Approach represents a systematic framework for strategy-based reading instruction. The acronym ACTIVE stands for Activate prior knowledge, Cultivate vocabulary, Teach for comprehension, Increase reading rate, Verify reading strategies, and Evaluate progress. According to Anderson (2003, p. 5), these components work together to promote active engagement with texts and to develop learners' metacognitive awareness.

ACTIVE reading is grounded in the view that effective readers are strategic and self-regulated. Anderson (2020, p. 3) emphasises that learners who are aware of their reading strategies are better able to control their comprehension processes and to adapt strategies to different reading purposes. Vocabulary cultivation, in particular, plays a crucial role in reducing comprehension difficulties and increasing reading fluency.

The approach also emphasises self-evaluation, encouraging learners to reflect on their reading performance and to identify areas for improvement. Thongwichit and Buripakdib (2021, p. 112) argue that such reflective practices enhance learner autonomy and contribute to long-term reading development. When applied systematically, the ACTIVE Reading Approach offers a structured yet flexible framework that addresses both linguistic and strategic dimensions of reading.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Traditional Reading Methods and Neil Anderson's ACTIVE Reading Approach

Aspect	Traditional Reading Methods	Neil Anderson's ACTIVE Reading Approach
Theoretical orientation	Rooted mainly in bottom-up and top-down models, with emphasis on decoding and comprehension testing (Debat, 2006, p. 9; Wallace, 2001, p. 21).	Grounded in strategy-based and metacognitive theories of reading, viewing reading as an active and self-regulated process (Anderson, 2003, p. 4).
Role of the teacher	Teacher-centred; the teacher controls text interpretation, explains vocabulary, and evaluates comprehension.	Facilitator and guide; the teacher supports learners in developing and applying reading strategies.
Role of the learner	Largely passive; learners receive meaning from the teacher and focus on answering questions correctly.	Active and autonomous; learners engage with texts strategically and take responsibility for comprehension.
Focus of instruction	Emphasis on pronunciation, translation, and post-reading comprehension questions (Harmer, 2007, p. 99).	Emphasis on reading strategies, comprehension monitoring, vocabulary development, and reflection (Anderson, 2003, p. 5).
Treatment of reading	Reading is treated as a product to be tested after reading.	Reading is treated as a process to be developed before, during, and after reading.
Vocabulary instruction	Vocabulary is often pre-taught through direct explanation or translation.	Vocabulary is cultivated strategically, encouraging inference from context and lexical awareness (Anderson, 2020, p. 3).
Pedagogical strengths	Provides structure, clarity, and teacher control; may benefit lower-level learners.	Promotes engagement, strategic competence, and long-term reading development.
Pedagogical limitations	May discourage active engagement and strategy development; overreliance on translation.	Requires teacher training and careful integration into existing curricula.

Source: adapted from Wallace (2001, p. 22).

From a theoretical perspective, traditional reading methods are largely teacher-centred. Instructional control remains with the teacher, who selects vocabulary, explains meaning, and evaluates comprehension after reading. Wallace (2001, p. 21) notes that such practices often reduce learners' responsibility in the reading process, limiting opportunities for strategic engagement. Harmer (2007, p. 99) similarly argues that traditional methods frequently prioritise accuracy and control at the expense of learner autonomy.

By comparison, ACTIVE reading adopts a learner-centred orientation. It explicitly teaches learners how to approach texts through strategy instruction and metacognitive reflection. Anderson (2003, p. 5) emphasises that effective reading instruction should focus not only on what learners read but also on how they read. Through components such as activating prior knowledge and verifying reading strategies, ACTIVE reading shifts the focus from comprehension testing to comprehension development.

Another key distinction concerns vocabulary instruction. Traditional methods often rely on direct explanation and translation, which may support immediate understanding but do little to promote long-term vocabulary acquisition or inferencing skills (Harmer, 2007, p. 100). In contrast, the ACTIVE Reading Approach integrates vocabulary cultivation as an ongoing and strategic process, encouraging learners to infer meaning from context and to reflect on lexical development (Anderson, 2020, p. 3).

In terms of metacognitive development, traditional reading methods provide limited opportunities for learners to reflect on their reading processes. Strategy use is rarely made explicit, and learners are seldom encouraged to evaluate their comprehension or reading performance. Grabe (2002, p. 15) argues that without metacognitive awareness, learners are unlikely to transfer reading skills to new texts. ACTIVE reading directly addresses this limitation by incorporating self-evaluation and strategy verification as core components of instruction (Anderson, 2003, p. 6).

Overall, the comparative analysis suggests that while traditional reading methods offer structure and clarity, they are insufficient for developing strategic and autonomous readers. The ACTIVE Reading Approach, by contrast, provides a comprehensive pedagogical framework that addresses cognitive, linguistic, and metacognitive dimensions of reading, making it more responsive to the demands of contemporary EFL pedagogy.

Pedagogical Implications for Efl Reading Instruction

The comparative analysis presented in this article has several important implications for EFL reading pedagogy. First, it highlights the need to reconceptualise reading instruction as a process-oriented activity rather than as a product-oriented task. Teachers are encouraged to move beyond exclusive reliance on post-reading comprehension questions and to incorporate explicit instruction in reading strategies, such as predicting, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating understanding (Anderson, 2003, p. 6).

Second, the findings suggest that strategy-based approaches such as ACTIVE reading can be integrated into existing curricula without abandoning traditional practices entirely. A balanced pedagogical approach that combines the structural organisation of traditional methods with the learner-centred orientation of ACTIVE reading may be particularly effective. Harmer (2007, p. 101) argues that methodological flexibility is essential in adapting teaching practices to diverse learning contexts.

Third, teacher education and professional development programmes should place greater emphasis on reading pedagogy and strategy instruction. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 62) note that teaching informed by learners' needs and learning processes is more likely to be effective. Training teachers to understand reading as a strategic and metacognitive activity can contribute to improved instructional decision-making and learner outcomes.

Finally, the analysis underscores the importance of fostering learner autonomy in reading. By encouraging learners to reflect on their reading strategies and progress, teachers can support the development of independent readers capable of engaging with texts beyond the classroom. Such autonomy is particularly important in EFL contexts, where opportunities for language exposure may be limited (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 280).

CONCLUSION

This article presented a bibliographical and conceptual analysis of traditional reading methods and Neil Anderson's ACTIVE Reading Approach within the field of EFL pedagogy. Drawing on established literature in applied linguistics and reading instruction, the analysis examined the theoretical foundations, instructional characteristics, and pedagogical implications of both approaches.

The analysis suggests that traditional reading methods, while providing structure and teacher guidance, often fail to address the strategic and metacognitive dimensions of reading. As a result, learners may develop dependency on teacher explanations and rely on inefficient reading strategies. In contrast, the ACTIVE Reading Approach offers a comprehensive framework that explicitly promotes strategic awareness, learner engagement, and self regulation (Anderson, 2003, p. 5; Anderson, 2020, p. 3).

The article concludes that effective EFL reading instruction should move towards strategy-based and learner centred pedagogies. Integrating principles from the ACTIVE Reading Approach into reading instruction can contribute to the development of more autonomous and proficient readers across diverse educational contexts. As such, this comparative analysis supports the view that contemporary EFL pedagogy must prioritise not only linguistic input but also the strategic processes that underlie successful reading comprehension.

REFERENCES

1. Anderson, N. J. (2003). Active reading: The research base for a pedagogical approach in the reading classroom. Cambridge University Press.
2. Anderson, N. J. (2003). Reading. In D. Nunan (Ed.), Practical English language teaching (pp. 67–86).
3. McGraw-Hill.
4. Anderson, N. J. (2020). ACTIVE skills for reading. National Geographic Learning.
5. Baharuddin, E. (2017). Reading approach use, effectiveness and EFL reading comprehension at University Muhammadiyah of Parepare. International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research, 6(10), 35–39.
6. Bamford, J., & Day, R. R. (2004). Extensive reading activities for teaching language. Cambridge University Press.
7. Broughton, G., Brumfit, C., Flavell, R., Hill, P., & Pincas, A. (1980). Teaching English as a foreign language. Routledge.
8. Cook, V. (2008). Second language learning and language teaching (4th ed.). Hodder Education.
9. Debat, E. V. (2006). Applying current approaches to the teaching of reading. English Teaching Forum, 44(1), 8–15.
10. Fauzi, I., Saman, T. N., N. Z., Octaviani, S., & Winey, B. G. (2022). The relationship between students' reading motivation and success in comprehending English texts. Journal of English Teaching and Learning Issues, 5(1), 31–38.
11. Grabe, W. (2002). Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice. Cambridge University Press.
12. Harmer, J. (2007). How to teach English (new ed.). Pearson Education.
13. Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). English for specific purposes: A learning-centred approach. Cambridge University Press.
14. Muhamad, B. K., Hoang, D. Y., & Chu, C. D. (2023). Reading habits and educational achievement of secondary school learners in Bishan, Singapore. Journal of Education, 1(1), 11–20.
15. Nadea, B., Jumariati, & Nasrullah. (2021). Bottom-up or top-down reading strategies: Reading strategies used by EFL students. In Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Education, Language, Literature, and Arts (pp. 30–36). Atlantis Press.
16. Nuttall, C. (1996). Teaching reading skills in a foreign language. Macmillan Heinemann.
17. Renandya, W. A., & Jacobs, G. M. (2002). Extensive reading: Why aren't we all doing it? In J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), Methodology in language teaching (pp. 295–302). Cambridge University Press.
18. Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice. Cambridge University Press.
19. Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. (2010). Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
20. Scrivener, J. (2011). Learning teaching: The essential guide to English language teaching (3rd ed.). Macmillan.
21. Shin, K.-C. (2013). Developmental approaches to the teaching of EFL reading. Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics, 17(1), 159–170.
22. Smith, F. (2004). Understanding reading: A psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

23. Stoller, F. L., Anderson, N. J., Grabe, W., & Komiyama, R. (2013). Teaching and researching reading (2nd ed.). Routledge.

24. Thongwichit, S., & Buripakdi, A. (2021). Enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension through strategy-based instruction. Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 12(1), 108–116. https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1201.13

25. Wallace, C. (2001). Reading. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages (pp. 21–27). Cambridge University Press.