Original Article

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Scaffolding Narrative Reading through Literature Circles and the Teaching and Learning Cycle: Evidence from Indonesian EFL Classrooms

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Abstrak:

This study investigates how integrating Literature Circles with the Teaching and Learning Cycle enhances junior secondary English as a Foreign Language students' engagement, comprehension, and motivation in extensive reading of narrative texts. Using a qualitative classroom action research design with phenomenological orientation, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and classroom observations. The intervention followed four Teaching and Learning Cycle stages—Building Knowledge of the Field, Modelling of the Text, Joint Construction of the Text, and Independent Construction of the Text—combined with rotating Literature Circle roles to scaffold comprehension and collaboration. Findings reveal that students progressed from supported participation to independent analysis, showing gains in vocabulary noticing, inferential reasoning, and critical response. Students also reported heightened intrinsic motivation, confidence, and ownership of learning, facilitated by structured peer interaction and equitable participation. Challenges such as time constraints, text difficulty, and performance anxiety emerged but also suggested avenues for refinement in instructional design. This study contributes conceptually by bridging constructivist, sociocultural, and genre-based perspectives, pedagogically by operationalizing scaffolding through structured roles, and contextually by adding evidence from Indonesian junior secondary classrooms. These findings highlight the potential of Literature Circles integrated with the Teaching and Learning Cycle as a sustainable model for student-cantered reading instruction and provide directions for future research on scalability, digital mediation, and application across genres.

Keywords: Literature Circles; Teaching and Learning Cycle; Extensive Reading; Narrative Texts; Motivation; Engagement; English as a Foreign Language.

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Introduction

Reading has long been regarded as a central component of English language learning, providing access to vocabulary, grammar, and conceptual knowledge that underpin communicative competence. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, reading comprehension is often one of the most challenging skills for learners to develop, as it requires the orchestration of decoding, vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge activation, and interpretive skills (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Within the Indonesian context, junior secondary students commonly encounter difficulties when engaging with narrative texts, particularly in identifying main ideas, recognizing generic structures, and making inferences (Kiswara & Fitria, 2023). These challenges highlight the importance of developing instructional approaches that not only improve individual comprehension but also create opportunities for collaborative meaning-making. Narrative texts, as one of the most widely used genres in EFL classrooms, serve as an effective medium through which such pedagogical innovation can be explored.

Narrative texts hold particular pedagogical value in EFL education because they integrate linguistic, cognitive, and affective dimensions of reading. Typically structured around orientation, complication, resolution, and optional coda, narrative texts include folktales, fables, legends, myths, and modern short stories (Anderson & Anderson, 1998). Their literary and cultural richness provides a space for learners to engage not only with language but also with values, imagination, and social reflection (Gamble & Yaters, 2002; Nathanson, 2006). Narrative reading has also been linked to the development of inferential skills and global literacy competencies, prompting interpretation of events and evaluation of character behavior (Mullis et al., 2020; Kiswara & Fitria, 2023). However, in many EFL classrooms in Indonesia, narrative reading is constrained by teacher-centered instruction, lack of scaffolded opportunities for student participation, and limited use of collaborative strategies. This creates a need for instructional designs that can integrate the richness of narrative texts with structured, dialogic approaches to comprehension.

The central problem addressed in this study lies in the limited engagement and motivation of EFL learners in extensive reading of narrative texts, which undermines their comprehension and participation. Traditional reading instruction often emphasizes text-based questioning or teacher-led analysis, which may not sufficiently activate students' schema, build their autonomy, or provide peer-mediated scaffolding. Consequently, students may view reading as a purely task-oriented activity rather than as an exploratory and enjoyable process. Without meaningful engagement, learners' capacity to internalize reading strategies and sustain motivation remains underdeveloped, creating a gap between the goals of communicative competence and the reality of classroom practices.
One general solution proposed in the literature is the use of Extensive Reading (ER), an approach that emphasizes reading large quantities of accessible texts for general understanding and pleasure (Day & Bamford, 2002). ER has been shown to provide comprehensible input, nurture reading fluency, and encourage learner autonomy (Renandya & Jacobs, 2021). By offering opportunities for choice, volume, and variety, ER supports motivation and cross-cultural understanding. However, the successful implementation of ER requires pedagogical scaffolding and collaborative mechanisms to sustain student engagement and ensure comprehension. Simply providing texts, even if leveled, is often insufficient for learners to engage critically and confidently, particularly in contexts where teacher-centered norms are dominant.

Literature Circles (LC) represent one pedagogical response to this challenge. LC is

a cooperative learning strategy in which students form small groups, read a shared text, and take on rotating roles such as summarizer, questioner, connector, vocabulary enricher, and passage master (Widodo, 2016). This approach has been associated with increased engagement, learner autonomy, ownership of learning, and collaborative skill development (Elhess & Egbert, 2015; Rogers & Leochko, 2006). In EFL contexts, LC helps students internalize reading strategies and cultivate a sense of community through peer discussion. Recent innovations also highlight the role of digital platforms in facilitating LC, where collaborative annotation and role-based interactions foster critical engagement (Kohnke & Har, 2022; Kos, 2024). Despite these strengths, LC discussions can vary in productivity without appropriate teacher scaffolding, highlighting the need for alignment with structured instructional frameworks (Wotring et al., 2023).

Another pedagogical response is the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC), developed within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). TLC is structured around four stages—Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modeling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT)—which guide learners from contextual understanding to independent performance (Derewianka & Jones, 2022). TLC has been widely applied to genre-based pedagogy, with evidence showing improvements in linguistic control, genre awareness, and reading-to-write performance (Hammond, 2020). Through explicit modeling and scaffolded practice, TLC provides a macro-structure that can be adapted for various text types and skills. However, while TLC supports systematic progression, it does not in itself specify mechanisms for peer collaboration, which are often essential in building student agency and motivation.

The integration of LC and TLC offers a more comprehensive instructional solution. LC roles provide micro-structures for collaboration, while TLC stages supply macro-scaffolding that guides learning from teacher modeling to student independence (Widodo, 2016). Within this synergy, BKOF primes schema activation, MOT clarifies role expectations, JCOT enables structured collaborative negotiation, and ICOT consolidates critical and independent response. From a theoretical perspective, this integration operationalizes constructivist and sociocultural principles, especially the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), by situating learning in mediated interaction. From a motivational perspective, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) explains how autonomy (choice and voice), competence (successful role enactment), and relatedness (peer support) can be fostered in LC+TLC classrooms (Printer, 2023). Together, these perspectives suggest that combining LC and TLC within ER can simultaneously enhance comprehension and motivation.

Existing literature on ER, LC, and TLC has primarily treated these elements in isolation. ER research has focused on scaffolded or digital implementations (Sun, 2022; Yu & Wen, 2023), while LC studies have emphasized peer collaboration and role structures (Elhess & Egbert, 2015; Widodo, 2016; Kos, 2024). TLC studies, in turn, have demonstrated the effectiveness of genre-based scaffolding in reading and writing development (Hammond, 2020; Derewianka & Jones, 2022). Yet relatively few studies have examined the integration of these three approaches into a coherent model for junior secondary EFL classrooms. Moreover, the existing body of work has tended to overlook Indonesian contexts at the junior-secondary level, where cultural, institutional, and linguistic factors may significantly shape implementation outcomes. This gap provides the rationale for investigating LC+TLC integration in an Indonesian secondary EFL setting.

Accordingly, the present study aims to investigate how integrating LC with TLC

shapes junior-secondary students' engagement, comprehension, and motivation in ER of narrative texts. Specifically, it addresses two research questions: (1) In what ways do students engage in extensive reading of narrative texts through Literature Circles? (2) What are students' responses to the extensive reading activities in Literature Circles? The study's novelty lies in its attempt to integrate ER, LC, and TLC into a single, scaffolded model that is both theoretically coherent and practically adaptable to classroom realities. Contextually, it contributes empirical evidence from an under-represented setting in Jakarta, expanding the literature on EFL pedagogy. The scope is delimited to one junior secondary class, where classroom action research provides both iterative refinement and phenomenological insights into student experiences. By situating narrative texts as emotionally and culturally resonant content, ER as the fluency-building approach, LC as the collaborative mechanism, and TLC as the scaffolding architecture, this study advances a model designed to enhance both comprehension and motivation in EFL reading instruction.

Method

This chapter outlines the methodological framework of the study, structured to ensure clarity, rigor, and systematic alignment with the research objectives. The methodology integrates the principles of Classroom Action Research (CAR) with an interpretive phenomenological orientation, enabling both iterative pedagogical refinement and in-depth exploration of learners' experiences. The following sub-sections detail the research design, site and participants, instructional procedures, data collection instruments, and data analysis procedures.

Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, following the cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis et al., 2014). CAR was chosen because it supports both pedagogical innovation and reflective practice, making it suitable for investigating the integration of Literature Circles (LC) and the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Within this framework, the study also incorporates an interpretive phenomenological orientation to capture learners lived experiences during the intervention. The dual methodological stance allows for both iterative instructional adjustments and the elicitation of deep insights into how students engage with extensive reading of narrative texts.

The CAR design ensures that the research remains responsive to classroom realities, with reflection and adaptation built into each cycle. Simultaneously, the phenomenological perspective emphasizes meaning-making from the standpoint of participants, thus highlighting the voices of students as they negotiate their roles and experiences within LC integrated into TLC.

Site and Participants

The study was conducted in a junior secondary school located in Jakarta. The participants were one eighth-grade class comprising a diverse mix of learners in terms of language proficiency and engagement levels. The class was purposively selected to represent typical Indonesian EFL learners at the junior-secondary level.

For richer perspectives, eight students were chosen for semi-structured interviews through purposive sampling, ensuring variation in gender, proficiency, and participation. The teacher collaborated with the researcher to co-plan, implement, and reflect on the intervention cycles. The teacher's role was pivotal, functioning as both facilitator and co-

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researcher, ensuring the fidelity of implementation and supporting professional learning. Ethical considerations were carefully observed, with informed consent obtained from all participants and their guardians, anonymity maintained, and participation framed as voluntary.

Instructional Procedure

The intervention integrated Literature Circles into the Teaching and Learning Cycle, adapted from Derewianka and Jones (2022) and Widodo (2016). Instruction unfolded across four sequential TLC stages:

Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF): Students were introduced to the structure and features of narrative texts (orientation, complication, resolution, coda) and were guided through key vocabulary and contextual knowledge to activate schema.

Modeling of the Text (MOT): The teacher demonstrated how to analyze narrative texts, explicitly modeling comprehension strategies and Literature Circle roles such as Text Picker, Passage Master, Summarizer, and Language Enricher.

Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT): Students engaged in small-group Literature Circles, enacting structured roles within Host and Visiting groups. This stage emphasized collaborative meaning-making, peer explanation, vocabulary noticing, and inferential reasoning.

Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT): Students synthesized their learning by summarizing, presenting, and reflecting on texts independently, consolidating their comprehension and developing critical responses.

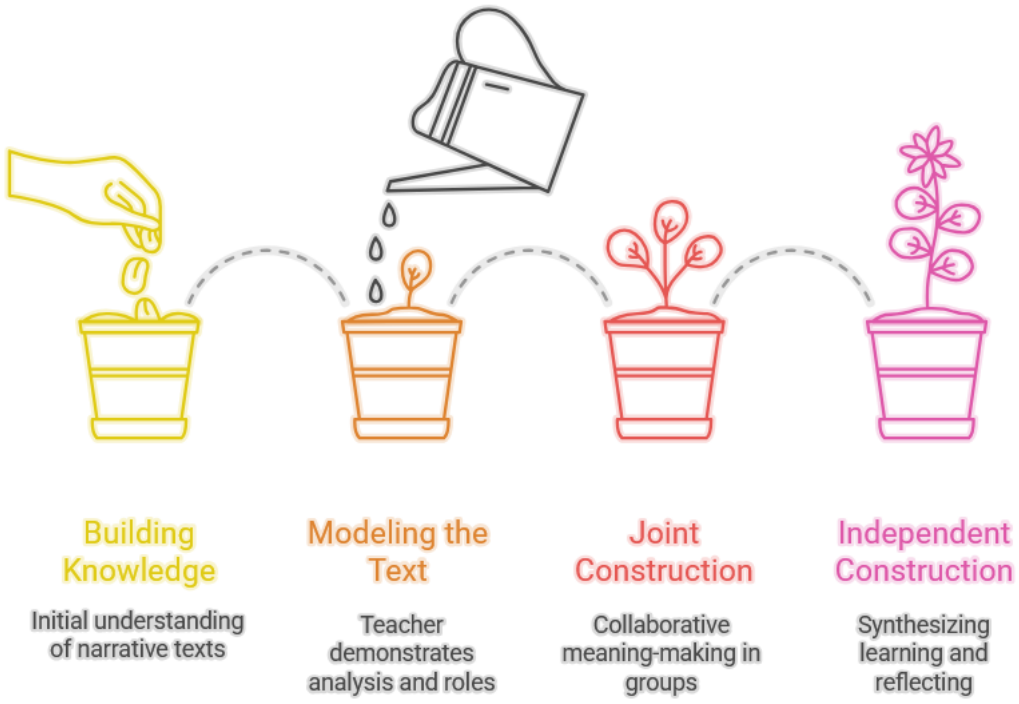

Figure 1. Teaching Learning Cycle of Literature Circle

To ensure equitable participation, students rotated roles and used structured tools such as role cards, discussion stems, and time allocations. Texts were selected collaboratively but levelled to ensure accessibility. The teacher scaffolded interaction by monitoring groups, providing just-in-time feedback, and ensuring balanced participation across members.

Table 1. Integration of CAR Cycles, TLC Stages, and LC Roles

CAR Cycle	TLC Stage	Focused Activities	LC Role Examples
Planning	BKOF	Schema activati narrative struct awareness, vocabul building	N/A (teacher-led)
Acting	MOT	Teacher models analy introduces LC roles	Text Picker, Pass Master, Summariz Language Enricher
Observing	JCOT	Collaborative group w with Host/Visiting role	Questioner, Connect Language Observ Note Maker
Reflecting	ICOT	Independent summarization, presentations, reflect writing	Students consolid roles independently

Data Collection

Multiple qualitative data sources were employed to enable triangulation and capture diverse perspectives:

Semi-structured Interviews: Conducted with eight selected students, interviews probed learners' engagement, comprehension, motivation, and challenges during LC within TLC. Questions were aligned with TLC stages and informed by Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective (1978) and Daniels (2002) on role enactment.

Reflective Journals: Students wrote short reflections after each TLC stage, recording their comprehension processes, vocabulary learning, strategies, and interaction experiences. Journals served both as formative assessment and as data for thematic analysis.

Classroom Observations: Using a structured observation protocol, the researcher documented participation, LC role performance, scaffolding strategies, and group dynamics. Observation notes were supplemented with photo documentation of classroom artifacts (e.g., word walls, discussion notes).

Teacher Reflection Notes: Co-researcher reflections provided insights into the instructional process, adaptation decisions, and professional learning outcomes.

These sources were selected to ensure a balance between learner voices, classroom practices, and teacher perspectives, thereby enhancing the validity of findings.

InstrumentsThe study employed tailored instruments to structure and guide data collection:Interview Guide: Designed around the TLC sequence, with prompts targeting comprehension, motivation, role enactment, and peer interaction. The guide enabled the capture of both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning.

Reflective Journal Prompts: Provided to students after each stage of TLC to capture immediate insights into comprehension, vocabulary, collaboration, and challenges.Observation Protocol: A structured schedule focused on observable indicators

of engagement, role fulfillment, scaffolding moves, and discussion quality across TLC stagesTogether, these instruments provided complementary perspectives and ensured systematic documentation of classroom processes.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, which follows six iterative phases: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This approach was chosen for its flexibility and systematic rigor in qualitative research.

Coding Frame: An initial coding framework was developed using a combination of deductive codes (aligned with TLC stages and motivational constructs from Self-Determination Theory) and inductive codes emerging from the data.

Theme Development: Codes were clustered into broader themes corresponding to student engagement during TLC stages and responses to LC participation.

Validation Strategies: Credibility was enhanced through triangulation across data sources (interviews, journals, observations), analyst triangulation with the collaborating teacher, member checking with participants to validate interpretations, and thick description to support transferability.

The analytical process aimed not only to categorize responses but also to trace the developmental trajectory of student engagement and motivation across the instructional cycle.

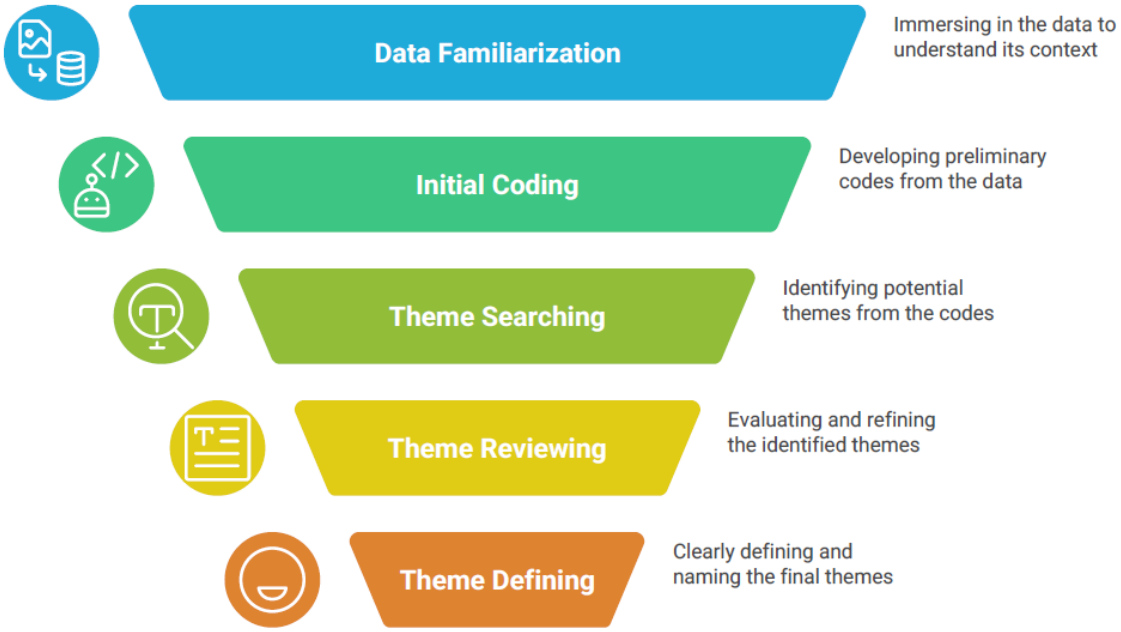

Figure 2. Thematic Analysis Procedure

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure research quality, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were followed. Triangulation of data sources and methods enhanced credibility, while rich contextual description supported transferability. Dependability was maintained through an audit trail of procedures and reflective memos, and confirmability through transparent analytic decisions. Ethical principles included voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality.

Student voices were anonymized in all reports and publications.

Results

This chapter presents the findings of the study, organized to address the two research questions guiding the investigation: (1) In what ways do students engage in extensive reading of narrative texts through Literature Circles (LC) when scaffolded by the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC)? and (2) What are students' responses to the extensive reading activities in Literature Circles, particularly regarding comprehension, motivation, and participation? The results are drawn from triangulated data including semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and classroom observations, analyzed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For clarity, the results are structured into three main sections: the trajectory of student engagement across TLC stages, students' responses to the intervention, and observed challenges and adaptations during implementation.

Engagement Across the TLC Stages (RQ1)

Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF)At the initial stage, students' engagement was marked by schema activation and vocabulary scaffolding. Observational data showed that teacher-led discussions on the structure of narrative texts (orientation–complication–resolution–coda) provided a shared conceptual base, which students later reported as useful for reducing confusion. Reflective journals confirmed that learners appreciated explicit instruction on narrative elements, which enhanced their readiness to engage with texts. One student wrote: "The explanation at the beginning helped me understand orientation, complication, resolution, and coda… I already had a picture of the story before starting to read."- Student MY, Reflective Journal, 28 July 2025) This suggests that BKOF succeeded in priming learners for deeper engagement.

Figure 2. The teacher is explaining the materials and students are listening the it.

Modelling of the Text (MOT)

During MOT, the teacher demonstrated how to analyse characters, plot, and themes, while simultaneously modelling LC roles. This dual modelling clarified expectations for both textual analysis and group participation. Students noted in journals

that teacher demonstrations reduced confusion and helped them see how LC discussions should unfold. Observations indicated that students referred back to these models during their group work, especially when enacting roles like Summarizer and Language Enricher. The MOT stage thus established both cognitive and procedural scaffolds.

Figure 3. The teacher model how to analyse plot, characters and themes

Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT)

JCOT emerged as the most collaborative stage, with role-structured interaction enabling meaning negotiation and peer scaffolding. Students highlighted the usefulness of rotating roles, which provided multiple perspectives on the same text. Reflective journals described instances where peer explanations clarified difficult vocabulary or plot points. Observational data corroborated this, showing high levels of verbal engagement, equitable talk time, and instances of self-initiated repair of misunderstandings. Thematic analysis indicated that JCOT supported vocabulary noticing, inferential reasoning, and collaborative interpretation. As YH's Reflective journal, 28 July 2025 contends that "In the literature circles activity, I understood and answered questions in the text through the roles of text picker, passage master/summarizer, language enricher."

Figure 4. Students are playing complementary roles and building shared understanding

Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT): autonomy and critical expression. At ICOT, students summarized texts, organized ideas, and presented findings, signaling a shift from dependence to independence.

Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT)

At ICOT, students demonstrated greater autonomy in summarizing, interpreting, and presenting narratives. Reflective journals revealed a sense of ownership: "I felt free to summarize the story and think for myself; it helped me express opinions more clearly." Student FC, Reflective Journal, 28 July 2025 Observations confirmed that students were more confident in articulating individual responses, with less reliance on peers or teacher scaffolding. ICOT thus represented the consolidation of earlier stages, aligning with the

gradual release of responsibility model.

Students' Responses to LC in ER of Narrative Texts (RQ2)

Enhanced Motivation and Engagement

Interviews and journals consistently reported heightened intrinsic motivation. Students expressed greater curiosity about narratives and eagerness to continue reading. One student noted: *"Narrative stories are usually exciting, and I want to know what happens next, so I'm more interested in reading."* - Studemt KV, Wawancara, 28 Juli 2025. Motivation was linked to both the appeal of stories and the interactive nature of LC discussions. The rotation of roles also sustained interest by preventing monotony.

Collaborative and Interactive Experience

Students described LC discussions as comfortable and supportive spaces. Interviews highlighted the importance of group rapport, with one student explaining: "It's comfortable because my group has close friends, so I can express myself comfortably." (Interview of students on 28 Juli 2025) Observations confirmed that peer interactions were respectful and inclusive, with students providing feedback and building on each other's contributions. This collaborative environment reinforced both cognitive engagement and socio-emotional connectedness.

Development of Confidence and Agency

The structured nature of LC roles encouraged students to speak more confidently. Learners reported feeling more competent in discussing vocabulary, summarizing content, and posing questions. This sense of competence aligns with Self-Determination Theory's emphasis on competence as a motivator. Observations indicated that students gradually moved from hesitant participation to active leadership in discussions, suggesting the intervention fostered agency.

Challenges and Constraints in Implementation

Despite positive outcomes, several challenges were identified. Time constraints were the most commonly reported issue, with students and the teacher noting that discussions often felt rushed. One participant stated: "The discussion is interesting, but sometimes time feels too short." Additionally, text difficulty posed challenges, with longer or more linguistically complex narratives reducing stamina and comprehension. Some students also experienced performance anxiety, particularly when presenting during ICOT. These challenges highlight areas where further scaffolding and structural

adjustments may be necessary.

Integration of Findings Across Data Sources

Thematic synthesis across interviews, journals, and observations revealed a coherent developmental trajectory: students progressed from teacher-supported comprehension to independent interpretation through TLC stages, while simultaneously experiencing increased motivation and confidence through LC structures. Observational data confirmed behavioral indicators of engagement (e.g., equitable participation, sustained focus), while interviews provided affective insights (e.g., enjoyment, reduced anxiety). Reflective journals offered cognitive self-reports (e.g., vocabulary gains, strategy use), reinforcing the validity of the findings.

Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter 3 by situating them within the broader theoretical and empirical literature. The discussion addresses the two guiding research questions: (1) how students engaged in extensive reading of narrative texts through Literature Circles (LC) scaffolded by the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC), and (2) how students responded to the intervention in terms of comprehension, motivation, and participation. The chapter is structured into four main sections: pedagogical implications of engagement across TLC stages, collaborative and motivational dynamics fostered by LC, challenges and their implications for instructional design, and contributions to existing scholarship.

Engagement Across TLC Stages: A Scaffolded Trajectory

The results demonstrate that integrating LC within TLC creates a scaffolded trajectory from supported comprehension to independent analysis. This progression mirrors the principles of genre-based pedagogy, where students move from contextual understanding to independent construction (Derewianka & Jones, 2022; Hammond, 2020). At BKOF, schema activation and explicit instruction reduced confusion, consistent with studies that emphasize background knowledge as a predictor of reading comprehension (Nuraeni et al., 2021). The findings highlight that genre awareness not only aids text comprehension but also prepares learners for collaborative discussion.

During MOT, teacher modeling of both textual analysis and LC roles functioned as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical enactment. This echoes Supriyadi and Susanti (2021), who argue that scaffolding in reading instruction is most effective when strategies are explicitly demonstrated. The dual modeling in this study clarified expectations, reducing ambiguity in role performance and supporting student confidence.

The JCOT stage provided the richest site for collaborative negotiation of meaning. Role rotation, peer explanation, and structured dialogue supported vocabulary noticing and inference-making, aligning with constructivist perspectives on learning through interaction (Arifah & Kustanti, 2022). These findings resonate with Novita and Nopitasari (2023), who observed that Literature Circles foster democratic learning environments where students feel empowered to contribute. The shift toward autonomy in ICOT confirmed the efficacy of the gradual release of responsibility model, demonstrating how scaffolded learning environments can nurture independence (Setiawan & Widiati, 2023).

Collaborative Learning and Student Agency in Literature Circles

LC played a central role in promoting collaboration and agency. By structuring

interaction through rotating roles, LC addressed issues of unequal participation and created conditions for equitable dialogue. This is consistent with research showing that structured peer roles enhance accountability, time-on-task, and depth of discussion (Saragih et al., 2022; Wotring et al., 2023). The findings suggest that role rotation not only diversifies student perspectives but also develops competencies across multiple reading strategies.

The development of agency was evident in students' progression from hesitant participation to active leadership in discussions. Such progression aligns with Vygotskian notions of the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), where learners appropriate strategies through guided interaction before internalizing them. Previous studies confirm that LC supports self-efficacy and reflective talk in EFL contexts (Widodo, 2016; Yuliana et al., 2022). The present study reinforces these claims by showing how the combination of LC roles and TLC stages operationalizes sociocultural theory in practice.

Collaborative dynamics also fostered socio-emotional growth. Students reported comfort in expressing ideas due to group rapport, a factor critical for building inclusive learning communities (Novita & Nopitasari, 2023). Such environments not only facilitate comprehension but also contribute to 21st-century skills such as empathy, respect, and constructive disagreement (Thomas & Rosenberg, 2024). The results therefore extend the significance of LC beyond cognitive outcomes to include affective and interpersonal development.

Motivation through Narrative Reading in LC+TLC Environments

The findings indicate robust gains in intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and enjoyment. These outcomes align with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that motivation is enhanced when autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied (Printer, 2023). In this study, autonomy was fostered by text choice and rotating roles, competence by successful role performance and scaffolding, and relatedness by supportive peer interaction.Narrative texts played a crucial role in sustaining engagement. Their inherent appeal and cultural relevance provided affective entry points, supporting previous research that highlights narratives as powerful tools for literacy and moral reflection (Gamble & Yaters, 2002; Nathanson, 2006). The combination of ER principles with LC+TLC created a balance between reading for pleasure and structured reflection, a balance noted in ER literature as critical for sustaining motivation (Renandya & Jacobs, 2021; Ro, 2024).The motivational gains observed are consistent with other studies that show collaborative reading contexts promote enjoyment and persistence (Rahayu et al., 2021; Sari & Lestari, 2022). However, this study adds nuance by demonstrating how motivation is distributed across TLC stages, with JCOT fostering curiosity through peer dialogue and ICOT consolidating confidence through independent response.

Challenges and Implications for Instructional Design

Despite overall success, the study identified significant challenges, notably time constraints, text difficulty, and performance anxiety. These findings reflect similar reports in LC research, where logistical limitations often reduce discussion depth (Wotring et al., 2023). The implication is that LC+TLC integration requires careful time management, perhaps through time-boxed routines, explicit scheduling of roles, and strategic selection of texts.

Text difficulty emerged as a constraint on stamina and comprehension, echoing Sun (2022) and Yu and Wen (2023), who stress the importance of leveled texts in ER. Teachers

must therefore curate reading materials that balance linguistic accessibility with cognitive challenge, ensuring that texts remain engaging but not overwhelming.

Performance anxiety during ICOT presentations highlights the affective dimension of reading instruction. While anxiety can sometimes motivate preparation, excessive pressure undermines confidence. This aligns with Zarei et al. (2024), who caution that classroom anxiety can hinder participation. Practical strategies such as peer feedback, collaborative presentations, or anonymous reflective journals may mitigate these effects.

Contributions to Scholarship and Pedagogy

The integration of LC with TLC contributes conceptually, pedagogically, and contextually to existing literature. Conceptually, it bridges constructivist, sociocultural, and genre-based perspectives by operationalizing scaffolding through structured roles and staged progression. Pedagogically, it provides a model that balances macro-scaffolding (TLC) with micro-structures (LC roles), ensuring both systematic guidance and equitable participation. Contextually, the study adds evidence from an underrepresented junior-secondary Indonesian setting, contributing to the global discourse on EFL pedagogy.

Furthermore, the study illustrates how LC+TLC reframes reading as an exploratory, student-centered process rather than a task-oriented one. This shift has implications for curriculum design, suggesting that LC+TLC can be adapted for other genres, integrated with digital tools (Kohnke & Har, 2022; Muslimin et al., 2025), and scaled across contexts with attention to cultural and institutional factors.

The discussion highlights that LC+TLC integration provides a structured yet flexible pathway for enhancing comprehension, motivation, and participation in extensive reading of narrative texts. Engagement across TLC stages illustrates the gradual release of responsibility; LC roles foster collaboration and agency; and narrative texts sustain motivation through affective resonance. While challenges such as time, text difficulty, and performance anxiety remain, these can be mitigated through careful instructional design. Overall, the findings affirm that LC+TLC constitutes a pedagogically coherent, theoretically grounded, and contextually adaptable model for EFL reading instruction.

Conclusion

This study has shown that integrating Literature Circles (LC) within the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) provides a structured yet flexible framework for enhancing junior secondary EFL students' engagement, comprehension, and motivation in extensive reading of narrative texts. The findings demonstrate a clear developmental trajectory across TLC stages, where teacher-led schema activation and modelling evolved into collaborative negotiation of meaning and independent critical response. Students reported stronger intrinsic motivation, confidence, and agency, supported by role rotation, equitable participation, and the inherently engaging nature of narrative texts. While challenges such as time limitations, text difficulty, and performance anxiety persisted, these highlight practical considerations for refining the model. Overall, the study contributes conceptually by bridging constructivist, sociocultural, and genre-based pedagogies; pedagogically by operationalizing scaffolding through structured peer roles; and contextually by providing evidence from an underrepresented Indonesian junior-secondary EFL setting. Future research could expand the model longitudinally, incorporate digital mediation, and examine its applicability across genres and contexts, thereby advancing both theory and practice in EFL reading instruction.

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