



Cultural Background and Reading Strategies: A Study Based on the Sociocultural and Constructive ESL Approach

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Abstract

This cross-sectional study aimed to establish the effect of cultural background on reading strategy and preference of learners of English Language from urban and rural origins. The purpose revolves around the need to discover more about how cultural factors interact with learners' attitudes and what kind of reading in English, what type of material they prefer, and how their cultural background hinders them. This research is qualitative research and the participants were sampled purposively 10 of which five were selected from the urban areas while the other five were selected from the rural area. Data collection includes interviews with the participants and also, reading of texts in English, with special attention to how students approach the respective texts. The framework of the present study is drawn from sociocultural theory and constructivism which pays attention to the cultural and social aspects of learning. The research findings indicate that the nature of learning settings that learners are subjected to, as a result of the difference in accessibility to urban and rural environments, results in the development of different reading strategies and preferences. Urban learners use more comprehensive and interventionist approaches to reading and have a higher inclination towards E-learning resources, in contrast to the rural learners who have a more conventional approach towards their reading skills and believe in book reading but face difficulty regarding issues of resource scarcity and exposure to English. This is because the study holds several implications concerning the teaching of English in Institutions as well as the construction of its curriculum. It reveals the practical importance of possessing a set of culturally appropriate approaches for teaching multicultural students. Thus, urban learners' integration of digital and textbook materials can further engagement, while rural learners need more scaffolding and access to textbooks and other types of materials. The implications of this study for future research are clear; more research needs to be earmarked for the development of reading strategies and syndromes; cross-sectional studies need to follow students for longer periods to observe the changes of the reading strategies; and comparative studies need to focus on cultural differences or, at least, use the existing data to investigate the effects of culture on reading strategies.

Keywords: Cultural Background, Reading Strategies, Reading Preferences, diverse Learners, Sociocultural Theory, Constructivism, Culturally Responsive Teaching

1. Introduction

Reading is an essential process, which is vital throughout the learning of the English language and forms the basis of academic accomplishments as well as the promotion of interpersonal interactions in global environments (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). With English persisting to be the language most utilized as a foreign language, learners from all parts of the world must be able to read and understand English texts. But reading in a second or foreign language is a phenomenon of learning that experiences a host of variables that involve linguistic competency skills, and the learner's cultural context (Koda, 2005). To shed more light on this area of interest, this work pays considerable attention to the learners' cultural background within the context of reading strategies and preferences. Culture refers to ideas, norms, and practices, which make up the frameworks of beliefs and attitudes that people worldwide, and they define how they will engage and understand texts (Norton & Toohey, 2011). For example, while learning, learners from collectivist-oriented cultures are likely to opt for collaborative reading schemes, while learners from individualist-oriented cultures will likely tend to embrace independent reading schemes (Hofstede, 2001).

Further, there are cultural disparities that may affect the selection of texts and the actual difficulties learners experience when reading comprehensively in English. For instance, students coming from contexts where the script is quite distinct from the best-known European model shall experience more challenges in terms of decoding and comprehension (Koda, 2007). Moreover, the cultural background of the learners can influence their motivation and the attitudes that they hold towards reading in English in a composite fashion that will determine their general proficiency and success in learning the language (McKay, 2006).

In light of the emphasis placed on the reading component of ELL and the possible effects of cultural background, the present study has been designed to compare learners with different cultural backgrounds regarding their attitudes toward reading, the techniques used, and obstacles encountered during this process. Another reason for reading in English is its importance as one of the fundamental aspects of studying a second language, as well as an essential requirement for people who need to read and write in English to gain information or for academic purposes as well as for the purpose of international communication that is continuously growing in today's high-stakes world (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). By developing the competency in reading and comprehending English texts, the learners are able to initiate themselves into a wealth of knowledge and information as well as to be able to

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inter-relate and participate at international levels. Moreover, they commented that success in reading in English is correlated with academic performance and career achievement in the context of globalization (Day & Bamford, 1998). It is for this, as everyone knows that learning effective reading skills in English is a central priority for learners and educators.

2. Literature review

It is clear that cultural background plays a very important role in the general learning process and, in particular, in terms of reading English text. Some students may be familiar with different strategies and preferences of reading depending on the education they had, cultural differences affect learning techniques and styles adopted in different countries (Jiang, 2001). For instance, learners who are from cultures such as those of Asia, where the culture reinforces the guessing and memorization of information, may use more frequent rereading and translation strategies as they read when compared to learners from cultures such as the American culture where critical thinking is valued, and thus such a learner may use more inferencing and summarizing strategies. Hence, learners' culturally acquired beliefs about reading, the type of texts to which they have been exposed, as well as their previous literacy learning history provisionally define their preferences for particular forms of reading materials and practices (McKay, 2006). For these reasons, teachers and professors need to be informed on these cultural factors to enhance their efforts towards teaching reading and fostering comprehension among the learners.

Meanwhile, a review of existing studies shows the significance of reading strategies for language learning by clarifying the meaning and purpose of these techniques. General reading strategies refer to learned patterns of processing or processing approaches that are used by the reader to comprehend and retain the materials that are being read. In the process of learning a second or foreign language, these approaches and methods are indispensable for promoting understanding and mastery of the language. Intensive and extensive reviews of the language learners' reading strategies and how effective these strategies have been over the years have been carried out. One of the earliest frameworks for categorizing reading strategies was proposed by Block (1986), who distinguished between two primary types: analytical and semantic strategies, which deployed top-down background knowledge and make predictions, and syntactical and lexical strategies, which rely on bottom-up decoding of the individual words and phrases. Building on this distinction, the author investigated specific approaches utilized by language learners in more depth.

Additional studies have provided the following taxonomy of reading strategies accessible to language learners: forecasting, rapid and distant reading for the endpoint, swift and quest reading for certain information, inferring, outlining and note-taking (Carrell, 1989; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). These strategies have been identified to be initiated in different ways and at different grade levels, whereby proficient readers are found to be more versatile, choosing diverse strategies as well as applying them more freely (Anderson, 1991).

Studies have also acknowledged and exemplified the use of metacognitive strategies, which include: planning, monitoring, and evaluation of one's tuition process (Flavel, 1979; Wenden, 1991). Metacognition is especially useful when reading, as learners' awareness of their own thoughts and actions allows them to monitor their reading process and modify their approach when necessary. Besides, in the analysis of the strategies employed by learners in the second language acquisition process, researchers have also explored factors that determine the use of strategies. These directions include- reader's language comprehension ability, cultural endowment, interest and the kind of text read (Bernhardt, 1991; Block, 1986; Carrell, 1989). For instance, when studying, high-able readers are likely to use inferencing strategies, and summarizing more than low-able readers who use translation and word-by-word reading (Bernhardt 1991). In addition, an analysis of the literature as informed the effect of instruction in the use of reading strategies has also been conducted. Some researchers have also established that pro-Parliament strategy could help language learners to enhance their reading comprehension as well as raising their awareness of strategies that they are using (Carrell, Pharis, & Liberto, 1989; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). This has several implications related to language teaching and learning and to practice and theory, indicating that the integration of strategy instruction into reading curricula can assist learners in improving their reading abilities.

2.1. Overview of Research on the Impact of Culture on Learning Styles and Preferences

A certain culture has a massive impact on learners when it comes to certain learning preferences and methods whether these are related to reading or learning a new language. Previous literature has discussed the influence of cultural context of the learners on the endeavor of learning, as well as the learner's behavior, feelings, and approaches towards learning. A theory that has been deemed as essential to driving this understanding is Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory which seeks to provide a framework of the principal dimensions that shape cultures including individualism collectivism, power distance index, and uncertainty avoidance index. These cultural dimensions have been seen as a reason for a difference in the approaches to learning that people from different cultures may prefer. For instance, those from collectivist culture may have a natural inclination towards collaborative learning as opposed to self-directed learning which may come as a natural response for those from an individualist culture (Hofstede, 1980).

When it comes to reading culture, people may experience various levels of differences in one society compared to another. For example, Nisbett, (2003) in his argument, highlights the fact that East Asian learners hold the Confucian heritage that does not encourage a systems approach to evaluation; instead, learners are likely to

concentrate on the general meaning of texts and clusters of related facets. In contrast, the European tradition, which incorporates the kingdom of thought from the Greek philosophy, is inclined towards segmentation and learners are encouraged to deconstruct texts and break them into fragments. Researchers have also endeavored to fathom specifications of the culture affecting reading strategies. For instance, the study conducted by Steffensen, Bert Pitcher, and Hilda Schlossel in 1979 as cited in the paper demonstrated that when tested for their comprehension of the texts belonging to their culture, Americans and Indians preferred their own culture's texts and the results of the test were more successful in expressing their understanding of the texts belonging to their respective cultural background. This means that cultural factors can influence the kind of study approaches the learners think are appropriate.

In addition, suitability of content can be influenced by cultural factors which may make certain forms of text or reading preferred by learners. For instance, a study conducted by Shen (2005) emphasized that Chinese learners of ESL preferred to read content originating from their culture and experience. In summary, the study emphasizes the role of social factors for learning when it comes to reading education or printed texts in language learners in particular. Hearing about these cultural differences in regard to learning preferences and approaches, it can be seen that it is very important for educators to be culturally sensitive about their methods of teaching.

2.2. Relevant Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical frameworks to be used in conducting this research are as follows. There are two crucial theoretical frames that will be related to the issue, which concerns the investigation of the effects of cultural context on reading approaches and choices about EL usage – sociocultural theory and constructivism. Regarding cultural and social aspects both the frameworks provide the understanding of how the contextual factors affect learners.

2.2.1. Sociocultural Theory

Cognitive pragmatism as outlined by Vygotsky (1978) under the sociocultural theories shows that learning and development of human cognition depends on the kind of society one is raised. From this perspective, learning is explained as the process of construction of meaning through social activity and due to influence from members of a society and their context. From a sociocultural perspective, therefore, reading involves cognition, culture, and social practice, which means that current learners' preferences and practices learning activities in reading depend on the culture that they find themselves in as well as the learning community that the learners engage with (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). It also focuses on the theory of cultural tools and how students can use these tools including language and literacy as a way of comprehending literature and learning.

2.2.2. Constructivism

Constructivism, advanced by Piaget (1954) and further developed by Bruner (1966), holds that knowledge and understanding are forged by the individual from experiences as well as by active thinking. The constructivist theory notes that learners are active in the construction of knowledge and prescribes that the process of learning is shaped by the existing knowledge a learner brings, experiences, & cultural context. In the case of reading, a constructivist approach means that learners understand texts in accordance with prior knowledge structures and cultural scripts, and that they have more flexible reading approaches and preferences due to their cultural and personally acquired backgrounds (Goodman, 1986). Sociocultural perspective and constructivism are two theories that assist in examining how cultural context affects reading approach and attitudes towards English language learning. Sociocultural theory notes the significance of the cultural and social environments within which learners perform, while constructivism posits the centrality of LPS's experiences and past knowledge in the construction of meanings out of texts. Altogether, these theories present a coherent framework that enables one to understand the relations between culture and cognition and their impact on reading in language acquisition processes.

2.3. Research questions

Given the importance of reading in English language learning and the potential impact of cultural background on reading strategies and preferences, this study aims to address the following research questions: Given the importance of reading in English language learning and the potential impact of cultural background on reading strategies and preferences, this study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What strategies do learners from different cultural backgrounds employ when it comes to reading from the English language?
2. What are some of the easy reading techniques preferred by learners of various backgrounds?
3. What are the difficulties that learners face in reading due to the cultural contexts?

3. Research Methodology

The following is a summarized research methodology that highlights the research design, sampling technique and the deduction, collection and analysis of data for the study focused on the impact of cultural background on reading profiles and inclination towards English language learning. The approach is intended for selecting the more detailed expressions of cultural effects on the learners' reading habits considering their diverse origins and language skills.

3.1. Research Design and Sampling

In this research, the writer uses a qualitative method of research to propose the various aspects that influence the use of reading strategies and preferences in learning English. The nature of the qualitative approach enables a

deeper understanding of participants' stance toward the experience in the study, including their perceptions and practices concerning reading in L2, which enables a more comprehensive exploration of the situation. Since this was a cross-sectional survey the sampling method adopted was through purposeful samples whereby the participants were purposively selected. According to the method of sample selection, the study uses purposive sampling to identify participants who can effectively contribute to the study questions. To address concerns of cultural bias, five participants from rural areas and five from urban areas are selected to include a demographically diverse sample of 10 participants. The participants include intermediate to advanced-level learners of English skills; such an approach will help the participants acquire a broad understanding of reading strategies and preferences because of the demonstrated diverse level of skills in the English language among the participants.

3.2. Data Collection Instruments

Data is collected through two primary instruments: Data is collected through two primary instruments:

3.2.1. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are used to obtain more explicit data about the participants' understanding of reading strategies, preferences and experiences with the English texts. The interviews are meant to discuss how the cultural backgrounds of the participants shape their reading process and the difficulties they face when studying the English language.

3.2.2. Reading Assessments

Students are expected to perform a close reading of apt selected English samples, which may be either Belorussian-oriented or American-oriented and should encompass different genres and difficulty levels. Included in the post-reading activities, they have to closely read/answer crucial questions and evaluate the strategies used in reading. This makes it possible to examine, for instance, reading comprehension skills as well as strategies being used in real-time

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis follows a thematic analysis approach, which involves several steps:

Transcription: Moreover, all the interviews and the reading reflection responses are documented in full and discussed in full for the accuracy of the analysis.

Coding: The transcriptions are coded and analyzed to determine past patterns that are again and again used while discussing reading methods, choosing the type of books, or containing cultural bias. Codes are created before the data collection as well as during the data analysis: deductive codes come from the distillation of research questions and theoretical propositions; inductive codes derive from the data.

Theme Development: The codes are then categorized into broader categories that summarize what the participants were trying to express concerning their reading and how culture plays a role in their experiences.

Interpretation: The themes are analyzed in relation to prior studies and theories, which is engaging for understanding the ways cultural context might influence the approach to reading and the choice of learning English.

In the process of the analysis, the researcher remains as objective as possible and does not let his/her personal opinions influence the interpretation of the data acquired.

4. Analysis of Responses of the Participants

4.1. Interview questions and responses from the students of urban background

Student 1:

Approach to Reading: "I normally read as quickly as possible and when I feel that I have understood general feel of the texts I go through it again thoroughly, slowly I engage a lot of memory of my own experiences in order to make it easier to understand."

Preferred Strategies and Materials: "I enjoy using interactive online materials and e-books particularly because they capture my attention. I can focus on the notes, highlight the text and make cross notes to arrange my information."

Challenges: Sometimes I do not understand idiomatic phrases and jokes from other countries because sometimes the jokes come with a certain background that I might not be privy to understand."

Student 2:

Approach to Reading: "I read English often with a focus on understanding the meanings of the words and the structure of the sentence since I have to look at the dictionary for the meaning of many a word. I strive to get a feel of the author's intention when he or she wrote the text."

Preferred Strategies and Materials: "I prefer printed books and academic journals because they assist me in concentrating more," said the subject. Likewise, 'paraphrasing portions of the text is an approach I employ frequently."

Challenges: "Because of the large volumes of reading expected in many academic settings my biggest challenge is meeting the dictation rate of reading."

Student 3:

Approach to Reading: "While reading I also pose questions to myself, I also aim at guessing the occurrences in the following sequence. This makes me glib."

Preferred Strategies and Materials: “It is better when there are videos and podcasts and other text types incorporated in the process because they add context and make the study process more interesting.”

Challenges: Some of the difficulties that learners experience include: “I have a problem of comprehension when texts contain a lot of syntactic and/or lexical density; this is inconvenient and slows me down.”

Student 4:

Approach to Reading: “I start from scanning the shape of it first before reading for meaning and for the text meaning, I understand meaning from the surrounding words (context clues) of a particular word if it is unknown to me.”

Preferred Strategies and Materials: “I do like reading novels and literature as it is entertaining while it aids me to enhance my language proficiency. I like to highlight texts.”

Challenges: “In academic work, I sometimes have problems with knowing the correct cultural implications of expressions or ideas in English texts.”

Student 5:

Approach to Reading: “First, I learn my purpose for reading which makes my reading goals clear to me and then I remember to read in segments, and try to summarize what I am reading in my head.”

Preferred Strategies and Materials: In their interview, they shared that they like to read articles created online and news websites are their preferred sources as they are updated and contain current information. This pointer works hand in hand with the first pointer, that the respondent uses mind mapping.

Challenges: “I am faced with pronunciation/intonation problems especially when reading aloud to fathom students and in my overall comprehension of English texts.”

The responses reveal the socio-cultural practice that learners from urban schools have adopted while reading English texts, their preferred approach and the difficulties they encounter. They draw the audience’s attention to the specifics of the approach concerning the reading of people of different cultural backgrounds

4.2. Interview Questions Responses from the rural Background students

Student 1:

Approach to Reading: Reading in English is very slow; I read words and sentences uttering them and trying to understand the meaning of the words I have read; sometimes I translate some words into my native language to get the meaning of what I haven’t understood.

Preferred Strategies and Materials: “Since I do not often use the internet, I rely on textbooks and other printed materials only to study. “To study, I tend to memorize things and repeat them several times. “

Challenges: In the experience shared, the main issues reported are as follows: ‘I need practice with vocabulary and grammar – here in Ecuador there are not many opportunities to practice English other than in class so reading becomes a challenge. ’

Student 2:

Approach to Reading: “I usually spend a lot of time reading, going over each concept to make sure that I understand it clearly. Sometimes I try to paint a picture in my head based upon what I’ve read. Sometimes I have discussions with my friends about what I’ve read in order to hear different points of view on the matter. “

Preferred Strategies and Materials: “The books from local library and newspapers seem to be convincing to me. When it comes to discussing some texts with my study partners I comprehend the things easier. “

Challenges: Here, the bar, I find it rather difficult to find reading materials on different topics. Most of the reading materials available are either old or in areas of my little interest.

Student 3:

Approach to Reading: When I open the text, the first thing is I try to read the whole title and the headings of the article. So, I have an idea about what I am going to read now I read each paragraph and try my level best to write the summary of the whole thing in my own words. “

Preferred Strategies and Materials: “I have school books and sometimes I will access other sources when available at my disposal. I will take notes and write brief summaries for better comprehension. “

Challenges: “Sometimes it is difficult for me to grasp the cultural nuances of texts in English and certain idioms may seem perplexing which distracts me. “

Student 4:

Approach to Reading: “I look at reading in English as interaction with the subject, which is to be associated with oneself. I use as many questions as possible to clear the misunderstanding. “

Preferred Strategies and Materials: “I like to listen to stories and folk tales in English language specifically in my English class for comprehending the story/ tale I have a dictionary with me and maintain a writing book where I write down any new word that I come across. “

Challenges: “My greatest concern is poor spoken English; one might understand texts that aren’t clear when spoken if they are accustomed to the sound of the words. “

Student 5:

Approach to Reading: From the following questions: How do you engage with source material? What strategies do you use to organize your thinking? Much attention, she reveals, is paid to these are the questions that I asked her. Here is what she told me in response: I read in small chunks, taking breaks to reflect on what I have read.

Preferred Strategies and Materials: “I look for articles and other sources of information that Revolve around farming or lifestyle in the countryside I also tend to highlight or annotate pieces of information that I find quite important. “

Challenges: In some cases, one becomes highly motivated to read in English but as soon as this ceases to interest one, as soon as one fails to perceive practical use for reading, one slackens.

These responses help give us a sense of how the learners from rural areas learn differently when it comes to reading English texts, and what their preferences and difficulties are. They point to the imperative of the development of culturally appropriate materials to facilitate reading in diverse classrooms and countries.

5. Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis of the responses and reading assessments of students from urban and rural backgrounds reveals distinct approaches, preferences, and challenges in reading English texts, organized according to the research questions: The thematic analysis of the responses and reading assessments of students from urban and rural backgrounds reveals distinct approaches, preferences, and challenges in reading English texts, organized according to the research questions:

i. **Research Question 1: What does the interaction of the learners with English as a second language entail in terms of reading?**

Students from urban regions are more likely to practice the more universal and intentional characteristics using relevant actions and interactions. They rely on the monitor to read casually to gain an overall understanding before going deep down and connect whatever they read to their own realities to improve their understanding. It is worth mentioning interactive and synthetic methods as often they analyze texts and imply the determination of the author’s purpose. However, the rural student sat reading the details while using visualization approaches which required translation into L1. They use a very systematic method where they first translate certain segments into their local languages to grasp what is conveyed and they try to create some kind of image of it. Their reading, thus, is more deliberate and they read by breaking chunks of information for improved understanding. These have a more complex and social approach to reading when compared to their counterparts from rural settings, this is most probably due to their exposure to the various forms of reading and literacy. When creating geometric proofs, rural students relied on more known and structured approaches likely attributed to less practice and resources available to them.

ii. **Research Question 2: When referring to programs, textbooks, and other materials, which kind of reading approaches do learners from different cultures prefer?**

Underlining the text, and using post-it notes or other types of markers urban students favor digital and more dynamic forms of material organization. It also reveals a stronger affinity for multimedia and source materials in academic journals, making use of annotation to interact with their content. While the case is completely different for the rural students who still use printed material more frequently and more tried and tested methods of learning such as rote learning and note taking. Prefer source in textbooks and local library books, and they employ redundant note-taking techniques to help them remember. There may be various reasons for this preference for digital material among learners who are from urban areas such as easy access to technology and flexibility of learning environment. Overall, students’ choice methods for rural areas relate to their learning environment’s limited emphasis on easy to access familiar instruments.

iii. **Research Question 3: It, therefore, emerges that there are several difficulties that learners can experience when attempting to read English texts due to culture.**

Some challenges recorded include; linguistic challenges resulting from variations in language use, as well as difficulties in accomplishing the goal of understanding another culture, and oral reading challenges faced by urban students. The following are some of the difficulties they experience with: • use of idioms • reading speed • grasp of cultural references that may pose loopholes to misunderstanding. Specifically, it is evident that rural students face difficulties in comprehending even the simplest linguistic concepts; they cannot gain access to many valuable resources; and they do not relate to materials that are culturally diverse from their own. This makes them have difficulties with their use of words and sentences, having a poor background of understanding cultural references, exposure to spoken English which hampers their reading skills and confidence. In fact, the challenges of the urban students are more complex because while they are able to write the English language with more ease they encounter problems in some of the features of language and culture. Moreover, rural students have much more basic issues, pertaining to their facilities and exposure for which due to lack of resource and exposure they are unable to deal with English text in a proper manner.

This thematic analysis successfully illustrates the variant scenarios of learning to comprehend English texts in urban and rural settings and supports the need to practice culturally sensitive teaching approaches. The table includes initial codes, sub-themes, and main themes, along with their interpretations:

The table below includes initial codes, sub-themes, and main themes, along with their interpretations:

Table 1. Summary of the Thematic Analysis

Research Question	Initial Codes	Sub-Themes	Main Themes	Interpretations
How do learners from different cultural backgrounds approach reading in English?	Skimming, Analytical, Active, Holistic, Purposeful	Strategy Diversity, Engagement Level	Reading Approach	Urban students show a tendency towards active and analytical approaches, while rural students display a more methodical and purpose-driven approach.
What are the preferred reading strategies and materials among learners from diverse cultural backgrounds?	Interactive materials, Printed books, Multimedia resources, Local library books, Online resources	Material Preferences, Strategy Preferences	Reading Materials & Strategies	Urban learners prefer interactive and multimedia materials, while rural learners rely on traditional printed materials and textbooks due to limited access to technology.
What challenges do learners face in reading English texts due to their cultural background?	Idiomatic expressions, Pace, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Cultural references	Linguistic Challenges, Cultural Challenges	Reading Challenges	Both groups face linguistic challenges, but urban students struggle more with pace and idiomatic expressions, whereas rural students face difficulties with vocabulary and cultural references.

The above table also gives a summary of the thematic analysis displaying the dichotomy of readings' habits, preferences, and difficulties linked to students originating from either the urban or rural areas. The main themes highlight how cultural influence plays out in the approaches and perceptions towards reading at times in the realization of the English language. The table 2 summarizes the reading skills and strategies employed by each of the ten students based on the reading assessments:

Table 2. Summary of the Reading Skills

Student	Background	Reading Proficiency	Reading Strategies Employed
1 (U)	Urban	High	Skimming, relating content to experiences, highlighting, note-taking
2 (U)	Urban	Moderate	Analytical reading, summarizing, using printed materials
3 (U)	Urban	High	Active reading, predicting, using multimedia resources
4 (U)	Urban	Moderate	Holistic reading, annotating, focusing on novels and literature
5 (U)	Urban	High	Setting purpose, chunking, mind mapping, using online articles
1 (R)	Rural	Low	Methodical reading, translating, using textbooks
2 (R)	Rural	Low	Slow reading, visualizing, participating in study groups
3 (R)	Rural	Moderate	Overview reading, summarizing, using school textbooks
4 (R)	Rural	Low	Curiosity-driven reading, using a dictionary, reading stories
5 (R)	Rural	Low	Chunking, relating content to rural life, highlighting

(U) = Urban background, (R) = Rural background

The above table encapsulates the performance of the learner in terms of reading proficiency level and the strategies used regarding urban rust learners. Specifically, the scheme reveals the distributive nature of the group's reading abilities and strategies and their cultural imprint on reading.

6. Main Findings of the Study

The following presentation is an analysis of the kinds of reading strategies employed by students originating from diverse cultural backgrounds. The analysis of the data based on the selected themes shows that learners with backgrounds from urban areas use transitional strategies in reading differently from those used by learners from rural areas. Learners in urban areas are receptive, integrating, and purposively oriented with an active participation and processing of the content. Some of the strategies that are used include skimming, making associations with what they already can do or have seen, and having specific times in mind when they read. This could be because one reads more actively and in a more integrated manner because of better experience and exposure to the different types of reads and the multi-read environment. Whereas rural learners pay attention to details and try to form mental pictures of concepts, all of them a lot rely on translating text into their home language. Pale's slow and

measured pace combined with reading, breaking the information down into chunks, and using graphic organizers indicate his preference for more explicit and conventional strategies. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that they hardly get enough resources and practice time, thereby, relying more on conventional ways and figures.

i. Different types of preferences as to the kinds of reading materials chosen or the approaches toward reading

The metacomprehension analysis also reveals the distinctions in the attitude towards books and ways of learning to read between urban and rural learners. Similar to their counterparts, urban students also favor learning resources that can be accessed digitally and those come interactively, as identified by the highlighting and annotation tools they use in sorting out their ideas. This may help explain why there is a higher reliance on technology in learning with digital resources being more accessible and the learning environment more kinetic than the rural environment. On the other hand the rural students keep their cramming and, note taking as the key preferences of learning and use printed materials much. Hence, their inclination towards printed material and local library books is in line with the learning environment framework that they were exposed to and familiar with. The delegation of reading comprehension to memorization of the notes and fierce retention of the text also shows more traditional orientation in reading, which may stem from the insufficiency of exposure to other approaches and resources.

ii. Knowledge of the problems that learners encounter in reading English texts

The thematic analysis also explains why learners particularly from different parts of the world have a hard time in reading English texts. Linguistic differences, cultural literacy, and reading aloud constitute some issues that urban students experience in school. They misunderstand idiomatic expressions the rate of reading, complex syntactic structures and pronunciation while they spent more time with English language which indicates that they faced some difficulty in those aspects of learning English language that is more complex in terms of linguistics and culture. Rural students therefore work with more profound problems such as most conventional language challenges, exposure to an array of books and other materials, and disconnection from culturally unfamiliar content. Their problems with words and sentences, familiarity with culturally related contexts, and the use of spoken language show how poor resources and exposure to English affect their chance of interacting with and making sense of English texts. Finally, the study's results call for effective strategies to provide an adequate approach to teach students, who study at urban and rural schools, focusing on cultural differences between students and the difficulties they face while reading English texts. Realizing the likelihood of ethnic and cultural differences in students and accepting the fact that these differences do affect the growth of the learners' reading skills in English as a foreign language, teachers can enhance their understanding and facilitative approach more effectively.

iii. The implication of the Findings, the Existing Literature & Theoretical Framework

The facts obtained from the students' survey, the analysis, and their reading performance is consistent with the principles that have been outlined in the sociocultural theory of development by Vygotsky (1978) and the constructivism by Piaget (1954), and Bruner (1966). This paper illuminates the cultural differences in learning between urban and rural interns including their reading patterns; attributed to the cultural differences of the respective environments in which the learners are brought up. Active and integrative reading strategies employed by the urban learners capture the constructivist model of learning as a process that works through the construction of new information based on learners' experiences and interactions with content. Since urban students opt for IT and interactive materials, such a choice concurs with the prevention of static and non-vibrant learning environments stated in the constructivist theory.

At the same time, the strategies used by rural learners are less radical and more constructive as compared to the learner from a city; those strategies are the sociocultural theory that is based on the use of cultural tools and social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). The abundance of printed material and the familiar approaches stem from the cultural background, in which Erick and Samantha might not witness a large variety of materials and possibilities.

iv. Reflection on Possible Roles that Cultural Factors may play in the Choice of Strategies and Contents to be Read

Self-archived in LRA Cultural differences in relation to access to learning resources, exposure to different learning environments, and beliefs and value systems of learners are some of the factors that influence reading strategies and preferences. It is hypothesized that due to technology access and greater diversified reading options urban learners preferred more technology based and interactive tools and were more engaged with material read and in their overall approach to reading. On the other hand, rural learners may lack some of the resources that are available to urban students and /or they may not be used to spoken English, hence they may have more reliance on printed work other related techniques like repeating and jotting. The focus on details and the use of native language for translating might be the result of a lack of vary learning opportunities in combination with a demand for tighter structure.

7. Practical Implications of the Study

The results have significant implications for effective teaching practices, emphasizing the necessity for culturally inclusive practices that ensure learners' variances are considered. For urban learners, the design and use of digital and interactive programs and content in the students' learning process will be of benefit when embracing active learning. Additional suggestions for enhancing teaching activities about collaborative learning and critical

thinking may also subside to their preferred modes of learning. When implementing the instructions, the teachers require more structured and familiar reading strategies to support the learning needs of the rural students. Besides, cultural connection in reading, books, and projects can aid in improving engagement and understanding among the two types of learners. When cultural differences are not only recognized but also drawn upon as resources in learning practice, education will become more inclusive and beneficial. In conclusion, it would therefore be necessary to emphasize that for these reasons among others, culture plays an important role and if educators apply culturally sensitive measures, they can meet the needs of students concerning reading as well as the students' cultural requirements.

8. Conclusion

Introducing the research question, this work intended to determine the influence of cultural context on learners' approaches and expectations to reading in the context of learning English as a foreign language by learners qualified as urban and rural. The quantitative and qualitative assessment of the insights gathered from the students and performing a thematic analysis pinpoint the dissimilarity of reading habits, the type of resources used by the learners from these two backgrounds, and the issues faced by them during learning. Learners in urban environments use the addressed strategies more purposefully, dynamically, and holistically for reading, they express more active reading activities and reveal a propensity towards digital, as well as interactive media. This is a viewpoint considered acceptable in constructivist learning theories where learning is an active process implying the creation of meaning with the help of prior experiences. However, rural learners seem to prefer the conventional instruction, explored, defined, and sequential approach and the use of print materials conforming to their learning environment and cultural perspectives as informed by sociocultural theory. The difficulties of learners are also different hence; the urban student was unable to understand the linguistic aspect of the language and cultural differences while on the other hand, the rural students are unable to grasp some of the simple aspects like the use of certain words, accessing more books and audios, and fluent speaking of English. The results of this study provide some insights into cultural factors and suggest that culture is an important aspect to be taken into consideration when teaching English, as well as when designing curricula. It must be noted that the findings of this study are quite far-reaching as they have a significant impact on the general understanding and practice of English language teaching and curriculum development. First, it raises the idea of culturally relevant pedagogy for students of diverse cultural backgrounds where the teacher as modeling appropriate behavior incorporates particular culturally sensitive practices into his teaching practice. This fits well in the observation that learner centered approach to learning recognizes the diversity of students allowing for a more effective learning environment. Therefore, it is suggested that for urban learners, the teacher should use some of the posted materials in the form of digital and interactive media to facilitate the learners' active learning styles. These learners may find themselves with much better access to technology and more likely to opt for facilitated learning hence use of digital sources when it comes to learning English language is quite helpful. Rural learners, however, need proper reading strategies and more extra reading to help combat their difficulties and expose them more to English. Such learners may need systematic and individualized guidance in striving for more profound learning at least in terms of widening their linguistic experience and improving essential skills because of the lack of resources and opportunities. Furthermore, the inclusion of cultural references in the text and context of the reading materials and the activities will help the learners of two cultures to understand and be motivated as much as the native one. To this effect, by incorporating elements that make the learning experience challenging yet practical, the instructor assists the learners to create a closer link with the language and cultures. In relation to the current study, further research can be directed toward the following areas in an attempt to gain more insights into the use of reading strategies and preference for English as a second language. Longitudinal investigation could follow the dynamics of the mentioned strategies inside the learners, learners from diverse cultural backgrounds, and hence, would enhance the understanding of the long-term effects of culture on language acquisition. Future empirical research works may focus on the comparison of students from different cultural backgrounds within the urban or rural contexts in order to provide a more detailed account of the culturally grounded components of reading skills and usages. This could assist the teachers in addressing the needs of the learner groups as they adopted an appellat approach to the teaching methods. A comparative study that looks at various teaching interferences or approaches for aiding the learners from different cultural backgrounds can help the English language teachers identify the overall effective instructions. In this way, special methods allow one to state what works and define successful practices in specific conditions so that teachers can implement them. In the end, more exploratory studies primarily including survey studies, interviews, and ethnographies would produce better insights on other cultural learner's perceptions and feelings. This might assist educators in getting a better feel for the subtleties in learners' experiences while reading and therefore how they might more effectively address learner needs in each case taking cultural differences into account.

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