Examining Students' Strategies for Meaning Construction Through Reading English Texts

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Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of how students use strategies for meaning construction through reading English texts. This narrative inquiry utilised in-depth interviews with four secondary-level students to explore their ways of learning English and constructing meaning from English texts. Findings show that students use their prior knowledge, collaborate with their friends, guess meaning from the context, seek the teacher's support, visit libraries, and use dictionaries to comprehend the texts. This paper reports that struggling readers use limited strategies, such as using dictionaries and asking for support from their friends and teachers, whereas the engaged readers follow strategies such as grasping meaning from the context, using prior knowledge, getting support from others, and visiting libraries. The use of multiple strategies in meaning construction helps students better with library visiting and collaboration for better meaning construction. The findings imply that teachers' support is necessary for students to develop their reading strategies.

Keywords: Meaning-construction, teacher-support, collaboration, reading skills, motivation

Introduction

In my long career of teaching and learning English, I have come across students who struggle to get the meaning of individual words, paragraphs, and the whole text. I have experienced that the majority of the students in community schools struggle with the same problem, which makes teaching and learning challenging. Constructing meaning from the text is an inevitable part of reading text in a foreign language (Al-Nafisah, 2011). As suggested by Protacio (2013), engaging cognitively in challenging texts, building background knowledge for the texts, and developing personal stances on texts are ways to develop meaning-construction ability. Moreover, Pokharel (2018) adds that constructing meaning from the text involves getting a sense of the text and knowing the meaning of vocabulary items from the reading materials. Meaning construction is the main part of reading in second language learning, which supports comprehension of the text (Liontas, 2002). Similarly, meaning construction also helps reading engagement and supports better achievement (Rojas et al.,

2019). Further, the students can get content knowledge of the course with the meaning-construction ability.

There are students with different levels of abilities to demonstrate English language learning competencies in the classroom. Some students can read and understand the text well; some of them can read well but cannot comprehend the text; and most of them cannot read or comprehend English texts. Following Barkley and Major (2020), I often keep exploring teaching methods that are helpful for students to learn English. However, I have a lot of stories to tell from the language classroom. I depict a few anecdotes and reflect on them in the following sections. Although some stories become a source of inspiration, a few stories collected from my participants make me highly engaged in thinking about how I can provide the necessary support to struggling students in the classroom. My experiences in supporting students' English learning remind me of the ideas suggested by Ashwin and McVitty (2015) and Barber and Klauda (2020) to develop teaching strategies that can be suitable for individual learners. I understand that to be an English teacher in rural schools like mine, where students come from completely non-English contexts, is a challenging job. However, I understand that I have to bring changes in their reading ways so that they can comfortably learn English. I agree with the views of Eeds and Wells (1989) that spending more time reading texts or books can promote the meaning-construction ability of the students. So, I ask my students to read English texts multiple times in the classroom, in the library, or in the home environment.

Meaning-making is crucial for second or foreign language reading development in students, which promotes reading engagement. Students are distracted from reading English texts due to difficult vocabulary; however, they can engage better in reading when they develop meaning-making strategies. Meaning construction develops the amount of time in the task because the students like to read more when they comprehend the text easily (Hirsch, 2003). Similarly, meaning-making is a crucial aspect of reading engagement because the students get frustrated with the text when they cannot make meaning (Dakin, 2013) while reading.

Literature Review

The readers need to have knowledge and skills to construct meaning to develop reading engagement (Ashwin & McVitty, 2015). Regarding this, Muijselaar et al. (2017) argue that it is essential for a good reader to increase word-reading ability, fluency, vocabulary, background knowledge, and the skilled application of comprehension. Similarly, visiting the library and using practice books increases the ability to get meaning from the text (Eeds & Wells, 1989). Students can read diverse kinds of books in the library, which develops reading motivation (Ng & Bartlett, 2017). Likewise, underlining important information, recognising new words, using a dictionary, and taking part in partner reading are useful strategies for meaning construction (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Additionally, gaining confidence and getting identified with new vocabulary in the text can support meaning construction (Alqahtani, 2015).

When students find new words in the text, they guess the meaning from the context using their prior knowledge (Mokhtari, 2018). Proficient readers construct meaning from the context, use the dictionary, and take the teacher's support (Fajardo et al., 2014). However, less proficient readers use the dictionary and take support from others (Guthrie et al., 2012). The students read the texts carefully and develop their comprehension techniques to find the meaning of words, sentences, and whole passages (Zimmerman, 2010). Likewise, the students build topic-specific vocabulary and schemata before reading each text (Palmer, 1981). They also practice dialogue from passages with their friends to construct meaning, which develops their cognitive engagement in reading (Aukerman & Schuldt,

2015). Moreover, the students develop their meaning-construction skills by collaborating with teachers and by participating in text discussions with friends (Protacio, 2013, 2017).

Engaged readers use the top-down approach of reading for meaning construction, whereas struggling readers follow the bottom-up approach to generate meaning from letters, words, phrases, clauses, and sentences (Oliver & Young, 2016; Suraprajit, 2019; Neupane, 2024). Motivated and engaged students want to read new and challenging texts because mental translation occurs and assists them in understanding the text (Liu, 2015; Niazifar & Shakibaei, 2019). Regarding this, Alqahtani (2015) reports that when learning new vocabulary from different texts, students recognise the connection with course content, and they can learn new things. Additionally, the reader is the centre of the reading process in the top-down approach, which is based on the importance of background knowledge for readers in guessing the meaning of the text (Suraprajit, 2019). It recognises the value of prior knowledge and context in the construction of meaning. The interactive approach has been created by combining these two approaches. According to this approach, bottom-up processing and top-down processing should interact to improve reading comprehension and meaning construction skills (Acharya, 2014). In addition to ideas of quick and precise feature identification for letters, words, and lexical forms, and the concept of processing them automatically, an interactive process necessitates the use of background knowledge, expectations, and context (Bhattarai, 2016).

The ideas found in the above literature have given me a way of deeper thinking about the ways students in community schools explore learning English. However, the literature shows a void in the context of Nepal and suggests exploring rural students' strategies for constructing meaning and learning English. For this, I designed a narrative inquiry research by employing in-depth interviews with the students.

Methodology

The study adopted a narrative inquiry design to investigate how students made sense of English texts and to interpret their lived experiences (Cohen et al., 2013; Creswell, 2007). Specifically, I used this approach to examine their views and experiences of constructing meaning while reading. Narrative inquiry allowed me to listen to participants' stories and delve into how they engaged with texts. This approach provided insights into various dimensions of their reading engagement through their reflective accounts. Their narratives offered a deeper understanding of how they negotiated meaning in English reading. In the process of constructing narratives, I made sense of my own lived experiences of reading and teaching English in EFL classrooms. Similarly, I made my understanding, consistency, and connections by retelling participants' experiences in story form, following the idea of Clandinin et al. (2016). The research developed a close collaboration between the participants and me, which built trust and respect for each other (Barkhuizen, 2016; Clandinin et al., 2016). Narrative inquiry, as a meaning-making process, was very helpful in understanding the perception of participants used in studies of reading engagement and their socially lived stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Being a narrative inquirer, I interpreted the participants' stories to understand their engagement in reading skills in the rural area of Nepal. My research participants' narratives allowed me to examine their stories and analyse the simplicities and complexities they had faced in reading English.

Selection of Site and Participants

First, I mapped and located potential schools in rural community schools in Myagdi district in Nepal. However, I selected four participants purposively (two girls from Grade Nine and two boys from Grade Ten to maintain gender balance in the research) from four community schools. So, I selected two engaged readers and two struggling readers for the study. For this purpose, I took the help of the subject teachers and the head teachers of the schools. They provided me with the names of the

students as I had requested. The original names of participant students and their schools have been replaced by pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. I called the parents of the students and obtained consent for the interview.

In-depth Interviews

I used in-depth interviews to gather students' narratives on meaning construction from reading English texts as suggested by Cohen et al. (2000). I established rapport with participants and provided them with information sheets about the research, and conducted interviews twice in the Nepali language and recorded the interviews with them on a mobile recorder with their prior consent. I developed an interview guideline that consisted of fourteen open-ended questions focusing on their meaning-making abilities in reading English texts. I visited the field two times in three weeks. My visit to the participants' home environment provided me with insight into gathering information from their real settings. The first interview lasted for about twenty minutes, and the second interview took place for around fifteen minutes, with intervals of three weeks.

Data Analysis

I transcribed the data from audio recordings. I had to listen to the recordings multiple times to avoid any possibility of missing information. Then, I translated them into English from the Nepali language. I coded them into four different themes and organized them accordingly. I tabulated the information separately and revisited the table to avoid overlapping the information. After that, I analysed the data in four different themes, namely using prior knowledge, visiting the library, getting support from friends and teachers, and using dictionaries. Each theme reflects different strategies students employed in constructing meaning from texts. For instance, using prior knowledge highlighted how learners drew upon their existing experiences and background knowledge to interpret English texts. Visiting the library demonstrated the role of supplementary reading resources in enhancing comprehension and developing meaning-making skills. Similarly, getting support from friends and teachers illustrated the value of collaborative reading and peer/teacher assistance in vocabulary development and problem-solving. Finally, using dictionaries captured how learners independently relied on lexical resources to clarify word meanings and strengthen their overall comprehension. Through this thematic analysis, the study was able to uncover the diverse strategies students engaged in while constructing meaning from English texts, thereby providing insights into their reading practices and learning processes.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of data is presented narratively into the following themes. Also, I have discussed the findings with existing literature.

Using Prior Knowledge

I have observed that most readers in public schools cannot get meaning from the text when they encounter new texts. Students find it difficult to grasp the meaning, and they cannot get the sense of the entire text. However, some readers use their previous knowledge to construct the meaning in the new texts. For example, Kushal, one of the participants in this study, shared that he used to read the text, paying much attention to it to construct the meaning from the new texts. He shared:

> I have a long story to tell about how I developed my meaning-making proficiency in English. I was disengaged in English in my early classes. Gradually, I developed reading with prolonged engagement in the text, where I used my previous knowledge to link the new texts. Now as a secondary level student, I read the text deeply and guess the meaning of difficult words when I read. Doing

so, I try to understand the meaning of the words in their context. Similarly, I read the whole text to get the meaning. I also read the passages in front of the class and the teacher.

The data show that motivated students read the text intensely to construct the meaning and engage themselves in reading. From Kushal's narration, I acknowledged that he had his way of meaning-making based on the use of words in contexts similar to the findings of Freed et al. (2017), which reveals that engaged readers construct the meaning with their prior knowledge. Further, reading the whole text helps construct the meaning in the context. As reading the text in front of the class increased their confidence in learning English, students get support from their teachers (Brown, 1999). Sangita, the second participant in this study, developed her meaning-construction ability when she reached upper classes. She shared:

In my early days, I was too dull in my English reading. I could just copy the sentences on my exercise copy as classwork or homework. I struggled a lot to be able to read English. It was very difficult to understand the text. Later, I developed the skill in grade eight. I read short passages first to develop reading skills and then tried to read long passages later. Now, I use my knowledge for meaning-making in new texts. I read the passage and try to find the meaning of words, sentences, and the whole passage. I guess the meaning of a new word from the context. It has helped me to learn things and develop language skills in English.

Sangita's narratives reveal that the students grasp meaning from the context using their previous knowledge of unfamiliar words. This reflects the findings of Mokhtari's (2018) that students guessed the meanings of English texts in terms of the context where the language is used, using their prior knowledge. It was also found that reading short passages is effective for meaning construction, as Protacio (2013) also discovered that students' meaning-making skills were fostered by engaging them with short texts, which helped them gain confidence and build background knowledge to navigate more challenging readings better.

Pratap, the third participant in this study, shared his experiences of how he constructed meaning from English texts. He shared that he found the meaning of individual words first and constructed meaning by connecting multiple words in phrases and sentences. He said:

I have suffered from tough experiences while learning English. I changed many schools because my parents moved to different places. It was hard to learn with new teachers and friends in unfamiliar locations. At first, I was afraid of reading English. Later, I could read but couldn't understand the text. Still in grade ten, finding meaning from the context is hard for me because I cannot rely on my previous knowledge in new readings. So, I try to find the meanings of individual words in the texts and then make connections between them to understand the sentences.

Namrata, the fourth participant, also had a similar experience with using prior knowledge, as she said:

I have been struggling with reading English since my early school years. Still in grade nine, I cannot find the meaning of the new words in context. I have to be

engaged in the text for a considerable amount of time. I try to find the meaning of familiar words and short words. Then, I connect them in my readings. I feel difficulty using my previous knowledge in text-reading since I have low vocabulary power and little language proficiency.

From the narratives, I explored that the students have different reading proficiency and meaning-making ability according to their knowledge of subject matter and proficiency in language. Struggling readers spend more time finding the meaning and read simple and short texts, whereas motivated readers spend time searching for the information and seeking the meaning of words first, then sentences and the whole text, which increases their reading engagement. This was similar to the findings of Zimmerman (2010), who reported that many students read the texts carefully and developed their comprehension techniques to find the meaning of words, phrases, and whole passages. The findings show that the identification of letters, words, and lexical forms necessitates the use of background knowledge, readers' expectations, and the context of the text (Bhattarai, 2016). It was also discovered in the study that proficient and engaged readers used the top-down approach of reading for meaning construction and constructed the meaning of whole sentences or a paragraph, whereas struggling readers followed the bottom-up approach to generate meaning from letters, words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. However, the connection between the top-down and bottom-up approach can help interact with the readers well with the texts and improve reading comprehension and meaning construction skills (Acharya, 2014).

Visiting Library

Community schools in rural areas also have libraries to foster students' learning since libraries are the only sources of extra reading material collection in remote areas. Regarding library visits, Kushal shared:

> I was struggling with the texts in my classes, as the texts were of a high level beyond my reading capacity. One day, my friend Ganesh said that storybooks in the library helped him to improve his English. Hearing this, I visited our school library and I started reading with simple texts like children's stories. I frequently visited the library whenever I was free. Later, I tried reading essays and novels. Now, I can read and understand the texts well. I also read books at home, which my father bought for me.

Similarly, Sangita shared:

> I was worried about my English. My teacher suggested reading library books. There were a lot of books in the school library. I started reading simple stories at first. Now, I frequently visit the library. There are course-related books in our library, such as practice books, grammar books, essay books, and story books.

The data above display that students like Kushal and Sangita built up their reading habits by visiting libraries since frequent visits to the library increase students' English reading hours, and they can develop the ability to get meaning from the text, which is similar to the findings of Azhari and Ramadan (2022). The study also portrayed that students ranged their reading from simple to complex texts to develop meaning-construction abilities. It was also found that some schools include course-related reading materials such as practice books and school essays in their libraries to develop students' reading habits and meaning-construction ability. This made me recall the findings of Eeds and Wells (1989), who found that visiting the library and using practice books increases students' ability to get

meaning from the text. Reading in the library is an effective way of improving English because students can read diverse kinds of books in the library, which develops reading motivation (Ng & Bartlett, 2017).

I also revealed that not all students who visit the library are motivated and engaged in reading. The participants, Pratap and Namrata, in this study could not engage themselves in English texts in the library. They preferred to read and enjoy children's picture stories. Pratap shared:

> My friends shared that they enjoyed reading library books. I also visited the library, where I could not stay still, engaging myself in the books. Still, I like to visit the library, but I do not like reading books such as English stories, essays, and novels. I read the books, but could not comprehend the text. Rather, I enjoy reading children's stories because they are easy to understand. I can construct the meaning of these kinds of simple texts. Sometimes, my teacher recommends books for me to read.

Similar to Pratap, another participant, Namrata, shared that she lacked interest in reading books in the library. She said:

> Our English teacher allows us to visit the library once a week. He asks us to read English essays and novels. I have no interest in reading because I cannot understand the texts. I sit in front of the children's section and enjoy the pictures from picture stories. I read simple texts and construct meaning in my own. It has also helped to develop reading habits. My teacher helps me choose the books to read.

The narration reveals that struggling readers need support to develop meaning-construction abilities from the texts during library visits, and they engaged themselves in reading library books, from which they developed meaning-construction abilities. It was found that the proficient readers select books for themselves, whereas the struggling readers take help from the teachers. This was similar to the findings of Guthrie and Davis (2003), who found that proficient readers can choose the books of their interest, and struggling readers need help with that because they feel hesitant to select English books. It was found that students constructed meaning as they comprehend and were engaged in the easy texts and hard texts according to their level of understanding (Carver & Leibert, 1995). Reading books from the library promotes the reading proficiency of the struggling readers, as Strommen and Mates (2004) have also noted that proficient students learn to make meaning from the texts, and struggling readers develop reading habits with frequent visits to the library. The findings in this study revealed that visiting the library is an effective way to increase the reading habits of the students (Cho & Krashen, 2018). Since the library is the source of immense knowledge development, readers can select and read multiple text types in the library according to their interests. This study further explored that reading various texts supports students in the development of meaning-construction skills and ideas (Zin et al., 2014).

Getting Support from Friends and Teachers

Getting support from friends and teachers is taking help from people around to construct meaning. It is a part of collaborative reading, which supports struggling readers in the text. Pratap shared:

> I have followed various approaches to develop my reading. Reading is useless when I do not understand the meaning of the texts. I ask my friends when I encounter difficult vocabulary in the text. I also take help from my teacher. The

teacher makes me underline new words in the text and find the meanings in the context. I also note down the words in my notebook. My friends sometimes read for me.

Another participant, Namrata, shared that she learned to get meaning from the texts with the help of her friends and engaged herself in reading. She shared:

I was frustrated with my English reading. My teachers and friends supported me in developing my reading. For that, I had to follow different techniques. I am working a lot to develop my reading proficiency. My teacher asks me to memorise ten words daily and make sentences using them. I request my friends to tell me the meaning of difficult words. I enjoy reading in a group with my teacher.

The data presented here shows that using new vocabulary to make sentences is helpful to improve meaning-making ability, which is similar to the findings of Waring (2002), who emphasized that active use of vocabulary in context strengthen retention and comprehension. Collaborative reading develops the creativity of the students and develops meaning construction ability (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Tracey and Morrow (2017) suggest that partner reading is a useful strategy for meaning construction to struggling readers because one of the friends reads the text for the others, and they listen to it attentively. It was discovered that reading with the support of friends can help to reduce passivity among students. It also shows that readers use various techniques to construct the meaning, working with collaboration, such as underlining unfamiliar words and listing new vocabulary in the notebook, as Bakri (2018) pointed out, thereby fostering deeper engagement with the text.

Proficient readers also take help from their friends and teachers. One of the participants, Kushal, shared that he supported his struggling friends to construct meaning from the text as well, and he also took support from his friends in reading. He shared;

Earlier, I used to read alone in isolation. But now, I read with my friends in collaboration. I help my friends to explain the texts or tell the meaning of the words if they ask for it. Sometimes, I cannot grasp the contextual meaning of the new words in the text. I discuss it with my friends. We take our teacher's help when we cannot solve the problem. I like to read the new texts with my friends. We can share ideas about the text and construct meaning from it.

Similarly, another participant, Sangita, shared that she liked to read new texts with her friends. She shared:

In my early days, I used to read alone, but now I like to read with my friends. I learn the words based on the topic of the passage with my friends. I discuss and debate with friends to analyse the meaning. We take part in role-play of conversations and dialogues from the book. I support my friends to find out the meaning of the words, and I also take help from them. Sometimes, I ask the teacher to confirm the meaning that I have guessed.

The data display that the students engage in reading texts such as conversations and dialogues with their friends. This is similar to the results of Blumenfeld et al. (2018), who found that students took part in dialogue form passage discussions and debates with friends to construct meaning from the texts. These kinds of cooperative reading skills develop engagement in reading. Moreover, the students

develop their meaning-construction skills by collaborating with teachers (Protacio, 2013, 2017). They can exchange more ideas in their group, which supports interactive reading and promotes students' achievement. Guthrie et al. (2004) add that collaborative reading is helpful to bring positive outcomes in students because reading becomes interactive. Supporting friends in reading as a model of collaborative reading develops meaning-making ideas and develops problem-solving strategies, as Akin and Neumann (2013) note that sharing experience and knowledge helps students to seek creative solutions to reading problems. The findings reveal that students' meaning construction ability grows when they work together to read because they can develop their fluency and gather textual knowledge and arguments in reading collaboration (Kim et al., 2017). Moreover, struggling students can learn multiple-meaning construction strategies with the support of proficient readers and teachers, which increases their reading motivation and achievement (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2005).

Using Dictionary

Using a dictionary is a familiar strategy for meaning construction to all readers. The dictionaries are the supporters and guides for the readers to find out and check the meaning of words. One of the participants, Sangita shared that she used the dictionary to get the meaning from the text when she could not guess the meaning from the context. She shared:

> I try to guess the meaning of new words from the context first. If I cannot find the meaning in context, I use the dictionary. Sometimes, I get confused about using the words because they have the same spelling as nouns and verbs. They also have multiple meanings. I help my friends find the words in the dictionary. I take my teacher's help if I do not understand the dictionary meanings.

Kushal, another participant, also had a similar experience of using a dictionary. He shared that he tried to find out the contextual meaning, and he took support from others before using dictionaries. He also shared that dictionary meanings do not fit the context. He said:

> I try to find the meaning in context. I consult the dictionary to find the meaning in the absence of my friends and teachers. I discuss it with my friends about dictionary meanings. Sometimes, I cannot even understand the dictionary meaning and take my teacher's help.

The data show that dictionaries are effective resources for students to comprehend text and to learn more information about unknown words. It also displays that dictionaries not only provide the meaning of the words or phrases, but they also provide possible meanings in contexts to facilitate language learning (Ramos & Dario, 2015). The findings in this study reveal that dictionaries serve as an incentive for students to learn the language and communicate with others (Wingate, 2004). Dictionaries are helpful to develop reading engagement as they assist the readers in finding meanings when they get stuck on new words and help them develop as independent learners. However, this study also found that the dictionary meanings do not always fit the meanings for the context of the text because words bring their meanings from contexts (Adamska-Sałaciak, 2010; Easterbrook, 1994).

Pratap, in this study, also shared that he used a dictionary frequently to construct the meaning from the text. He added that he used a bilingual dictionary to confirm the meaning. He said:

> I always use the dictionary to find the meaning of the words in the text. Before using a dictionary, I try to guess the meaning. Then I consult the dictionary. I

sometimes use an English-Nepali dictionary to look up the meanings of complex words.

Namrata also shared that she used a dictionary to solve the reading problems at home. She also contextualized the words in the text and took her friends' support. She shared:

I use a dictionary at home while reading and doing homework. I try to grasp the sense-meaning first. Then I use the dictionary. I take my friends' and teachers' help when I do not understand the dictionary meaning.

The data reflect that both proficient readers and struggling readers use dictionaries to construct meaning. However, struggling readers use them frequently. The findings show that all the readers try to get a contextual meaning from simple words first. This is similar to Schaffer (2015), who found that the students used their prior knowledge to contextualise the meaning of the words in the text before using dictionaries. Hunt and Beglar (2002) have also argued that guessing meanings from context and other strategies can be more effective than using dictionaries. However, using a dictionary is popular among learners. Moreover, I revealed that readers increase their reading motivation by sharing their reading experience with friends while using dictionaries. The interaction helps the students to develop their meaning-construction skills. The learners' reading comprehension proficiency increases when they use a dictionary (Khodabandehlou et al., 2012). The dictionaries enable the students to find out the meanings which they do not yet comprehend by guessing from the context. Regarding this, Ezeh et al. (2022) write that dictionary learning and training bring fun and motivation so that students can enjoy using them, become comfortable with them as a learning resource, and experience success.

Conclusion and Implications

The discussion above shows that the readers construct the meaning of English texts in diverse ways. Although the students could follow the strategies of their interest, I mainly discovered four meaning-construction strategies for reading texts. Struggling readers were limited to some extent in using strategies compared to proficient readers. The students construct meaning from the unfamiliar words using their existing knowledge, connecting with the new text. Using prior knowledge helps the students guess the meaning from the context and integrate it with new knowledge. Similarly, the students develop their meaning-construction ability by reading in libraries. Visiting libraries increases students' English reading hours, and they can read the book of their choice. However, it shows that not all the students who visit the library can develop meaning-construction skills. Proficient readers enjoy reading advanced texts and developing their meaning construction, whereas struggling readers cannot concentrate on reading. Instead, they engage themselves with children's stories. Frequent visits to the library can help develop reading habits. Reading in libraries can be taken as an alternative way of ICT integration in reading in the absence of the Internet. This study suggests that teachers can develop the library reading habits of the students by engaging them in different texts.

Reading becomes effective when students collaborate on it. They can develop their reading habits and meaning-construction ability with friends and teachers. Getting support from friends and teachers helps the students become proficient readers. Working with people develops engagement and collaboration in reading. Collaborative reading is very supportive for struggling readers because they can learn multiple-meaning construction strategies with the support of proficient readers and teachers. In reading collaboration, students take part in text discussions and role plays. These activities develop interactive reading skills, which help bring positive outcomes in students. Moreover, the students can

use dictionaries for meaning construction. Using dictionaries is the most widely followed strategy among students for finding the meanings of English words. It is useful for both struggling and proficient readers. Dictionaries assist the readers in finding meanings and help the students grow as independent learners. However, dictionary meanings do not always indicate the exact meaning of the words in context. Similarly, using a bilingual dictionary can also help integrate existing knowledge with new learning.

The study implies that teachers should design reading activities that promote flexible use of multiple-meaning construction strategies while fostering collaboration to support struggling readers. It also suggests that schools strengthen library resources and integrate them into reading instruction. Teachers should also train students to use dictionaries contextually rather than mechanically to enhance independent learning. Future research could examine how digital tools might complement libraries and dictionaries in supporting diverse reading strategies.

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