

On Development of English Reading Teaching in China: A Literature Review (2003-2023)

Yingkun Zhang¹

Abstract

Reading is the foundation of mastering a language as well as a primary instrument to obtain information. Reading teaching has always been a hot topic in English language teaching (ELT). The present study sought to trace the characteristics of existing studies on English reading teaching in China. Based on research articles in the CNKI database collected by Chinese core journals and CSSCI in the past two decades, 603 studies on English reading teaching were selected and analyzed. Firstly, the Cite Space software is used to visualize the annual number of published papers, research hotspots and research trends. Subsequently, a detailed content analysis was conducted to distil and summarise the predominant research foci in English reading instruction in China over the past twenty years. The results show that the number of published papers on reading teaching research in China increases first and then fluctuates. The evolution of research topics is discerned to encompass three distinct stages and was influenced by prevailing educational policies. The research foci mainly include three aspects: English reading teaching modes, English reading teaching strategies and English reading ability. This comprehensive review aims to map out the current research landscape, shedding light on future scholarly inquiry in English reading teaching.

Keywords: *English Language Teaching, Reading Teaching, Literature Review*

A. Introduction

Historically, reading has been thought of as a psycholinguistic process through which readers acquire information (Goodman, 1967; Harrison, 2003; Smith, 2012). Moreover, reading is also an important part of language learning. Within the realm of English language learning, one aspect of language proficiency hinges on the adept integration and application of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Of these, reading proficiency assumes a central role, significantly influencing English language learning and linguistic output, and it is integral to the educational process.

Over recent years, domestic scholars have conducted in-depth research on English reading teaching, which has provided valuable theoretical references and practical guidance for English teaching practice (Zhang & Zhao, 2004; Wang, 2010; He, 2016). Nonetheless, for a long time, there have been many problems in English reading teaching. These include a disproportionate focus on vocabulary and sentence structure at the expense of discourse comprehension and reading efficiency. Moreover, post-reading activities often lack depth, primarily assessing superficial information, thereby failing to nurture critical thinking skills in students (Zhang Xianchen, 2009). The genesis of these issues is multifaceted, predominantly stemming from a

¹Capital Normal University, No. 105, West Third Ring Road, Haidian District, Beijing, China,
Yingkun0803@outlook.com

pedagogical ethos that prioritizes language proficiency and examination preparation. This orientation fosters a mechanical, repetitive, and procedural approach to reading instruction (Ge Bingfang, 2012). Addressing and elevating the quality of English reading instruction remains a pressing concern and a vibrant area of research within the educational community.

Despite the extensive research in the past two decades, there exists a relative scarcity of empirical studies in this field. Additionally, there is a lack of analytical studies on the evolution of long-term reading-teaching research. Therefore, this study attempts to bridge this gap by comprehensively analyzing the literature on English reading teaching. Cite Space software is used to visually analyze existing documents, and content analysis is used to explore research content and focus. This study aims to elucidate the current state of English reading research and to project future research trajectories, ultimately providing valuable insights for forthcoming scholarly inquiries in the field of English reading pedagogy.

This study will evaluate the development of English reading teaching methods in China from 2003 to 2023, focusing on the effectiveness of the methods employed and their impact on students' English reading proficiency. Additionally, an analysis will be conducted on changes in curriculum and learning materials affecting teaching approaches and students' understanding of English during the studied period. The role of technology in the development of English reading teaching in China will also be investigated, including how the use of technology has influenced teaching effectiveness from 2003 to 2023. Cultural and contextual factors in China, such as social norms, educational policies, and levels of multilingualism, will also be considered in this research to understand how English reading teaching is shaped within this context. Furthermore, this study will identify challenges in improving the quality of English reading teaching in China and offer analysis of existing opportunities to enhance teaching approaches in the future. Thus, the research aims to provide deeper insights into the development of English reading teaching in China from 2003 to 2023 and offer recommendations for future improvements in this field.

B. Methods

In this paper, academic journals published in the CNKI database on the topic of "English reading teaching" were searched, and a total of 603 articles were obtained after excluding non-standard book reviews. The temporal scope of this literature corpus spans two decades, from 2003 to 2023. The sourced journals are predominantly esteemed domestic periodicals, specializing in foreign language education and pedagogy, mainly including *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, *Foreign Language Teaching Theory and Practice*, *Foreign Language and Foreign Language teaching, Teaching and Management*, *Curriculum*, *Teaching Materials*, *Teaching Methods* and other core academic journals, which have a certain validity.

Subsequently, this paper undertakes a content analysis of the accumulated literature, employing the Cite Space visual analysis. This analytical approach enables a comprehensive exploration and identification of the prevailing hot topics and focal points in the realm of English reading instruction research in recent years. The use of this method not only enhances the rigor of the analysis, but also provides a nuanced understanding of the changing trends and thematic concentrations within the field of English reading instruction.

C. Findings

Number of research publications

From 2003 to 2023, the CNKI core journal database has published 603 articles, indicating that high school English reading teaching has always been the focus of foreign language education scholars and experts. Figure 1 shows the changing trend of the number of articles published in English reading teaching in the past two decades. Initially, there is a discernible upward trajectory in the number of papers published, reflecting a burgeoning interest and expanding research activity in reading instruction. This period of growth reached its zenith in 2010, a landmark year that witnessed the publication of 60 papers, marking the highest annual output in this two-decade span. Nonetheless, after 2010, the trend in research publications on reading instruction exhibits a fluctuating yet predominantly downward trajectory. Particularly noteworthy is the recent three-year period, where the scholarly output in this field has dwindled to single-digit figures annually. This recent diminution in research activity signals a potential shift in academic focus or saturation of specific research themes within English reading instruction.

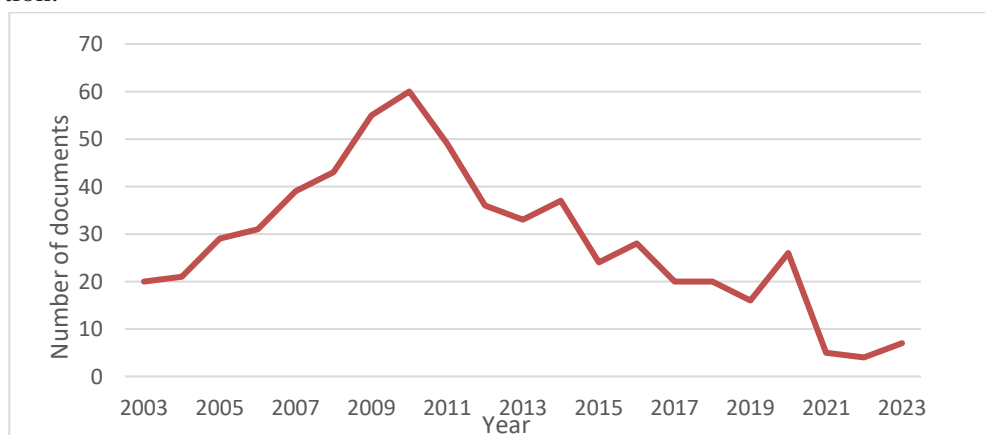


Figure. 1 Annual publication scale

Research Topic

Research trend analysis

In order to explore the frontier evolution of English reading teaching and research from 2003 to 2023, the present study uses the Detect Bursts function of Cite Space software to explore the mutation points of keywords in this field. The keyword with high citation can represent the research trend and focus of this period to a certain extent. Figure 2 reveals the evolution of hot topics in this field in the past 20 years.

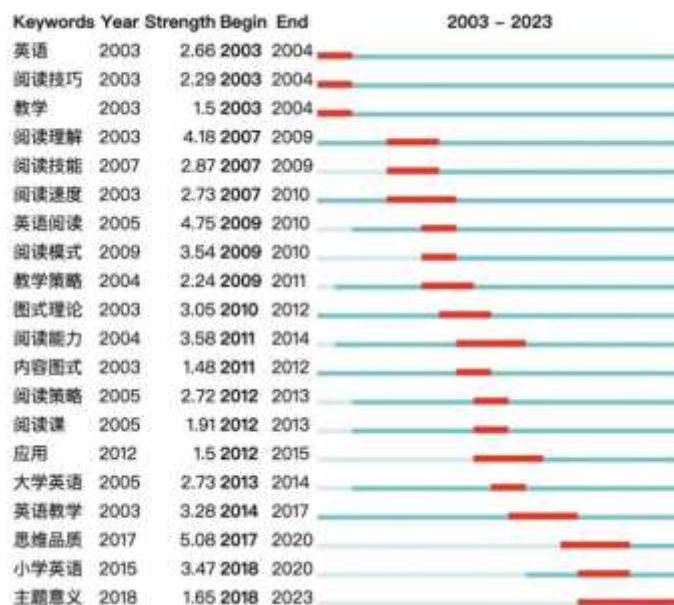


Figure. 2 Top 20 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

The frontier evolution of English reading teaching and research from 2003 to 2023 can be mainly divided into three stages: From 2003 to 2010, the predominant keywords include "reading teaching," "reading skills," "reading comprehension," etc. This indicates that the primary research emphasis during this era was on exploring and nurturing students' reading abilities, with a focus on the pedagogical aspects of reading instruction. From 2011 to 2017, the main keywords in this middle stage, such as "reading class," "schema theory," "reading ability," and "reading strategy," signal a subtle but significant shift in research orientation. The focus remains on reading instruction in the classroom, but there is a noticeable transition from external factors to internal factors, particularly the learner's internal cognitive processes and strategies. From 2017 to 2023, keywords like "quality of thinking," "thematic significance," "text interpretation," and "primary school English" predominate. This shift suggests that the research during this period is largely influenced by the implementation of new English curriculum standards. The research characteristics point to a growing interconnection between English reading and the cultivation of core competencies, reflecting broader trends in English curriculum reform. This framework not only offers a chronological narrative of the development of English reading pedagogy and research but also highlights the evolving priorities and methodologies within the field, influenced by broader educational policies and curriculum reforms.

Research Foci

Combining the top 20 keywords and mutation in Figure 2, this study identifies three major research foci on the basis of literature review, and makes an in-depth analysis.

Research on English Reading Teaching Models

Research on English reading teaching modes can be divided into two categories: research on theories and research on the application of pedagogy.

Research on Applying Theories to Classroom Teaching

A critical theoretical focus in reading pedagogy has been the Schema Theory, a concept garnering considerable interest and attention from many scholars. Chen and Yin (2004) argued

that the Schema Theory emphasizes the proactive engagement of readers in the reading process and the interactive dynamics between the reader and the text. They highlighted the necessity of aligning the reader's formal and content schemas with the reading material. Zhao Shouying and Wang Hongli (2004) conducted a pedagogical experiment based on Schema Theory to assess its impact on students' English achievements in high school reading contexts. Further scholarly endeavours extended this exploration, examining English reading strategies derived from Schema Theory across various educational levels (Qi, 2008; Gu, 2013; Lun, 2015).

Contrasting schema theory, the discourse teaching model accentuates collaborative and communicative processes between teachers and students during reading activities. It advocates for applying metacognitive strategies, notably enhancing affective reading strategies to fulfill communicative objectives (He & Pan, 2013). Additionally, Students often consider it boring to read in English and find it hard to comprehend the text (Seburn,2017). Therefore, some scholars consider the application of interaction theory to improve students' participation. Wang Yu (2012) delved into the interactive teaching model in English reading, emphasizing the centrality of student engagement, cultural background knowledge, and the PWP classroom teaching process to bolster students' reading proficiency and self-awareness. If there is lack of interactive learning among students and students are rarely asked questions, and they are not given the chance to think and participate, the classroom is very boring, and students are not interested (Chong & Tian, 2022).

As for related theories, some scholars have also applied learning theories and teaching theories to the practice of reading teaching. The incorporation of Cooperative Learning Theory into reading instruction has been advocated by Zhang Fake and Zhao Ting in 2004, who emphasize the need for balanced linguistic and non-linguistic inputs in group teaching settings. Xiao Han and Chen Da (2018) and He Xueqin (2016) explored integrating the Flipped Classroom Model (FCM) in the digital era's English reading instruction. FCM brings rich chances for learners, adds flexibility and adaptability (Shih & Huang, 2020).Through the interactive and collaborative online flipped classrooms, EFL learners engage in a multifaceted approach to reading. They not only improve their linguistic competencies but also develop critical thinking skills, cultivate effective study habits, and foster a reflective stance toward their reading practices (Fulgueras and Bautista, 2020). Concurrently, the shift towards learner-centered approaches has brought Scaffolding Theory to the forefront. Zhang Xiaoqin (2008) detailed the application of scaffolding in reading instruction, while Yan Xianfeng (2018) outlined a five-stage scaffolding strategy for English reading pedagogy. A comparative study by Lv Jing and Yang Min (2020) demonstrated the effectiveness of the scaffolding teaching method in college English reading classes.

With the advent of information technology, there has been a growing scholarly focus on multimodal English reading approaches. Multimodal teaching is conducive to enhancing divergent thinking, discourse comprehension, and student engagement, ultimately augmenting reading proficiency through interactive classroom practices and post-class exercises. (Lv & Mou, 2014; Wu, 2014). In addition, how to promote the efficiency of English reading classes through testing has become a research hotspot (Huang, 2003; Ge, 2018). Meanwhile, with the deep integration of the Internet and foreign language teaching, the research on improving reading literacy with the help of corpus is in full swing (Chen, 2011; Xu & He, 2016). Corpus-based methods guide students to quickly grasp the core components of the text through high-frequency keywords, analyze the text in depth from the surface to the inside, and reveal the cultural value

of the discourse, which is conducive to the development of students' analytical thinking and critical ability, and enriches the teaching mode of English reading (Xu & He, 2016).

Research on The Use of Pedagogy in Classroom Teaching

The task-based teaching method (TBLT) has emerged as a prevalent pedagogical approach within English reading classrooms. Many scholars, such as Li Rui (2011), Guo Yanzhi & Guo Ruizhi (2007), and Shen Jinkun (2005), have conducted extensive research on the application of TBLT across various educational stages in English reading instruction. Shen Jinkun (2005) describes TBLT as an innovative classroom teaching methodology that reconfigures the fundamental concept of language application into a pedagogically meaningful approach. This method facilitates natural language acquisition and the expansion of communicative vocabulary through task completion orchestrated collaboratively by teachers and students. In this context, teachers are envisaged as facilitators and coordinators, designing tasks aligned with textbook content and tailored to students' proximal developmental zones. These tasks, which resonate with students' life experiences and societal challenges, stimulate their participatory interest and emotional engagement.

In recent years, Project-Based Learning (PBL) has also garnered significant scholarly attention. Qiao Yuling and Guo Liping (2011) outline the implementation of PBL in college English reading classes, encompassing stages such as problem formulation, data review, group discussion, classroom interaction, and evaluation. The efficacy of PBL lies in its capacity to foster active knowledge acquisition from linguistic content during meaningful learning processes, thereby enhancing language proficiency. Yue Ruiling (2014) emphasizes that successful integration of PBL in college English reading instruction necessitates teachers' clarity in guiding students through the initiation, execution, presentation, and evaluation phases of projects. Moreover, teachers are tasked with subtly aiding students throughout the instructional process, focusing on leveraging the leadership dynamics within student groups to facilitate project completion.

Furthermore, innovative pedagogies continue to evolve within this field. Li Sen (2002) highlights the genre-based approach as a good alternative to traditional methods in college English reading instruction. This approach, characterized by its ability to enhance students' reading proficiency within a condensed timeframe significantly, involves a four-stage teaching process: genre analysis, group discussion, independent analysis, and consolidation practice. This pedagogical innovation enriches the instructional repertoire and aligns closely with contemporary educational paradigms emphasizing student-centred, active learning strategies.

Research on English Reading Teaching Strategies

At the end of the 20th century, due to the constraints of various factors, especially the traditional method of teaching language, which has been deeply rooted for many years, English classroom teaching has paid too much attention to explaining and teaching grammar and vocabulary knowledge but neglected the cultivation of students' ability to use the language. In response to this pedagogical gap, certain scholars have advocated for a paradigm shift in teaching strategies aligned with the new curriculum reform. Han Yinyan (2004) suggests refocusing pedagogical strategies to enhance the role of student agency, emphasizing the teaching of discourse, fostering cooperative learning environments, and enriching the curriculum with supplemental extracurricular reading materials. Meanwhile, early scholars combined reading theory and practice and proposed strategies such as providing reading precursors, constructing

reading schemas, and integrating reading from the perspective of reading activities (Lun, 2015; Qi, 2008). These strategies aim to provide a more cohesive and practical framework for reading instruction.

Some scholars have explored how to improve the efficiency of English text teaching from the perspective of discourse analysis and provided some suggestions for designing reading exercises (Zhang Xianchen, 2009). Furthermore, Ma Wulin and Chen Yu (2008) have contributed insights into the utility of mind mapping in discourse teaching. This approach centres on enabling learners to concentrate on crucial knowledge points, thus alleviating challenges posed by lengthy or complex texts. Mind mapping facilitates a deeper grasp of the thematic essence of texts and invigorates the learner's intrinsic motivation, pivoting the learning experience from a passive to an active endeavour.

In addition to the focus on language and content, English reading teaching in recent years has also centred on developing thinking ability. Given the uncertainties, ambiguities, and paradoxes of today's times, teachers have a responsibility to develop students' critical awareness when they are exposed to different ways of thinking, being, and behaving through reading English texts (Wallace, 2017). The new curriculum standard points out that the core competencies of the English discipline mainly include language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability (Ministry of Education, 2018). Thinking quality, characterized as a fundamental skill and an indispensable character trait, merges cognitive abilities with personality attributes related to thought processes. It integrates intellectual factors with non-intellectual elements, grounded in knowledge yet transcending it (Huang Yuanzhen, 2017). This dual nature has sparked scholarly interest in integrating the development of thinking quality into reading pedagogy. Researchers such as Ge Bingfang and Hong Li (2018) have delved into the pedagogical strategies effective in enhancing students' cognitive competencies, particularly within the context of secondary school English reading instruction. They propose the concept of a 'thinking classroom', which should concurrently focus on holistic education and cognitive innovation, emphasizing both the subject matter and the depth of thought engagement. They posit that a comprehensive design of reading activities—encompassing experiences, appreciation, sharing, and output—is essential for fostering students' cognitive development and optimizing the instructional efficacy of reading classes.

Moreover, the influence of discourse analysis and problem-oriented design in reading classes on the evolution of students' thinking abilities has been a focus of academic inquiry (Gu, 2014; Yang, 2017; Hu, 2018). The proposed strategies for cultivating thinking quality include: firstly, engaging students emotionally with texts to stimulate reading interest and facilitate the exploration of textual emotional connotations; secondly, leveraging problem-based learning to guide deep thinking and transform the learning process into a journey of problem identification, analysis, and resolution; thirdly, employing thinking maps to assist students in comprehensive, systematic text analysis; and fourthly, fostering collaborative learning to develop students' skills in teamwork and collective inquiry (Sun Jing, 2018). This holistic approach to reading instruction aims to enhance linguistic proficiency and enrich students' cognitive and affective experiences.

In the evolving landscape of English reading teaching, the integration of information technology has become increasingly prominent. This technological infusion into the traditional reading classroom offers novel avenues for enhancing the pedagogical process. Zong Yun (2010) posits that utilizing multimedia resources can significantly augment the efficacy of the English

reading classroom. He outlines several innovative teaching strategies, including the dual-master mode, which fosters teacher-led and student-centred learning; interactive teaching methodologies that encourage active engagement and dialogue; independent learning opportunities facilitated by technological tools; creating immersive learning scenarios; and targeted skills training.

In addition, given the prominence of information technology, mobile-assisted language learning has become an indispensable part of English as a foreign language (EFL) learning and has been recognized as an efficient tool in this setting (Sad et al., 2022). Mobile phones may have shaped new reading behavior and styles featured by more browsing and selective reading (Liu & Huang, 2016). Nevertheless, the previous research on the influence of mobile AIDS on reading teaching is not sufficient. Lin et al. (2020) noted that further empirical research is necessary on the potential advantages and disadvantages of applying mobile-assisted language learning to EFL reading. Jiang Yinjian (2016) investigated the supportive role of the WeChat public platform in English reading education. The findings from this study indicate that WeChat can be effectively leveraged in professional English reading instruction to enhance students' reading proficiency. The platform's utility lies in its capacity to tailor reading materials to students' specific needs and provide ongoing guidance on reading skills and methodologies throughout the learning process. This approach emphasizes the potential of digital platforms in customizing and enriching the learning experience, aligning with contemporary educational paradigms that emphasize personalized and technologically integrated learning environments.

Research on English Reading Ability

At the dawn of the 21st century, academic research concerning reading ability within the domestic sphere focused on reading comprehension. Reading comprehension encompasses the process of constructing meaning from written texts, ranging from recognizing individual symbols and linguistic units to synthesizing and integrating information within a meaningful framework, thereby engaging higher-order thinking skills (Zhang and Zhang, 2022). The use of reading strategies in the L2 literature has been recognized as an important way to increase reading comprehension (Anderson, 1991). Scholars have extensively debated and empirically investigated the positive influence of reading strategies on comprehension abilities. Researchers like Meng Yue (2004) and Wu Jing (2006) have spearheaded experimental studies examining the impact of English reading strategy training on college students. Their findings consistently demonstrate that strategic instruction significantly bolsters students' reading comprehension and speed.

Additionally, scholarly inquiries into the interplay between metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension have been pursued by Liu Huijun (2004) and Yang Xiaohu and Zhang Wenpeng (2002). Metacognition is most commonly understood as encompassing knowledge about, as well as the regulation of, cognition (Flavell, 1976; Guo, 2018). Previous studies reveal that metacognition directly enhances English reading comprehension and indirectly affects it by influencing the learners' overall English language proficiency. In the pedagogical realm, Pan Liping (2006) delved into the teachability of metacognitive strategies within classroom settings, proposing an innovative model for reading metacognitive strategy training that applies the teaching of metacognitive knowledge with its practical application. However, Li Xiaoyan's (2017) research into the usage of English reading strategies by college students yielded intriguing insights. Her study found that the deployment of metacognitive strategies was

substantially less frequent than that of cognitive strategies, with the majority of metacognitive strategies being seldom utilized. The strategies most commonly employed were lexical and compensation strategies, whereas self-evaluation and self-monitoring strategies were notably underused. These findings indicate a discrepancy between the theoretical advocacy of cognitive strategy teaching and its practical implementation in actual classroom settings, suggesting a significant gap in the popularization and practical application of these strategies in real-world educational contexts.

Moreover, some scholars pay attention to the cultivation of reading fluency. At present, Chinese children's English reading fluency teaching results are not ideal. To effectively carry out English reading fluency teaching for children, it is necessary to scientifically select reading materials, carry out repeated reading aloud teaching, teach basic skills of reading fluency, and scientifically evaluate reading fluency.(Dong GJ, Dong WF & Wang, 2013). In recent years, in the field of basic education, the focus o traditional concept of "reading ability" gradually switched to the new concept of "reading literacy", which contains more comprehensive and rich connotations. It not only emphasizes the linguistic, cognitive and socio-cultural abilities required for students to read, but also emphasizes the basic literacy needed to promote students' whole-person development, which consists of two major elements: reading ability and reading character (Wang, Qiang & Ao Narentuya, 2015). The cultivation of reading literacy is increasingly recognized as achievable through diverse pedagogical approaches. Wang, Qiang & Ao Narentuya (2017) have highlighted the instructional potential of picture books, while Zhang Jinxiu (2018) has emphasized the effectiveness of graded reading programs. These methodologies represent innovative strategies to foster reading literacy.

Furthermore, assessing reading abilities has garnered renewed scholarly interest, particularly regarding novel evaluative approaches. Cheng Xiaotang & Chen Pingping (2019) have proposed a conceptual framework for an English reading ability cultivation and assessment system rooted in big data analytics. This concept aims to harness the advancements in educational informatization to enhance students' English reading literacy.

Similarly, Fan Tingting and Zeng Yuqiang (2019) have critiqued traditional language proficiency scales for their macroscopic perspective, which often needs to account for individual learner variations with sufficient granularity. They advocate for using cognitive diagnostic testing as a research method to construct a diagnostic model for English reading proficiency. This model, positioned complementary to the Chinese English proficiency scale, enables educators to tailor instruction to individual student needs and refine the teaching process. Integrating this diagnostic approach with the existing proficiency scale aims to assist students in identifying specific challenges in their reading development, thereby enhancing the practical utility of the national scale in classroom instruction. This refinement and expansion of the Chinese English Proficiency Scale represent a significant step towards more personalized and effective reading literacy education.

D. Discussion and Conclusion

After a long time of exploration by experts and front-line teachers in foreign language education, the research on English reading teaching has gradually entered a period of multiple

perspectives and levels, embodying a certain degree of comprehensiveness with the following characteristics.

Diversification of Perspectives in English Reading Instruction Research

The study of English reading in China includes the study of English reading teaching strategies, as well as the exploration of different aspects of English teaching by using other theories. It gradually presents a significant feature of combining with Internet technology. For example, Wang Miao (2011), starting from the perspective of reading mode, explained online English reading based on Dynamic System Theory and made a new attempt at the Dynamic System Mode of English reading from the perspective of the Internet.

While network information technology has undoubtedly opened new vistas for English reading pedagogy, it has also introduced novel challenges. On the Internet, reading involves not only the reader's interpretation of the text and the author's position in the paper reading environment; When it comes to the third factor, Internet technology, reading also becomes a selective process, requiring special skills to scrutinize the rich visual and non-textual features of the Internet (Julie, 2005; Schmar-Dobler, 2003). Some scholars contend that, despite the apparent benefits of integrating network information technology in English reading instruction, this approach may need more emotional connectivity inherent in traditional classroom settings. Moreover, students may become engrossed in the vast array of online information, potentially losing sight of their learning objectives. Consequently, educators must strike a reasonable balance between traditional and technology-enhanced teaching methods. Ma Tiewei (2007) argues that effective reading instruction should uphold conventional pedagogical approaches. Instead, teachers ought to carefully consider the learning content, objectives, and individual characteristics, strategically combining network information technology with conventional teaching practices to optimize educational outcomes.

Rationalization and Depth in English Reading Research

Scholars pay attention to the ontological research of reading teaching in theoretical research. Li Hong (2004) has engaged deeply with reading mode theories, emphasizing that the reading process represents an intricate interaction between linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to developing students' correct use of all language skills in teaching. So that students can make use of their background knowledge to make inferences, speculations, generalizations and so on, to give the full play an active role in the process of reading. Expanding this discourse, Chen Yunxiang (2005) has drawn upon Michael Hoey's theory of semantic unit relations to propose novel approaches for enhancing reading skills in college English and refining foreign language reading instruction. Similarly, Zhang Yining (2010) has integrated the Transactional Theory in literacy with college English reading teaching to develop the "ATE" reading model.

Additionally, the intersection of learning theory and English reading instruction has been a focal area for several scholars. Zhang Fake and Zhao Ting (2004), for instance, highlight the potential of cooperative learning theory as a transformative pedagogical approach to reading instruction. Li Ling and Zou Yan (2005) advocate for applying verbal behaviour theory in college reading teaching, suggesting that guiding students through different contextual layers (background, situational, and contextual) can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of

the text. Collectively, these scholarly endeavours mark a shift in English reading research towards a more rationalized and in-depth exploration.

Integration with Curriculum Reform in English Reading Instruction Researchs

This shift has seen many scholars transition from an exclusive focus on language knowledge to a broader consideration of humanistic elements, including cognitive quality and learning ability (Hu, 2018; Sun, 2018; Ge & Li, 2018). Moreover, the conceptualization of English learning activities has infused fresh perspectives into reading teaching methodologies. For instance, Chen Shike (2019) examined the design of reading instruction grounded in the activity view of English, encompassing aspects such as text interpretation, teaching objective formulation, and the structuring of educational activities.

Ge Bingfang and Jiahuan Yin (2020) have also underscored the significance of framing English reading classroom activities with thematic meaning as both the genesis and goal of instructional design. They emphasize the cultivation of thinking through a questioning mainline, focusing on discerning content within textual processing and transforming specific queries into broader inquisitive exploration. This integration of thematic exploration and pedagogical design exemplifies the close alignment of English reading research with ongoing curriculum reforms.

However, there are still some areas that deserve further exploration in English reading teaching research. Firstly, much of the current theoretical research in English reading is an adaptation of foreign reading theories and has yet to form an Indigenous theoretical innovation. Although some scholars have put forward their own set of concepts, most of them summarise their experience and cannot constitute a complete English reading theory system. Secondly, from the point of view of research topics, in recent years, English reading teaching has paid attention to the cultivation of thematic meaning and thinking quality. There needs to be more exploration of how to integrate thematic content with language knowledge. Thirdly, from the point of view of research results, the current research needs to integrate more with Internet technology and artificial intelligence to increase the efficiency of English reading teaching.

Reading is a complex cognitive process and the cornerstone of language learning. The present study embarks on an analytical literature examination of research publication numbers, research trends and research foci on English reading teaching by experts and scholars in China in recent years. It systematically dissects the body of research along three critical dimensions: English reading teaching model, teaching strategies, and reading ability. Future studies should strengthen the ontology of reading theory and foster indigenous theoretical innovations. Moreover, the path of integrating new technological means and reading teaching can be explored to augment the efficiency of English reading teaching. Finally, forthcoming studies are encouraged to persist in employing empirical methodologies, such as teaching experiments, to foster innovative pedagogical practices grounded in the realities of educators' experiential knowledge.

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