Journal of Educational Sciences
Journal homepage: https://jes.ejournal.unri.ac.id/index.php/JES
P-ISSN 2581-1657
E-ISSN 2581-2203

# Implementing Reading Instruction in English Class through Positivism, Phenomenology, and Constructivism as Branches of Philosophy of Science

**Wasilatul Munawaroh*, Ari Purnawan**
*English Language Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, 55281, Indonesia*

**ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history*:

Received: 13 May 2026
Accepted: 05 June 2026
Available Online: 15 June 2026

*Keywords:*

Constructivism;
English Language Teaching;
Phenomenology;
Philosophy Of Science;
Positivism;
Reading Instruction

* *Corresponding author:*

E-mail:
wasilatul0040fbsb.2024@student.uny.ac.id

*Article Doi:*

https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.10.6.p.1046-1061

*This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.*

**A B S T R A C T**

This study explores how reading instruction in English classrooms is shaped by three philosophical paradigms, namely positivism, phenomenology, and constructivism, as branches of the philosophy of science. A qualitative multiple case study design was employed, involving six English teachers purposively selected from three A-accredited public senior high schools in Jakarta. The teachers had at least five years of teaching experience and held a bachelor's degree in English Education. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of teaching documents. Methodological triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing were used to ensure data credibility. Data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed three patterns. First, positivist-aligned teachers emphasized measurable outcomes and structured assessments. Second, phenomenological practices fostered personal reflection and multiple interpretations. Third, constructivist instruction encouraged collaboration and critical text-to-world connections. Several teachers blended the three paradigms to respond flexibly to learner needs. The study concludes that making philosophical orientations explicit can strengthen reading pedagogy in English language teaching. The findings can be applied to inform teacher professional development programs, the design of reading curricula in the Merdeka Curriculum, and classroom reading strategies that combine structured skill instruction with reflective and collaborative activities.

## 1. Introduction

Reading instruction in English classes is a complex and dynamic process deeply rooted in philosophical underpinnings. Far from being purely technical or procedural, reading pedagogy is shaped by foundational beliefs about knowledge, reality, and human understanding. The philosophy of science provides a lens

through which to examine how educational practices emerge from different epistemological traditions. Among these, positivism, phenomenology, and constructivism represent three influential paradigms that shape how teachers approach reading instruction in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Cohen et al., 2018; Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each paradigm offers a unique perspective on learning, knowledge, and the learner's role, providing a comprehensive framework for designing effective reading strategies in diverse classrooms.

Positivism, rooted in empirical observation and objectivity, views knowledge as measurable, testable, and generalizable. In the context of reading instruction, this has traditionally translated into practices focused on phonemic awareness, vocabulary recall, and standardized comprehension assessments (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Language programs shaped by positivist assumptions often prioritize structured reading tasks, explicit instruction, and formal assessments to produce measurable outcomes. While this approach provides clarity and consistency, it tends to minimize the personal and social dimensions of reading, treating learners as passive recipients of information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Research indicates that exclusive reliance on positivist methods may suppress learner engagement, particularly when reading tasks lack cultural or emotional relevance for students (Alvermann & Rush, 2022).

In contrast, phenomenology emphasizes the lived experience of the reader and the interpretive nature of meaning-making. It posits that reading is not merely decoding texts but engaging with them from one's situated consciousness and personal context (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2016). In the ELT classroom, phenomenological approaches encourage reflection, personal connection to reading material, and sensitivity to learners' cultural and emotional backgrounds. This approach highlights the value of student voice and subjectivity, allowing learners to construct meaning based on their own narratives and worldviews (Schwandt, 2000). Recent scholarship emphasizes that phenomenological instruction is particularly valuable in multilingual and multicultural classrooms, where diverse experiential backgrounds enrich textual interpretation (Pikhart & Al-Obaydi, 2025).

Constructivism, while sharing phenomenology's appreciation for subjectivity, shifts the focus to active learning and social interaction. Rooted in the foundational works of Piaget (1972) and Vygotsky (1978), constructivism asserts that learners build their own understanding through experience, inquiry, and dialogue. Reading instruction informed by constructivist thought fosters collaborative learning, discussion-based analysis of texts, and the integration of students' prior knowledge and experiences (Bruner, 1996; Freire, 1970). This paradigm supports critical literacy, encouraging students not only to comprehend texts but to interrogate them and connect them to broader social realities (Janks, 2022; Skerrett, 2021). Contemporary applications of constructivism in ELT include digital and multimodal literacy practices that encourage students to co-construct meaning across diverse text types and platforms (Cope & Kalantzis, 2021; Rowsell & Walsh, 2022).

The relationship between philosophical paradigms and reading pedagogy has attracted growing scholarly attention over the past decade, particularly in response to the increasing diversity of twenty-first century classrooms. Researchers have noted that teachers often hold implicit philosophical orientations that influence their instructional choices without conscious reflection (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Richards, 2022). Making these orientations explicit enables more intentional, theoretically grounded teaching. Empirical studies in ELT contexts have shown that when teachers understand and articulate their philosophical assumptions, they are better equipped to diversify their instructional repertoire and respond to the varied learning profiles of their students (Kumaravadivelu, 2021; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2020). Recent studies in Indonesian EFL contexts have further confirmed that pedagogical innovation in English language education is closely tied to teachers' epistemological choices and classroom strategies (Islami et al., 2025; Ilmita et al., 2025). This awareness is especially important in Indonesia, where the Merdeka Curriculum increasingly calls for student-centered, inquiry-based, and culturally responsive instruction (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

Three bodies of literature are particularly germane to this inquiry. First, research on reading comprehension consistently highlights the importance of integrating both bottom-up and top-down processing, with recent studies emphasizing that learners benefit most when instruction explicitly bridges linguistic decoding and higher-order inferential reasoning (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). Positivist models tend to emphasize the former, while phenomenological and constructivist models foreground the latter. Second, research on metacognitive strategy instruction demonstrates that learners who develop awareness of their own reading processes, regardless of the philosophical orientation of their teacher, achieve deeper comprehension and greater transfer of learning (Afflerbach et al., 2022; Baniabdelrahman, 2022).

Recent studies in Indonesian schools have also shown that reading-focused instructional materials and modules can significantly enhance literacy development when designed with clear pedagogical orientations (Imran et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2026). Third, work in critical literacy has established that reading instruction that positions learners as active, questioning, socially aware agents produces not only stronger comprehension outcomes but also greater motivation and identity investment in literacy tasks (Janks, 2022; Luke & Woods, 2020).

Despite the theoretical richness of these paradigms, their practical integration in Indonesian secondary EFL classrooms remains underexamined. Most existing research either focuses on a single paradigm or examines philosophical orientations at an abstract level without grounding findings in specific classroom practices (Muhlisin & Retnawati, 2021; Widiati & Cahyono, 2022). Furthermore, recent case studies in Indonesian secondary EFL settings indicate that classroom-level pedagogical decisions, including translanguaging and task design, are shaped by teachers' underlying beliefs about how language is learned (Saqinah et al., 2025; Jannah et al., 2025).

This study addresses that gap by examining how reading instruction in English classes at the senior high school level reflects, blends, and navigates the demands of positivism, phenomenology, and constructivism in practice. The paper pursues three interconnected objectives: (1) to identify how each philosophical paradigm manifests in observable classroom reading practices; (2) to examine how teachers reflect on and justify their philosophical orientations; and (3) to explore how paradigm blending enables more responsive and effective reading instruction.

## 2. Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative multiple case study design to explore how reading instruction in English classes is informed by the philosophical paradigms of positivism, phenomenology, and constructivism. The multiple case study approach was selected to allow for in-depth, contextualized analysis of diverse classroom practices across different philosophical orientations (Stake, 2023; Yin, 2018). This design aligns with the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms, which emphasize understanding meaning-making processes from participants' perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis, the study examined how teachers implement reading strategies that reflect their philosophical assumptions.

### Participants

Participants included six English teachers from three senior high schools in Jakarta, Indonesia. The three schools were A-accredited public senior high schools located in different sub-districts of Jakarta, each implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and serving classes with twenty-eight to thirty-six students. Teachers were purposively selected based on their diverse teaching approaches and stated beliefs about teaching and learning. Purposive sampling is appropriate for case study research as it allows the researcher to select information-rich cases that yield meaningful insights into the phenomenon of interest (Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2015). The inclusion criteria were: (a) a minimum of five years of teaching experience in English at the senior high school level; (b) holding at least a bachelor's degree in English Education; (c) currently teaching reading as part of the English subject; and (d) willingness to take part in classroom observations, interviews, and document sharing. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board, and informed consent was collected from all participants.

### Instruments

To gather comprehensive data, the study utilized three primary instruments: semi-structured interviews, classroom observation protocols, and teaching document analysis, such as lesson plans and reading materials. Semi-structured interviews

allowed for flexibility in probing teachers' philosophical beliefs, reading strategies, and reflective practices (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Classroom observations were conducted using a structured protocol adapted from Richards and Farrell (2011) to identify instructional practices aligned with positivist, phenomenological, or constructivist orientations. Document analysis helped to triangulate findings and understand how instructional planning aligned with underlying philosophical assumptions (Bowen, 2009). The instruments were piloted with two teachers not involved in the study to ensure clarity, reliability, and contextual appropriateness. Field notes and audio recordings were also collected to support data richness and credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), involving six recursive phases: familiarization, coding, theme generation, reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing up. Data from interviews, observations, and documents were transcribed, coded manually, and categorized according to emerging themes reflecting each philosophical paradigm. Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing (Shenton, 2004). Analytic memos were kept to capture the researcher's reflections throughout the process. NVivo software was used to assist in managing and visualizing qualitative data.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### *Overview of Data Collection in the Field*

Before presenting the findings, this section briefly describes how the data were collected in the classroom and what materials were analyzed. Data collection took place over a four-month period in the three participating senior high schools. Each English teacher was observed during three consecutive reading lessons, conducted in regular English class hours of approximately ninety minutes. Classes were taught using the textbook designated by the school in combination with additional reading materials selected by the teacher, such as short narrative texts, descriptive texts, and online articles. The classroom atmosphere varied across schools; some classes were arranged in rows with teacher-fronted instruction, while others used clustered seating that supported group discussion.

The researcher attended each lesson as a non-participant observer, recorded field notes, and audio-recorded the interactions with the teacher's permission. Semi-structured interviews of approximately forty to sixty minutes were then carried out with each teacher after the observation cycle was completed, and teaching documents such as lesson plans, student worksheets, and reading materials were collected for analysis. To clarify the interview process, the main interview questions that guided the conversation with the teachers are presented in Table 1 below.

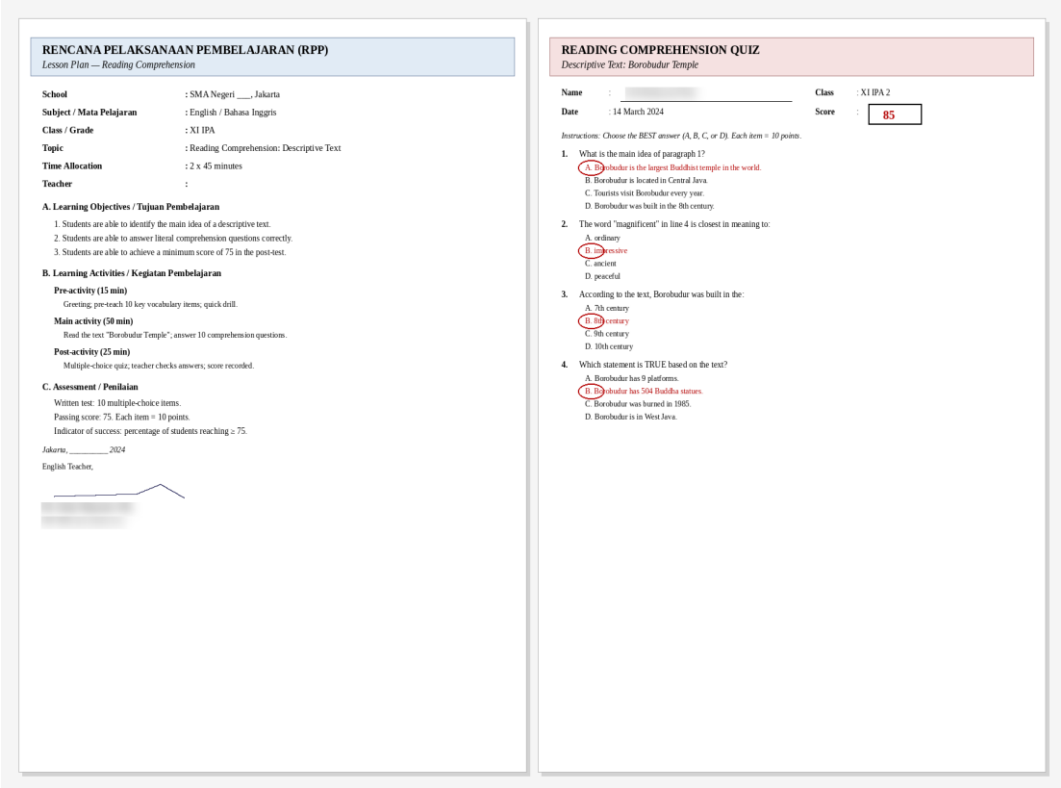
Table 1. Main Interview Questions Used in the Study

| No. | Interview Question |
|---|---|
| 1 | How do you describe your overall view of teaching reading in English class? |
| 2 | What do you consider the main goal of reading instruction in your classroom? |
| 3 | What activities or strategies do you usually use when teaching a reading lesson? |
| 4 | How do you decide which reading texts and tasks to give to your students? |
| 5 | How do you measure or know that your students understand a reading text? |
| 6 | In what ways do you encourage students to connect a reading text to their personal experiences or to real life? |
| 7 | How do you handle students who interpret a reading text differently from your own interpretation? |
| 8 | How do you reflect on your own beliefs about how students learn to read in English? |

Classroom observation focused on five main aspects derived from the three philosophical paradigms: (a) the type of reading tasks given to students, whether structured or open-ended; (b) the role of the teacher, whether instructor, facilitator, or co-inquirer; (c) the role of the students, whether receivers, interpreters, or collaborators; (d) the use of texts and supporting materials; and (e) the way comprehension was checked and assessed. During each observation, the researcher used an observation sheet to note instructional sequences, teacher and student interactions, the types of questions asked, and the dominant pattern of engagement. After each session, the researcher wrote a short reflective summary to capture initial impressions before transcribing the field notes in full.

The documents analyzed in this study included three categories: (a) lesson plans written by each teacher for the observed reading lessons; (b) student worksheets and reading tasks distributed during the lessons; and (c) the reading texts used as instructional material, both from textbooks and from teacher-selected sources. These documents were used to triangulate the data from observations and interviews and to examine how the teachers' philosophical orientations were reflected in their written instructional planning.

To respect ethical considerations, all documents were anonymized, and any photographs that contained recognizable faces or personal identifiers were blurred before being used for analysis or reporting. Two illustrative examples of the documentation collected in the field are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below. Figure 1 displays a lesson plan and student worksheet developed by a positivist-oriented teacher, while Figure 2 shows reflective notes and a group worksheet from a phenomenological and constructivist lesson. All identifying information has been blurred to protect participant privacy.



**RENCANA PELAKSANAAN PEMBELAJARAN (RPP)**
*Lesson Plan — Reading Comprehension*

**School** : SMA Negeri ___, Jakarta
**Subject / Mata Pelajaran** : English / Bahasa Inggris
**Class / Grade** : XI IPA
**Topic** : Reading Comprehension: Descriptive Text
**Time Allocation** : 2 x 45 minutes
**Teacher** :

**A. Learning Objectives / Tujuan Pembelajaran**

1. Students are able to identify the main idea of a descriptive text.
2. Students are able to answer literal comprehension questions correctly.
3. Students are able to achieve a minimum score of 75 in the post-test.

**B. Learning Activities / Kegiatan Pembelajaran**

**Pre-activity (15 min)**
Greeting; pre-teach 10 key vocabulary items; quick drill.

**Main activity (50 min)**
Read the text "Borobudur Temple"; answer 10 comprehension questions.

**Post-activity (25 min)**
Multiple-choice quiz; teacher checks answers; score recorded.

**C. Assessment / Penilaian**

Written test: 10 multiple-choice items.
Passing score: 75. Each item = 10 points.
Indicator of success: percentage of students reaching ≥ 75.

*Jakarta, _____ 2024*
English Teacher,

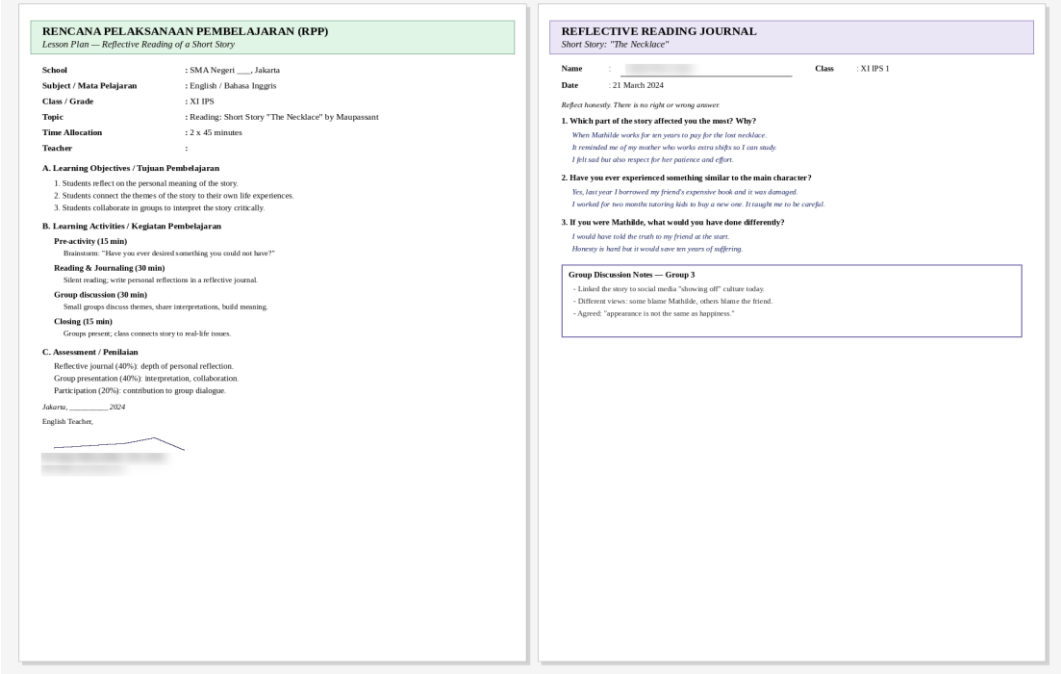
**READING COMPREHENSION QUIZ**
*Descriptive Text: Borobudur Temple*

**Name** : [redacted] **Class** : XI IPA 2
**Date** : 14 March 2024 **Score** : 85

*Instructions: Choose the BEST answer (A, B, C, or D). Each item = 10 points.*

1. What is the main idea of paragraph 1?
   A. Borobudur is the largest Buddhist temple in the world.
   B. Borobudur is located in Central Java.
   C. Tourists visit Borobudur every year.
   D. Borobudur was built in the 8th century.
2. The word "magnificent" in line 4 is closest in meaning to:
   A. ordinary
   B. impressive
   C. ancient
   D. peaceful
3. According to the text, Borobudur was built in the:
   A. 7th century
   B. 8th century
   C. 9th century
   D. 10th century
4. Which statement is TRUE based on the text?
   A. Borobudur has 9 platforms.
   B. Borobudur has 504 Buddha statues.
   C. Borobudur was burned in 1985.
   D. Borobudur is in West Java.

Figure 1. Illustrative example of a positivist-oriented English reading lesson plan and a multiple-choice comprehension worksheet from the study (names and identifiers blurred).



**RENCANA PELAKSANAAN PEMBELAJARAN (RPP)**
*Lesson Plan — Reflective Reading of a Short Story*

**School** : SMA Negeri ___, Jakarta
**Subject / Mata Pelajaran** : English / Bahasa Inggris
**Class / Grade** : XI IPS
**Topic** : Reading: Short Story "The Necklace" by Maupassant
**Time Allocation** : 2 x 45 minutes
**Teacher** :

**A. Learning Objectives / Tujuan Pembelajaran**

1. Students reflect on the personal meaning of the story.
2. Students connect the themes of the story to their own life experiences.
3. Students collaborate in groups to interpret the story critically.

**B. Learning Activities / Kegiatan Pembelajaran**

**Pre-activity (15 min)**
Brainstorm: "Have you ever desired something you could not have?"

**Reading & Journaling (30 min)**
Silent reading; write personal reflections in a reflective journal.

**Group discussion (30 min)**
Small groups discuss themes, share interpretations, build meaning.

**Closing (15 min)**
Groups present; class connects story to real-life issues.

**C. Assessment / Penilaian**

Reflective journal (40%): depth of personal reflection.
Group presentation (40%): interpretation, collaboration.
Participation (20%): contribution to group dialogue.

*Jakarta, _____ 2024*
English Teacher,

**REFLECTIVE READING JOURNAL**
*Short Story: "The Necklace"*

**Name** : [redacted] **Class** : XI IPS 1
**Date** : 21 March 2024

*Reflect honestly. There is no right or wrong answer.*

**1. Which part of the story affected you the most? Why?**
*When Mathilde works for ten years to pay for the lost necklace.*
*It reminded me of my mother who works extra shifts so I can study.*
*I felt sad but also respect for her patience and effort.*

**2. Have you ever experienced something similar to the main character?**
*Yes, last year I borrowed my friend's expensive book and it was damaged.*
*I worked for two months tutoring kids to buy a new one. It taught me to be careful.*

**3. If you were Mathilde, what would you have done differently?**
*I would have told the truth to my friend at the start.*
*Honesty is hard but it would save ten years of suffering.*

**Group Discussion Notes — Group 3**
- Linked the story to social media "showing off" culture today.
- Different views: some blame Mathilde, others blame the friend.
- Agreed: "appearance is not the same as happiness."

Figure 2. Illustrative example of a phenomenological and constructivist English reading lesson plan together with a reflective journal and group discussion worksheet from the study (names and identifiers blurred).

The data analysis revealed two major themes: (1) instructional practices informed by philosophical paradigms, and (2) teacher reflections and learner engagement.

### *Instructional Practices Informed by Philosophical Paradigms*

The first major finding centered on observable classroom practices aligned with the three philosophical paradigms. Teachers whose approaches reflected positivism typically adopted structured reading routines, such as pre-teaching vocabulary, using comprehension questions with single correct answers, and assessing understanding through written quizzes. These practices were uniform, text-centered, and focused on measurable outcomes. One teacher explained, "I always give multiple-choice questions after each reading task because it is easier to check and it shows how much they understand the passage." This mirrors the positivist emphasis on objectivity, standardization, and control (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

This pattern is consistent with previous studies that have argued that positivist-oriented reading instruction often privileges decoding, vocabulary control, and standardized comprehension testing as the main indicators of reading success (Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Nation, 2009). Furthermore, similar findings have been reported in Indonesian EFL classrooms, where teachers tend to rely on textbook-driven tasks and short-answer comprehension exercises to align with national assessments (Widiati & Cahyono, 2022; Muhlisin & Retnawati, 2021). The present study supports this view but extends it by showing that, in the Jakarta context, positivist practices are not adopted in isolation, but coexist with phenomenological and constructivist elements within the same lesson.

In contrast, teachers with a phenomenological orientation designed lessons that encouraged students to relate personally to the reading material. This included reflective journaling, reader-response activities, and open-ended class discussions. For example, one teacher asked students to "write about a time in your life that connects with the main character's experience," highlighting the importance of subjective meaning and emotional engagement. Observations confirmed that these teachers allowed space for multiple interpretations and validated diverse student voices, consistent with phenomenological perspectives on lived experience and interpretation (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2016).

These observations align with phenomenological scholarship that views reading as an interpretive act shaped by readers' lived experiences (Hanauer & Warhol, 2023; van Manen, 2016), and they extend prior studies on reading interest in Indonesian secondary schools that have reported the importance of emotionally engaging materials for sustained reading practice (Jannah et al., 2025). Teachers who operated from a constructivist perspective emphasized collaborative tasks, text-to-world connections, and learner agency. In one classroom, students worked in groups to co-create digital presentations analyzing social themes in a short story, followed by peer questioning. These practices reflected the constructivist view that learning is socially situated and knowledge is actively constructed (Vygotsky, 1978). Unlike positivist classrooms that were teacher-centered and assessment-

driven, constructivist classrooms encouraged exploration, dialogue, and critical thinking.

These constructivist practices resonate with earlier findings on collaborative and project-based reading interventions in Indonesia, which have shown that group-based reading tasks can foster twenty-first century skills such as critical thinking, communication, and digital literacy (Sari et al., 2026; Imran et al., 2025). The present study confirms the pedagogical value of such practices and shows that they are most effective when teachers are aware of the constructivist assumptions that underlie them.

### *Teacher Reflections and Learner Engagement*

The second finding emerged from interviews, highlighting how teachers' philosophical orientations shaped their reflective practices and students' engagement. Positivist-oriented teachers tended to focus on improving test scores and comprehension accuracy, referring to "increased scores" or "correct answers" as indicators of success. While these teachers reported efficiency and clarity in their instruction, classroom observations noted limited student interaction and lower enthusiasm, particularly when working with prescribed reading passages (Nation, 2009; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Phenomenological and constructivist-oriented teachers, by contrast, expressed concerns not only about performance but about students' emotional, cognitive, and social involvement. They spoke about helping learners develop "empathy," "confidence," and "ownership of meaning." In phenomenological classrooms, learners appeared more introspective and open to sharing personal stories, while in constructivist classrooms, students were highly interactive, often engaging in debates and collaborative meaning-making. These findings are consistent with recent literature showing that learner-centered paradigms enhance engagement, motivation, and deeper comprehension (Alvermann & Rush, 2022; Janks, 2022; Luke & Woods, 2020).

Moreover, several teachers acknowledged blending paradigms depending on context. One teacher stated: "Sometimes, I begin with a structured quiz to check understanding, but then I let students explore alternative interpretations." This flexible application of philosophical principles suggests a growing recognition that no single paradigm is sufficient on its own, and that effective reading instruction often requires a balanced integration of positivist clarity, phenomenological empathy, and constructivist interaction. A summary of the observed instructional practices based on the three philosophical paradigms is presented in Table 2 below. To complement the qualitative summary in Table 2, the relative frequency of paradigm-aligned features observed across the six participating teachers during the three observed reading lessons is illustrated in Figure 3 below. Frequency counts were obtained by coding observation field notes against the indicators defined for each paradigm (see Section 2).

Table 2. Summary of Observed Instructional Practices Based on Philosophical Paradigms

| Philosophical Paradigm | Instructional Features | Examples from Data | Sources |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positivism | Teacher-centered, structured tasks, measurable outcomes | Multiple-choice quizzes, literal comprehension questions | *Richards & Rodgers (2014); Creswell & Creswell (2018)* |
| Phenomenology | Learner-centered, focus on personal experience and subjective interpretation | Reflective journaling, emotion-based reading discussions | *Moustakas (1994); van Manen (2016)* |
| Constructivism | Social learning, collaborative meaning-making, inquiry-based tasks | Group discussions, digital projects, text-to-world connections | *Vygotsky (1978); Bruner (1996); Freire (1970)* |

The chart highlights the variation in pedagogical orientation across teachers and supports the qualitative pattern of paradigm blending discussed earlier in this section.

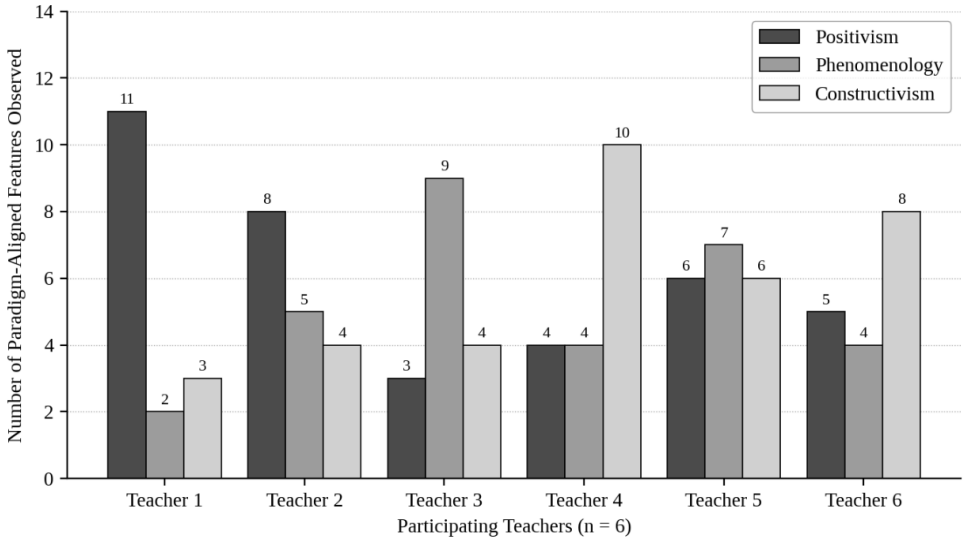



*Figure 3. Frequency of paradigm-aligned features observed across the six participating English teachers (three observed lessons per teacher; counts derived from coded observation field notes).*

As shown in Figure 3, Teacher 1 exhibited the strongest positivist orientation, with eleven coded instances, while Teacher 4 and Teacher 6 were predominantly constructivist, with ten and eight coded constructivist features respectively. Teacher 3 leaned phenomenological with nine coded features. Teacher 5 showed the most balanced profile, with comparable counts across all three paradigms, supporting the qualitative finding that some teachers consciously blend paradigms in their reading instruction.

## *Discussion*

The findings of this study underscore the critical importance of philosophical orientation in shaping reading instruction in English classrooms. By examining instructional practices through the lenses of positivism, phenomenology, and constructivism, this research illuminates how deeply embedded philosophical assumptions influence not only what is taught, but how students experience and engage with reading tasks. These insights are particularly significant in the context of increasingly diverse and multilingual classrooms, where a one-size-fits-all model of reading instruction is inadequate (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kumaravadivelu, 2021).

This study contributes to educational theory and classroom practice by revealing how teachers, often without conscious awareness, align their methods with foundational philosophies. Making these alignments explicit offers a powerful tool for reflective teaching and pedagogical growth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research demonstrates that integrating paradigms rather than strictly adhering to one enables a more responsive and learner-centered approach to reading instruction, capable of addressing both cognitive and affective learning goals (Cope & Kalantzis, 2021; Janks, 2022). The study confirms that positivist approaches, while effective for structured literacy development and formal assessment preparation, can constrain learner engagement when over-relied upon. Such methods often prioritize comprehension accuracy and textual correctness, aligning with national standards and large-scale assessments (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). However, when reading becomes mechanistic, students may struggle to connect meaningfully with texts, particularly if content lacks personal or cultural relevance (Alvermann & Rush, 2022; Moje et al., 2020).

Phenomenological instruction emphasizes the emotional and experiential dimensions of reading, fostering deeper reflection, empathy, and personal connection, especially valuable when exploring literature or culturally rich texts (Hanauer & Warhol, 2023). Teachers who adopt this approach elevate the learner's voice and recognize the fluid, interpretive nature of meaning, supporting inclusive and humanizing pedagogies. This aligns with recent calls for culturally responsive teaching in Indonesian EFL contexts (Kemendikbudristek, 2022; Lie, 2020).

Constructivism provides a practical framework for critical literacy, enabling students to analyze, question, and apply texts to real-world contexts. The emphasis on dialogue, collaboration, and inquiry transforms reading into a social process that cultivates not just comprehension but agency (Freire, 1970; Janks, 2022). This aligns with the goals of twenty-first century education, such as creativity, communication, and critical thinking, and with recent multiliteracies frameworks that recognize reading as shaped by ideology, culture, and identity (Cope & Kalantzis, 2021; Rowsell & Walsh, 2022).

An important contribution of this study is the recognition that effective teachers do not adhere rigidly to a single paradigm but blend elements depending on instructional goals and student needs. Positivist strategies may be used to establish

foundational skills, while phenomenological and constructivist strategies foster deeper engagement and critical interpretation (Kumaravadivelu, 2021; Richards, 2022). This flexible, integrated approach aligns with contemporary calls for pedagogical pluralism in language education and with the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on differentiated, student-centered learning (Kemendikbudristek, 2022; Widiati & Cahyono, 2022).

### *Challenges and Limitations of Implementing the Paradigms in the Classroom*

Although each paradigm has clear pedagogical strengths, the data also revealed several challenges that constrain their implementation in real classroom contexts. The first challenge is limited instructional time. Several teachers reported that the ninety-minute weekly slot for English, combined with the breadth of competencies in the Merdeka Curriculum, made it difficult to fully implement phenomenological reflection or extended constructivist projects without sacrificing other learning objectives. As a result, structured positivist tasks were often preferred for reasons of efficiency rather than pedagogical conviction.

The second challenge concerns teacher readiness. Some participants expressed that they had received limited formal preparation in the philosophical foundations of language teaching, which made it harder for them to deliberately design phenomenological or constructivist activities. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that English teachers in Indonesia often develop their pedagogical orientations implicitly through practice rather than through explicit theoretical training (Richards, 2022; Muhlisin & Retnawati, 2021).

The third challenge concerns curriculum and assessment pressure. Even when teachers preferred phenomenological or constructivist approaches, the demands of school-based examinations and national assessments still encouraged short-answer and multiple-choice testing formats. This pressure tends to reinforce positivist assumptions about reading, regardless of teachers' personal beliefs. The fourth challenge concerns learner characteristics. Teachers reported that students who were unfamiliar with reflective or collaborative reading tasks often struggled in the early stages, particularly those with limited English proficiency or low confidence in expressing personal opinions. Constructivist and phenomenological tasks therefore required additional scaffolding, classroom management strategies, and patience before they began to produce visible engagement. These challenges suggest that the integration of positivism, phenomenology, and constructivism in reading instruction cannot rely on teacher willingness alone. It must be supported by appropriate curriculum design, sustained teacher professional development, and assessment systems that recognize qualitative aspects of reading such as interpretation, reflection, and collaboration.

These findings suggest that teacher education programs should explicitly address philosophical foundations, helping future educators understand how paradigms shape literacy instruction. Doing so fosters more intentional, reflective, and transformative teaching practices (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2020). School leaders and curriculum developers should support

professional development initiatives that enable teachers to experiment with varied reading approaches and adapt instruction to diverse learner identities and contexts..

## 4. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that reading instruction in English classrooms is deeply influenced by the philosophical paradigms underlying teachers' beliefs and pedagogical decisions. In response to the three research objectives, the study shows, first, that each paradigm manifests in distinct observable practices: positivism in structured tasks and measurable outcomes, phenomenology in reflective and personal interpretation, and constructivism in collaborative and inquiry-based reading. Second, teachers reflected on their orientations not as rigid frameworks but as flexible resources shaped by classroom realities. Third, paradigm blending emerged as the most responsive form of reading pedagogy. The research can therefore be regarded as successful in fulfilling its objectives, although it is limited by its small number of participants and its single urban setting. Making philosophical orientations explicit in teacher education and professional development supports more intentional and reflective pedagogy. By integrating positivist, phenomenological, and constructivist approaches, teachers can foster reading environments that are not only effective but also transformative, empowering students to engage critically with texts and with the world.

## Acknowledgement

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the Master of English Language Education, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, for the academic support and guidance throughout the completion of this research. The author also extends appreciation to all lecturers, participants, and individuals who contributed valuable assistance, encouragement, and support during the research process.

## References

Afflerbach, P., Pearson, P. D., & Paris, S. G. (2022). Clarifying Differences Between Reading Skills and Reading Strategies. In E. Dutro & R. Hand (Eds.), *Rethinking Reading Instruction* (pp. 25–42). Routledge.

Alvermann, D. E., & Rush, L. S. (2022). Literacy's Sociocultural Dimensions. In N. K. Duke & M. H. Mallette (Eds.), *Literacy Research Methodologies* (3rd ed., pp. 1–18). Guilford Press.

Baniabdelrahman, A. A. (2022). Scaffolded Metacognitive Reading Strategy Instruction and EFL Reading Comprehension. *TESOL Journal*, *13*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.604

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *9*(2), 27–40. https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bruner, J. (1996). *The Culture of Education*. Harvard University Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education* (8th ed.). Routledge.

Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2021). *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Learning by Design* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. SAGE Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2017). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Herder and Herder.

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2019). *Teaching and Researching Reading* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Hanauer, D. I., & Warhol, L. (2023). Phenomenological Approaches to Multilingual Literacy Research. *Modern Language Journal*, *107*(1), 12–29. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12820

Ilmita, A. N., Setyaningsih, E., & Putra, K. A. (2025). Indonesian EFL Learners' English Language Learning and Use in Social Media: A Case Study. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *9*(2), 758–781. https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.2.p.758-781

Imran, M. A., Akhir, M., & Arif, T. (2025). Development of a Prototype of Children's Literature E-Module Media Based on Google Workspace for Education to Improve Reading Literacy of Students in Elementary Schools. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *9*(4), 2678–2686. https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.4.p.2678-2686

Islami, A. P., Putri, S. A., & Hasibuan, H. N. H. (2025). Exploring Innovations in Teaching, Assessment, and Technology for English Language Education in Indonesian Tertiary Education. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *9*(6), 5452–5465. https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.6.p.5452-5465

Janks, H. (2022). Critical Literacy in a Post-Truth World. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *65*(4), 285–293. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1178

Jannah, W. J., Melliofatria, M., & Corrina, F. (2025). Enhancing Students' Reading Interest by Developing Augmented Reality-Based Storybooks. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *9*(6), 5343–5357. https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.6.p.5343-5357

Kemendikbudristek. (2022). *Capaian Pembelajaran Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris Fase F*. Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi. https://kurikulum.kemdikbud.go.id

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2021). A Decolonial Approach to Language Teaching and Learning. In P. De Costa & S. Canagarajah (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Language Teacher Education* (pp. 27–42). Cambridge University Press.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Lie, A. (2020). English and Identity in Multicultural Contexts: Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities. *TEFLIN Journal*, *31*(2), 185–202. https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v31i2/185-202

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. SAGE Publications.

Luke, A., & Woods, A. (2020). Critical Literacies in Schools: A Primer. *Voices from the Middle*, *27*(1), 9–17.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Moje, E. B., Afflerbach, P., Enciso, P., & Lesaux, N. K. (2020). *Handbook of Reading Research* (Vol. 5). Routledge.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. SAGE Publications.

Muhlisin, A., & Retnawati, H. (2021). Philosophical Underpinnings of EFL Teaching Practices in Indonesian Secondary Schools. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *11*(1), 55–67. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v11i1.31479

Nation, I. S. P. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing*. Routledge.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Pennycook, A., & Coutand-Marin, S. (2020). *Critical Applied Linguistics: A Critical Re-Introduction*. Routledge.

Piaget, J. (1972). *The Psychology of the Child*. Basic Books.

Pikhart, M., & Al-Obaydi, L. H. (2025). Reporting the Potential Risk of Using AI in Higher Education: Subjective Perspectives of Educators. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, *18*, 100693. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2025.100693

Richards, J. C. (2022). Exploring the Epistemological Underpinnings of Language Teaching: Implications for Teacher Education. *RELC Journal*, *53*(1), 3–18. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220941440

Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2011). *Practice Teaching: A Reflective Approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Rowsell, J., & Walsh, M. (2022). Rethinking Literacy Education in New Times: Multimodality, Multiliteracies, and New Literacies. *Brock Education Journal*, *31*(1), 53–62. https://doi.org/10.26522/brocked.v31i1.920

Saqinah, A., Samsi, Y. S., & Utami, P. P. (2025). Exploring an EFL Teacher's Translanguaging Practice of Giving Instruction in English Learning and Teaching Process: A Case Study at Junior High School in Bogor. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *9*(5), 4183–4192. https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.5.p.4183-4192

Sari, D., Sinaga, M., & Charlina, C. (2026). Development of Project-Based Short Story Reading Module to Enhance 21st Century Skills of Junior High School Learners. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *10*(1), 48–59. https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.10.1.p.48-59

Schwandt, T. A. (2000). Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 189–213). SAGE Publications.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects. *Education for Information*, *22*(2), 63–75. https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201

Skerrett, A. (2021). *Teaching Transnational Youth: Literacy and Education in a Changing World* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Stake, R. E. (2023). *Multiple Case Study Analysis* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.

van Manen, M. (2016). *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing*. Routledge.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.

Widiati, U., & Cahyono, B. Y. (2022). Reading Instruction in the Indonesian EFL Context: Revisiting Theory, Policy, and Practice. *TEFLIN Journal*, *33*(2), 217–238. https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v33i2/217-238

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

How to cite this article:

Munawaroh, W., & Purnawan, A. (2026). Implementing Reading Instruction in English Class through Positivism, Phenomenology, and Constructivism as Branches of Philosophy of Science. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *10(6)*, 1046-1061.