Bringing Movement into Reading Lessons: EFL Teachers' Perspectives in Primary Schools in Tirana, Albania

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Abstract

Maintaining students' attention during reading activities remains a persistent challenge in primary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. When attention declines, learners often struggle to process and interpret written information effectively. Recent educational and cognitive research highlights the potential of integrating physical movement into classroom instruction as a means of supporting engagement and mental readiness for learning.

This study explores how movement-based strategies are perceived by primary school EFL teachers in Tirana, Albania when incorporated into reading instruction. Using a structured questionnaire, the research examines teachers' experiences with integrating physical activity into reading lessons, the contexts in which these strategies are applied, and their perceived influence on learners' engagement and comprehension.

The results indicate that teachers generally associate purposeful movement with improved classroom engagement and greater student focus during reading tasks. Activities such as role-play, gesture-based interaction, and short physical exercises were commonly perceived by teachers as supportive of sustained attention and text understanding. Teachers also report that these strategies contribute to a more dynamic classroom environment and encourage active participation in reading-related activities.

The findings suggest that movement-integrated instruction may represent a valuable pedagogical approach for supporting reading comprehension in primary EFL settings. Incorporating physical engagement into language lessons may help create learning conditions that promote concentration and deeper interaction with texts. Further investigation using classroom-based observational and experimental methods could provide additional insight into the long-term impact of such practices on reading development.

Keywords: movement-based learning, reading comprehension, attention, EFL classrooms, primary education, Tirana, Albania

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a fundamental component of foreign language learning and plays a central role in the development of literacy skills among young learners. In primary EFL classrooms, reading activities provide opportunities for students to expand vocabulary, develop language awareness, and engage with meaningful texts. However, sustaining learners' attention during reading lessons is often difficult, particularly when instructional

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activities are repetitive or require prolonged periods of passive participation.

Over the last decade, interest has grown in the relationship between physical activity and learning. Educational researchers have examined how movement can influence attention, engagement, and classroom behavior, while cognitive scientists have explored the connections between bodily activity and mental processes. This growing body of research challenges the traditional assumption that learning occurs primarily through sedentary classroom work and suggests that physical engagement can play a meaningful role in supporting cognitive performance.

Within language education, movement is commonly incorporated through activities such as role-play, storytelling, gesture-supported communication, vocabulary enactment, and movement-based games. These approaches are particularly relevant for young learners, who often benefit from interactive and multisensory learning experiences. Rather than functioning solely as classroom energizers, movement activities can become part of the instructional process itself by helping learners interact with language in more active ways.

Although research on physically active learning has expanded substantially during the past decade, much of the existing literature has concentrated on measuring student outcomes such as attention, cognitive performance, and academic achievement. Comparatively less attention has been given to teachers' perspectives regarding how movement-based approaches are implemented within everyday classroom practice. This limitation is particularly evident in EFL reading instruction, where teachers play a central role in adapting instructional strategies to the realities of curriculum requirements, classroom management, and learner needs. Furthermore, little empirical evidence exists regarding how Albanian primary school teachers perceive movement-integrated reading instruction. Consequently, important questions remain concerning the practical feasibility, perceived effectiveness, and contextual challenges associated with movement-based learning in Albanian EFL classrooms. By addressing this gap, the present study contributes both local and international insight into the implementation of physically active learning.

This study explores how primary school EFL teachers in Tirana perceive movement-integrated reading instruction. Specifically, it examines how teachers describe the influence of movement on student attention and participation, the ways in which movement activities are incorporated into reading lessons, and the challenges associated with their use. By focusing on teachers' experiences rather than student outcomes, the study contributes to a better understanding of how movement-based approaches are interpreted and applied within Albanian primary education.

The study is guided by the following research objectives:

1. To examine teachers' perceptions of the relationship between physical movement, student attention, and reading engagement.
2. To identify the movement-based activities most commonly used during reading instruction.
3. To explore the practical challenges teachers encounter when implementing movement-integrated learning in primary EFL classrooms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Physical Activity and Cognitive Function

Interest in the relationship between physical activity and learning has increased considerably over the years. Researchers from education, psychology, and neuroscience have examined whether movement can influence cognitive processes that support academic performance, including attention, memory, and executive functioning. While findings are not entirely consistent, a substantial body of research suggests that physical activity can contribute positively to children's readiness to learn.

Recent European research has further emphasized the growing importance of physically active learning as an educational approach capable of integrating movement and academic instruction within everyday classroom practice (Bailey et al., 2023). Several studies have reported improvements in attentional control and cognitive performance following physical activity. Earlier classroom-based research also demonstrated that brief movement interventions can increase students' on-task behavior during lessons, suggesting that physical activity may support attentional readiness in educational settings (Mahar et al., 2006). Hillman et al. (2009), for example, found that a brief period of aerobic exercise improved aspects of cognitive control among school-aged children. Similarly, classroom-based interventions reviewed by Donnelly et al. (2016) indicated that physically active learning environments may support both cognitive functioning and academic engagement.

At the same time, evidence regarding academic achievement is less conclusive. Some investigations have reported positive effects on learning outcomes, while others have found stronger effects on classroom behavior and attention than on academic performance itself. Syväoja et al. (2022) argue that the relationship between physical activity and achievement is influenced by multiple factors, including the nature of the activity, implementation quality, and characteristics of the learning environment. Recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses likewise report generally positive effects of physically active lessons on student engagement, physical activity, and selected academic outcomes, although the magnitude of these effects varies considerably across studies and educational settings (Norris et al., 2020; Watson et al., 2019). These findings further support the view that movement can contribute to learning, while highlighting the importance of implementation quality and instructional design.

One important distinction emerging from this literature concerns the difference between movement that is integrated into instruction and movement that occurs independently of academic tasks. Activities that require students to engage physically with learning content appear to produce stronger educational outcomes than general activity breaks. Mavilidi et al. (2018) suggest that movement is most effective when it contributes directly to the learning process rather than functioning solely as a means of increasing physical activity.

Taken together, existing research indicates that movement can support conditions associated with effective learning, particularly attention and engagement. However, current evidence does not support a simple conclusion that physical activity automatically leads to improved academic performance. The educational value of movement appears to depend largely on how it is incorporated into classroom instruction.

Movement-Based Learning in EFL Classrooms

Movement has long been used in language teaching, particularly through Total Physical Response (TPR), introduced by Asher (1969). TPR is based on the idea that comprehension develops before production and that physical responses can strengthen language learning and memory.

Today, movement-based instruction extends beyond TPR to include role-play, dramatization, gestures, collaborative games, and storytelling. Research suggests that integrating movement into learning tasks can enhance participation and collaboration (Shoval, 2011), making it especially valuable in primary EFL classrooms.

Studies generally associate movement-based activities with greater motivation, engagement, and participation. However, researchers differ on whether these benefits result mainly from increased enjoyment and motivation or from improved comprehension and memory. Evidence also suggests that movement is most effective when directly linked to learning objectives, such as acting out stories or vocabulary, rather than serving only as a break from instruction.

Despite growing research on physically active learning, teacher perspectives remain limited, particularly in Albania, where little research has explored the practical implementation of movement-based teaching in EFL classrooms.

Movement and Reading Development

Reading instruction provides an important context for examining movement-based learning because successful reading requires attention, comprehension, and active meaning-making. Several studies have reported positive links between physical activity and reading-related outcomes. For example, Álvarez-Bueno et al. (2017) and Haapala et al. (2017) found associations between physical activity, cognitive functioning, and academic achievement, while Mullender-Wijnsma et al. (2016) reported improved achievement following physically active language lessons.

However, findings remain mixed because studies use different measures of reading success, including achievement, motivation, participation, and attention. Research also suggests that movement is most effective when integrated directly into academic content rather than used solely as general exercise (Duncan et al., 2021). In reading instruction, this may include dramatization, vocabulary enactment, and story-based activities.

Despite encouraging results, many studies have been conducted under controlled conditions, and the mechanisms through which movement influences reading remain unclear. While some research reports gains in comprehension and literacy outcomes, others identify stronger effects on motivation and attentional behavior. These inconsistencies highlight the need to examine teachers' perspectives on the practicality and effectiveness of movement-based reading activities in authentic classroom settings.

Teacher Perspectives and Classroom Context

Educational innovations are ultimately implemented by teachers. As a result, understanding teacher perspectives is essential when evaluating the potential of movement-based learning. Even instructional approaches supported by

research may face challenges when applied within classrooms characterized by limited resources, large class sizes, or rigid curricular structures.

Teachers often balance competing priorities, including curriculum coverage, classroom management, assessment demands, and student engagement. Decisions about whether and how to incorporate movement are therefore shaped by practical considerations as well as pedagogical beliefs. Previous research has shown that teachers may support active learning in principle while expressing concerns about time, space, and classroom control.

These issues are particularly relevant in primary education, where movement activities can increase noise levels and require greater organizational effort. At the same time, younger learners may benefit most from opportunities for active participation, creating a tension between instructional goals and practical constraints.

In Albania, educational reforms have increasingly emphasized student-centered approaches to teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the extent to which these principles are reflected in everyday classroom practice remains unclear. Limited research has explored how Albanian EFL teachers perceive movement-based instruction or how local conditions influence implementation. Examining teacher perspectives, therefore, provides an opportunity to better understand how international educational ideas are interpreted within a specific national context.

Theoretical Framework: Embodied Cognition

According to embodied perspectives, cognitive processes are closely linked to sensory, motor, and perceptual systems. Understanding language is therefore not purely abstract; it often involves mentally simulating actions, experiences, and situations described through words.

Glenberg (2011) argues that comprehension is strengthened when learners actively connect language with physical experience. From this perspective, movement is not simply an aid to motivation but a potential contributor to meaning-making itself. Activities such as role-play, gesture use, and story dramatization may support understanding by helping learners create richer mental representations of language.

Related work by Kiefer and Trumpp (2012) emphasizes that cognition develops through interactions between perception, action, and environment. More recent theoretical work has expanded embodied perspectives by demonstrating how sensorimotor processes contribute to language understanding across multiple levels of linguistic processing, from individual words to broader discourse structures (Körner et al., 2023).

Embodied cognition does not imply that movement is necessary for all learning. Rather, it provides a theoretical explanation for why physically engaging with language may enhance understanding in some contexts. This perspective offers a useful framework for interpreting teachers' views regarding movement-based reading activities and their potential role in supporting learner engagement and comprehension.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design to investigate primary school EFL teachers' perceptions of movement-based activities during reading instruction. A survey approach was selected because the

study sought to document teachers' reported practices, experiences, and views regarding movement-integrated learning rather than examine causal relationships between instructional strategies and student outcomes.

The research focused on three areas: (a) teachers' use of movement-based activities during reading lessons, (b) perceptions of the effects of movement on student attention and engagement, and (c) challenges associated with implementing movement-integrated instruction in primary school classrooms.

Participants and Sampling

The study was conducted in public primary schools located in Tirana, Albania. A stratified school-based sampling procedure was used to ensure representation across schools serving different socioeconomic communities. Twelve public primary schools were selected from high-, medium-, and low-socioeconomic areas of Tirana, and all English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers within the selected schools were invited to participate.

A total of 148 teachers participated from an invited sample of 189, resulting in a response rate of 78.3%. Participants represented a broad range of professional experience. Teaching experience ranged from 1 to 30 years (M = 12.4 years, SD = 7.8). Respondents taught across Grades 1–5 and worked in schools located in high-, medium-, and low-socioeconomic areas. This diversity allowed the study to capture perspectives from teachers working in a variety of primary school settings. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participating Teachers

Characteristic	Category	N	%
Teaching Experience	1–5 years	38	25.7
	6–15 years	72	48.6
	16+ years	38	25.7
Grade Level Taught	Grades 1–2	52	35.1
	Grades 3–4	64	43.2
	Grade 5	32	21.6
School Socioeconomic Area	High SES	50	33.8
	Medium SES	68	45.9
	Low SES	30	20.3

Instrument Development

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of 13 multiple-choice items. The instrument was designed specifically for this study and focused on four broad areas:

- use of movement-based instructional practices,
- perceived effects on attention and engagement,
- perceived reading-related benefits,
- implementation challenges.

Question development was informed by previous research on physically active learning, embodied cognition, and movement-integrated instruction. Particular attention was given to ensuring that the items reflected situations commonly encountered in primary EFL classrooms.

Before the main data collection phase, the questionnaire was piloted with 15 EFL teachers who were not included in the final sample. Participants were asked to comment on item clarity, wording, and relevance. Feedback from the pilot resulted in minor revisions to improve readability and reduce ambiguity.

The questionnaire was also reviewed by two specialists in EFL education and educational research. Their evaluation focused on item clarity, content relevance, alignment with the study objectives, and suitability for the target population.

The instrument was designed primarily to obtain descriptive information regarding teachers' classroom practices and perceptions rather than to measure latent psychological constructs. Consequently, emphasis was placed on establishing content validity through expert review and pilot testing. Because the questionnaire was not intended as a psychometric scale and no composite measures were created, procedures such as factor analysis and internal consistency estimation (e.g., Cronbach's alpha) were not considered appropriate.

Table 2: Alignment of Questionnaire Constructs, Items, and Planned Analyses

Primary Construct	Description & Research Focus	Question Numbers	Analysis Method
Implementation Practices	Captures the *frequency, type, timing, and target students* for movement activities.	1, 2, 4, 9, 13	Descriptive statistics (frequencies, %);
Perceived Efficacy	Assess teacher *perceptions* of the impact on student attention, behavior, and specific reading/comprehension skills.	5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12	Descriptive statistics (frequencies, %);
Observational Demographics	Explores teacher-observed differences in response based on *student characteristics* (age, gender).	3, 4	Descriptive statistics (frequencies, %).
Implementation Challenges	Identifies *barriers and practical difficulties* faced by teachers	6	Descriptive statistics (frequencies, %).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted over a four-week period using Google Forms. School administrators were contacted prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, and participating teachers received information about the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of participation.

Respondents completed the survey independently and anonymously. No identifying information was collected, and teachers were able to discontinue participation at any stage without consequence. The online format was selected

because it allowed participants to complete the questionnaire at a convenient time while facilitating efficient data management and analysis.

Data Analysis

Survey responses were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 28. Given the descriptive nature of the study, the analysis focused on frequencies and percentages.

The objective of the analysis was to identify patterns in teachers' responses rather than test hypotheses or establish statistical relationships among variables. Findings are therefore presented as descriptive summaries of participants' reported practices and perceptions. Although descriptive statistics do not permit causal inference, they provide a useful overview of how movement-based instruction is perceived and implemented within the participating schools.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Tirana. Participants received information regarding the aims of the research, procedures for participation, and their rights as research participants. Informed consent was obtained electronically before respondents accessed the questionnaire.

All responses were collected anonymously and stored securely. Data were used exclusively for research purposes and were analyzed in aggregate form to protect participant confidentiality.

Several measures were taken to support response quality, including anonymous participation, clear survey instructions, and balanced response options. While self-report surveys remain subject to limitations such as social desirability bias, anonymity was emphasized throughout the study to encourage honest responses and reduce evaluation concerns. Nevertheless, the possibility that participants overreported the frequency or effectiveness of movement-based practices cannot be entirely excluded and should be considered when interpreting the findings.

RESULTS

Use of Movement-Based Activities During Reading Instruction

Participants reported using a range of movement-based activities during reading lessons. Role-play and story enactment were the most frequently reported strategies (47.3%), followed by interactive games and learning stations (30.4%). Stretching and short movement breaks were reported by 17.6% of participants, while only 4.7% indicated that they did not use movement-based activities.

Table 3: Types of Movement-Based Activities Used During Reading Instruction

Activity Type	n	%
Role-play and story enactment	70	47.3
Interactive games and learning stations	45	30.4
Stretching and movement breaks	26	17.6
Do not use movement activities	7	4.7

Teachers also reported differences in when movement activities were used during instruction. Just over half of participants (50.7%) indicated that movement was most effective before reading tasks, while 38.5% preferred integrating movement during reading activities. Only 10.8% reported that movement was most useful after reading. Regarding target groups, 45.9% of teachers reported using movement-based activities with all students, whereas 26.4% primarily used them with learners experiencing attention difficulties and 23.0% reported using them mainly with younger learners.

Teachers were also asked whether they observed differences in how students responded to movement-based reading activities according to age and gender. Responses regarding age were relatively balanced, with 39.2% indicating that younger primary students (ages 6–8) benefited most, 38 % reporting stronger benefits for older primary students (ages 9–12), and 22.3% believing that both age groups benefited equally. With respect to gender, nearly half of the respondents (47.3%) reported that boys and girls responded similarly to movement-based activities. However, 33.8% perceived greater benefits among boys, while 12.2% believed girls benefited more. Only 6.7% reported no noticeable differences in student responses. These findings suggest that teachers generally perceive movement-based learning as beneficial across different student groups, although some variation in responsiveness may be observed according to age and gender.

Table 4: Timing and Target Groups for Movement-Based Activities During Reading Instruction

Category	Variable	Response output	n	%
Targets and Timing	**Timing of Movement Activities**	Before reading	75	50.7
		During reading	57	38.5
		After reading	16	10.8
	Target Student Group	All students	68	45.9
		Students with attention difficulties	39	26.4
		Younger learners only	34	23
		Not used	7	4.7
Observed Student Differences	**Age Group Perceived to Benefit Most**	Younger students (6–8)	58	39.2
		Older students (9–12)	57	38
		Both age groups equally	33	22.8
	Gender Differences	Boys and girls benefit similarly	70	47.3

	in Response to Movement	Boys benefit more	50	33.8
		Girls benefit more	18	12.2
		No noticeable difference	10	6.7

Perceived Effects on Attention, Engagement, and Reading

Table 5 summarizes teachers' perceptions of the effects of movement on attention and classroom behavior. Nearly half of the respondents (48.6%) reported that movement-based activities significantly improved students' ability to maintain focus during reading lessons, while an additional 38.5% observed benefits for at least some learners. Similar patterns emerged regarding classroom engagement, with 50.7% of teachers reporting increased student focus and engagement and 28.4% reporting higher levels of participation. Very few respondents associated movement with negative classroom outcomes. Overall, these findings indicate that movement is generally perceived as a positive contributor to classroom engagement and attentional readiness**.**

Table 5: Effects of Movement-Based Activities on Attention and Engagement

Category	**Variable**	**Response output**	**n**	**%**
Effects of Movement on Attention and Classroom Engagement	**Impact on attention**	Significantly improves focus	72	48.6
		Helps some students maintain focus	57	38.5
		No major impact	11	7.4
		Distracts students	8	5.4
	Behavioral changes	Students become more engaged and focused	75	50.7
		Increased participation in classroom activities	42	28.4
		Some distraction, but most students remain on task	23	15.5
		Creates distraction	8	5.4

As shown in Table 6, teachers reported that students responded most positively to role-play and story enactment activities (52.7%). Hand gestures and movement-supported discussion were also viewed positively, although less frequently. Teachers additionally indicated that combining multiple forms of movement was the most effective instructional approach (43.9%), suggesting that varied movement experiences may better support engagement than relying on a single movement strategy.

Table 6: Student Responsiveness and Preferred Types of Movement Activities

Category	**Variable**	**Response output**	**n**	**%**
	Student responsiveness	Acting out stories and role-play	78	52.7

Student Responsiveness and Preferred Movement		Hand gestures and discussion	40	27
		Physical games and stations	30	20.3
	Preferred movement type	Combination of movement forms	65	43.9
		Whole-body movement	44	29.7
		Gestures	22	14.9
		Fine-motor activities	17	11.5

Table 7 presents teachers' perceptions regarding the reading-related outcomes associated with movement-based instruction. Reading comprehension was the skill most frequently identified as benefiting from movement activities (55.4%), substantially exceeding fluency, word recognition, and confidence in reading aloud. Teachers also associated movement with specific comprehension processes, particularly identifying main ideas (35.8%) and understanding cause-and-effect relationships (20.9%). These findings suggest that teachers perceive movement not only as a tool for increasing participation but also as a means of supporting higher-level comprehension processes during reading instruction.

Table 7: Perceived Impact of Movement-Based Activities on Reading Skills and Comprehension Processes

Category	**Variable**	**Response Options**	**n**	**%**
Reading Outcomes Associated with Movement-Based Activities	Suggested pre-reading activity	Acting out vocabulary	62	41.9
		Movement-based games	44	29.7
		Stretching and breathing	42	28.4
	Reading skills improved	Reading comprehension	82	55.4
		Confidence in reading aloud	26	17.6
		Fluency	21	14.2
		Word recognition	19	12.8
	Comprehension aspects improved	Identifying main ideas	53	35.8
		Understanding cause–and–effect relationships	31	20.9
		Retelling stories	26	17.6
		Drawing conclusions	24	16.2
		Making predictions	14	9.5

Challenges and Implementation Considerations

Despite generally positive perceptions, teachers identified several practical challenges associated with movement-integrated instruction. Student overexcitement emerged as the most frequently reported concern (35.8%), followed by limited classroom space (16.9%). A smaller proportion of teachers reported difficulties integrating movement into lesson planning (7.4%). Nevertheless, the largest response category was "no significant challenges" (39.9%), indicating that many teachers considered movement-based activities manageable within their existing instructional practices.

Table 8: Teachers' Perceived Challenges in the Implementation of Movement-Based Activities During Instruction

Category		Variable	Response output	n	%
Challenges in Implementing Movement		**Challenge**	No significant challenges	59	39.9
			Student overexcitement	53	35.8
			Limited classroom space	25	16.9
			Difficulty integrating movement into lesson planning	11	7.4

Overall, the results indicate that movement-based activities are widely used by participating teachers and are generally perceived as supporting attention, engagement, and reading-related learning. At the same time, implementation appears to be influenced by practical classroom considerations, particularly space constraints and classroom management demands.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine how primary school EFL teachers in Tirana perceive the use of movement-based activities during reading instruction. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers generally regard movement as a useful classroom tool for supporting attention, participation, and engagement. Rather than viewing physical activity as separate from learning, many participants described movement as an instructional resource that can help learners interact more actively with reading tasks.

One of the most notable findings concerns the types of activities Albanian EFL teachers considered most effective. Role-play, story dramatization, and vocabulary enactment were consistently identified as strategies that encouraged student participation. This preference suggests that teachers value movement most when it is directly connected to lesson content. Activities that require students to act out events, represent vocabulary physically, or participate in story-based tasks appear to be viewed as more educationally meaningful than movement used solely to increase energy levels or provide a break from classroom routines.

This finding is consistent with research emphasizing the importance of integrating movement into academic content rather than treating physical activity as an independent classroom intervention. Studies of physically active learning

have shown that educational benefits are often strongest when movement contributes directly to the learning task itself. The responses obtained in the present study suggest that teachers recognize this distinction and tend to favor activities that combine physical participation with language use.

Another important finding relates to the timing of movement activities. Many teachers reported that movement was most effective before reading tasks rather than during or after reading. This preference may reflect practical classroom considerations. Short activities implemented before reading can help students settle into the lesson, focus their attention, and prepare for academic work without disrupting the flow of instruction. In contrast, movement during reading may require greater planning, classroom management, and flexibility.

The preference for pre-reading movement may also reveal an underlying pedagogical assumption regarding the role of physical activity in language learning. Many teachers appear to view movement primarily as a preparatory strategy that enhances concentration before academic work begins rather than as an integral component of reading instruction itself. This distinction is important because contemporary models of physically active learning emphasize the educational value of movement that is embedded within learning tasks rather than separated from them.

The findings further suggest that teachers associate movement with specific aspects of reading development, particularly comprehension and the identification of main ideas. While these perceptions cannot be interpreted as evidence of actual learning gains, they are nevertheless noteworthy. Teachers observe students on a daily basis and make instructional decisions based on their classroom experiences. Their perceptions, therefore, provide insight into which learning processes they believe are most responsive to movement-based activities.

One possible explanation for these perceptions can be found in embodied cognition theory. The findings are particularly relevant to reading instruction because embodied cognition proposes that comprehension is strengthened when learners connect language with sensory and motor experiences, allowing textual meaning to be grounded in physical action. From an embodied perspective, understanding language involves more than processing words and sentences; it also involves connecting meaning to actions, experiences, and sensory representations. Activities such as role-play and dramatization may help students build these connections by linking language to physical experience.

The study also highlights the influence of contextual factors on instructional decision-making. Although participants generally expressed positive attitudes toward movement-based instruction, they also identified practical obstacles. Concerns related to student overexcitement, limited classroom space, and classroom management were reported frequently. These challenges illustrate that the implementation of movement-based learning is shaped not only by pedagogical beliefs but also by material and organizational conditions.

Such findings are particularly relevant in the Albanian educational context. Many schools operate within physical and structural constraints that may limit opportunities for active learning. As a result, teachers often need to balance the perceived benefits of movement with the realities of classroom organization, available space, and curricular expectations. The coexistence of positive attitudes and practical concerns suggests that successful implementation

depends as much on classroom conditions as on teachers' willingness to adopt innovative approaches. The results should also be interpreted with appropriate caution. Because the study relies entirely on self-reported teacher perceptions, it cannot determine whether movement-based activities improve reading comprehension, attention, or academic achievement. Teachers may overestimate or underestimate the effectiveness of particular strategies, and their views may be influenced by personal teaching philosophies or prior experiences. Consequently, the findings should be understood as evidence of teacher perceptions rather than evidence of instructional effectiveness.

Despite these limitations, the study contributes to the growing literature on movement-integrated learning by drawing attention to the perspectives of practitioners. Much of the existing research focuses on learner outcomes, intervention effects, or theoretical explanations. Less attention has been given to how Albanian EFL teachers interpret movement-based instruction within the realities of everyday classroom practice. By focusing on teacher perspectives, the present study offers insight into the conditions that may support or hinder the implementation of physically active learning in primary EFL classrooms in Tirana Albania.

Overall, the findings suggest that movement-based reading activities are viewed positively by many Albanian EFL teachers, particularly when those activities are closely connected to instructional goals. At the same time, the results emphasize that the effectiveness and sustainability of such practices are influenced by classroom context, available resources, and teachers' ability to integrate movement into existing instructional routines.

CONCLUSION

This study explored how primary school EFL teachers in Tirana perceive the use of movement-based activities during reading instruction. The findings indicate that teachers generally view movement as a valuable classroom practice for supporting student attention, participation, and engagement. Activities that linked movement directly to learning objectives, such as role-play, story dramatization, and vocabulary enactment, were perceived as particularly effective.

The findings also highlight the practical considerations shaping teachers' decisions. Participants recognized the educational benefits of movement but also noted challenges related to classroom space, management, and lesson organization. Consequently, teachers tended to favor activities that could be integrated without disrupting instructional routines.

Although the study does not provide evidence that movement directly improves reading achievement, it offers insight into how teachers understand the relationship between physical activity and learning. These perspectives are important because they influence the adoption and sustainability of movement-based practices.

This study contributes to the growing literature on movement-integrated learning by providing evidence from an underrepresented educational context and by highlighting teachers' perspectives on instructional innovation. The findings suggest that movement-based reading activities are perceived as most beneficial when closely aligned with instructional goals, while practical constraints remain an important consideration for implementation. These insights may inform future research, teacher education, and the development of more effective movement-integrated EFL reading practices.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Several practical implications emerge from the findings.

First, movement activities appear to be most effective when they are integrated into instructional content rather than used as isolated classroom exercises. Teachers consistently reported positive experiences with activities that required students to interact physically with stories, vocabulary, or reading tasks. This suggests that movement should be designed as part of the learning process rather than as a separate addition to it.

Second, the findings highlight the importance of flexibility. Not all classrooms offer the same physical conditions, and teachers often need to adapt activities to available space, class size, and student needs. Small-scale movement tasks, gestures, pair work, and role-play activities may provide practical alternatives in settings where large-group movement is difficult to organize.

Third, teacher preparation may play an important role in successful implementation. Professional development opportunities focused on movement-integrated learning could help teachers expand their repertoire of classroom strategies and address concerns related to organization and classroom management.

Finally, the findings suggest that movement can be incorporated into reading instruction without requiring major curricular changes. Even brief activities linked to vocabulary development, prediction tasks, sequencing exercises, or story comprehension may increase opportunities for active student participation.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

The study was conducted exclusively in public primary schools in Tirana. Although the sample included teachers from different socioeconomic areas, the findings may not reflect experiences in rural schools, private institutions, or other regions of Albania. Future studies should examine whether similar patterns emerge across different educational contexts.

A second limitation concerns the reliance on self-reported data. The study examined teachers' perceptions rather than actual classroom behavior. As with all survey research, responses may have been influenced by personal beliefs, memory, or social desirability. Classroom observations and qualitative interviews would provide a more detailed understanding of how movement-based activities are implemented in practice.

The study also did not include direct measures of student outcomes. Consequently, it cannot determine whether movement-based instruction improves reading comprehension, attention, motivation, or academic achievement. Future research should combine teacher perspectives with student performance data in order to examine these relationships more directly.

In addition, the descriptive design limits the conclusions that can be drawn. While the study identifies patterns in teacher responses, it does not explain why certain perceptions exist or how they vary across different groups of teachers. Further research could explore whether factors such as teaching experience, grade level, professional

training, or school context influence attitudes toward movement-integrated instruction.

Nevertheless, because the findings are based on self-reported perceptions rather than direct measures of student performance, conclusions regarding instructional effectiveness should be interpreted cautiously.

Future investigations would benefit from mixed-methods and longitudinal approaches that examine both implementation and outcomes over time. Research comparing different forms of movement-based instruction, including role-play, gesture-supported learning, and structured physical activity, may also provide a clearer understanding of which approaches are most effective for supporting reading development in EFL classrooms.

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