



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

**THE TRIPARTITE RELATIONSHIP AMONG EFL TEACHERS' COGNITION, PERCEIVED AND ACTUAL CLASSROOM PRACTICES OF READING INSTRUCTION**<sup>1</sup>Fetene Getaw, <sup>2</sup>Tamiru Olana & <sup>3</sup>Rufael Disasa<sup>1,2&3</sup>(Department of English Language and Literature Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia)Email: [1234fetene@gmail.com](mailto:1234fetene@gmail.com)Doi: <https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2023.10201>**ABSTRACT**

Understanding the beliefs that guide teachers' decision making and actions in their classrooms could help educators adjust how they work with teachers to provide more targeted feedback, to support teachers' professional growth and development throughout their career. The ultimate aim of this study was to show the tripartite relationship among EFL teachers' cognition, perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction at secondary schools in Addis Ababa. A descriptive survey research design was employed. Questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were used as major data collection instruments. Particularly, questionnaire and interview were used to explore teachers' cognition, and perceived practices of reading instruction whereas classroom observation was done to assess their actual classroom practices. The study was held at six secondary schools found in Gulela sub city in Addis Ababa. 80 English language teachers who were active in the academic year of 2022 had taken part in filling the questionnaire. And classroom observation and interview were done with six EFL teachers. The study participants were selected purposively. Finally, the data attained via questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS, whereas data from interview and classroom observation were qualitatively narrated. The finding revealed that EFL teachers' cognition of reading instruction and their actual classroom practices lied on the bottom up approach of reading instruction whereas the report of teachers' perceived classroom practices indicated that they implement top-down approach. EFL teachers' cognition of reading instruction was found to be contradicting with their perceived classroom practices but congruent with their actual classroom practices.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to Freeman 2002, until the mid of 1970, teachers were not considered as having 'mental lives'. In this perspective, L2 teaching was perceived as skills-based profession where teacher trainers determined the desirable teaching behavior by carefully shaping teaching skills and categorically, teachers were seen as skill learners and performers who were reciting other's ideas (Erkmen, 2014). This ideology of teaching massively ignored the thought processes of teachers, i.e., their decision making, their thinking and judgments.

In the mid of 1970s, the advancement of cognitive psychology, qualitative methodology, the popularity of ethnographic and the new conception of teaching as a thoughtful profession, brought a new paradigm shift to L2 teaching. According to Fang 1996, since then, researchers have shown an unprecedented interest in and enthusiasm about certain aspects of teacher cognition and their relationship to sound pedagogical practices in the classroom and the focus of research on L2 teaching has shifted from observable teacher behavior with student achievement to a focus on teachers' cognition.

According to Johnson (2006), the studies on teachers' cognition have helped to comprehend the convolutions of "who teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach, and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts throughout their careers.

As teachers are important agents in developing students' reading skills, the way teachers perceive knowledge; reading instruction and students could positively or negatively influence their

classroom practices. Hence, it is essential to study teachers' cognitions and their classroom practices. However, such study in the Ethiopian educational context seems scanty. The educational system in Ethiopia doesn't entertain teachers' beliefs and perspectives. The trend of studies in Ethiopia still persists to be the process-product paradigm approach where the focus is on the observable aspect of what teachers did in the classroom and what students learn.

To bridge the gap this study will focus on EFL teachers' cognition and practices of reading instruction. Hence, the study intended to find out:

1. What are EFL teachers' cognitions, perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction?
2. Is there any relationship among teachers' cognition perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction?

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.1 CONCEPT OF TEACHER COGNITION

Different scholars conceptualize and define the concept of teacher cognition differently. To mention some, for example, Kagan (1992) conceptualizes teacher cognition as teachers' thought about instruction, their beliefs about their own teaching performance, classrooms, and learners. Some other scholars also use different terminologies to define teacher cognition, for example, "teacher knowledge" (Freeman, 2002), "teachers', theories" (Borg, 1999) "teachers' personal theories" (James, 2001). In a nutshell, terms like teachers' knowledge, teachers' beliefs, and teacher thinking, comprise the broader concept of teacher cognition.



The most notable scholar in the field of teacher cognition, Borg, proposes a framework for teacher cognition study. He stated that there are four major aspects that need to be addressed in teacher cognition study. These are, teacher's prior language learning experiences, conceptualizations of second or foreign language teaching during teacher education, contextual aspects, and classroom practices (Borg, 2006).

### 2.1.1 TEACHER COGNITION AND PRIOR LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

According to Borg (2003), beliefs formed at earlier stage of life are resistant to change even in the face of contradictory evidence. In the meantime, such beliefs take the form of episodically stored material derived from critical incidents in individuals' personal experience (Nespor, 1987). Lortie (1975) explains the nature of such kind of beliefs. He calls such kind of experience "apprenticeship of observation" where teachers take a lot of lesson about teaching through their massive experience as students. Strengthening this point, Borg (2003) stated that such kind of prior language learning experience form the basis of their initial conceptualizations of EFL teaching during teacher education, and which may continue to be influential throughout their professional lives.

### 2.1.2 TEACHER COGNITION AND TEACHER EDUCATION

There is a contradicting opinion between scholars about the relationship between teacher cognition and teacher education program. Some researchers like Kagan (1992); Freeman (1992); Borg (2003) believe that at the beginning of teacher

education program, students may hold inappropriate, unrealistic or naïve understandings of teaching and learning, which has been proved to be true in the field of language teaching. So, they believe that the relationship is not that significant.

However, a study by Richards, Ho & Giblin (1996) proved their claims wrong. They first offered an introductory teacher training course for five students. Later, they discovered change in their cognition on certain points such as on their professional knowledge, on their conception of their role in the classroom, on the manner in which they evaluated their own teaching and their concerns for achieving continuity in lessons.

Even if there is no consensus regarding their relationships, some studies reflect the eclectic feature of teachers' cognition under certain teacher education program, which may well elicit some pedagogical implication. Studies on their relationship indicate considerable differences between pedagogically and non-pedagogically educated teachers in terms of their classroom behavior. Hence, students' cognition during the teacher education program should be surfaced and acknowledged if the program meant to bring a difference in the deep structure of cognition held by the students.

### 2.1.3 TEACHER COGNITION AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

Over the years, researchers have studied the complex relationship between teacher cognition and classroom practices. The way teachers act, behave or do in the classroom is governed by their cognition for example, when they plan their instruction when they make instructional judgment, when they make decision, when they apply or choose the teaching



strategy, the media, the material the resource, when they interact and communicate with their students in the classroom, and when they manage classroom. By strengthening this point, Richards (1998) stated that a primary source of teachers' classroom practices is belief systems: the information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers build up over time and bring with them to the classroom.

#### **2.1.4 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS AFFECTING CLASSROOM PRACTICES**

Researchers categorize these contextual factors into social, cultural, and economic contexts. Borg (2006) claimed that there as some sort of relationships among teachers' cognition, practices, and context. He stated that these relationships are neither unidirectional nor linear. They may occur enormously in a different of ways in an infinite possibility of settings and conditions. Furthermore, Borg notes that the instructional, social, and physical settings in which teachers experience at work place could have a major impact on their cognition and practices. As study by Johnson et al. (2012) shows work context has a massive impact on teachers than financial issues. Hence, conducting a study of cognition and practices without considering the contexts in which they occur will give a flawed characterization of teaching and teachers.

#### **2.2 APPROACHES OF EFL READING INSTRUCTION**

Approaches of the reading process try to explain and predict reading behavior. They are the bases on which reading instructions are built (Fetene 2021). Davies (1995) pointed out that reading

approach is a theory of what is going on in the reader's eyes and mind during reading and comprehending (or miscomprehending) a text.

##### **2.2.1 BOTTOM-UP APPROACH**

The bottom-up approach or a traditional approach views reading instruction as a passive lower-level decoding process. According to Carrell, (1988), this approach views reading basically as a process of reconstructing the authors intended meaning by recognizing the printed letters and words and building up the meaning for a text from the smallest textual units at the "bottom" to the largest textual units at the "top". The advocators of this approach believe that as long as a person is able to correctly decode a text, meaning and understanding will be imminent.

Kuzborska (2011) elaborated the roles teachers should play in the classroom. He said that teachers should teach new vocabularies before reading; teach word chunks in English such as prefixes and base words, they should transmit knowledge and skills, ask factual questions on some details in a text, follow textbook by covering all possible material and activities, frequently ask students to read aloud, instantly correct student's oral reading mistakes. Finally, the teacher should discuss a text with the whole class and use textbooks that are graded and sequenced in terms of language structure and vocabulary.

##### **2.2.2 TOP-DOWN APPROACH**

This approach views reading as a higher-level of reading. As to Grabe (1988), reading is not just extracting meaning from a text but a process of connecting information in the text with the knowledge



the reader brings to the act of reading. Reading, in this sense, is a dialogue between the reader and the text.

In the top down approach, meaning of the text is quiet reliant on the prior knowledge and understanding that the reader brings to the reading text. Goodman (1967) pointed out that “reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game” where the reader formulates hypotheses and makes prediction, and later confirms or disconfirms those predictions while reading.

Kuzborska (2011) enumerates the roles teachers are assumed to play. For example; teachers should teach vocabulary incidentally when meeting new words in a text and when students ask; they should ask inferential questions, make them do pre-reading activities such as looking at graphs and headings. Teachers should also assess students with their ability of writing, speaking, and performing instead of assessing them with multiple-choice or short-answer tests. Basically teachers do these to significantly developing students’ reading interest.

### 2.2.3 INTERACTIVE APPROACH

According to Eskey (1988) the interactive model takes into account the continuous interaction between bottom-up and top-down processing in the construction of the meaning of a text. This approach acknowledges both approaches of reading. For example, the lower level processing skills are essential for fluent and accurate reading; it also emphasizes that as bottom-up processing becomes more automatic, higher-level skills will become more engaged.

Similarly, Carrell (1988) also reflects that efficient and effective reading entails both processes interacting simultaneously, although, today’s reading instruction is hugely influenced by the perspective of

top down approach. The interactive model and its variations are not yet fully reflected in materials for ESL/EFL teaching, and the decoding aspect of reading is more often than not overlooked. To compensate for this deficiency, top-down tasks may easily be supplemented with bottom-up ones in the areas of vocabulary development, extensive reading, reading rate, and discourse knowledge (Fetene 2021).

## 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The main aim of this study was to obtain data from research participants about their cognition, perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction and to elucidate the tripartite relationship among their cognition, perceived and actual classroom practices. Accordingly, a descriptive research design with mixed method was used. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) mixed method is an emergent methodology of research that advances the systematic integration, or “mixing,” of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained program of inquiry.

### 3. 2 SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

This study was conducted at Gulella Sub City-Addis Ababa. The population of the study consisted of grade 9 and 10 EFL teachers who were active in the academic calendar of 2022. Eighty EFL teachers at public schools of Gulella sub-city were involved in this study.

### 3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Gulella sub-city is one of the eleven administrative sub-cities of Addis Ababa. This sub-city was purposively selected for the study as the researcher observed the problem in the schools



located under the aforementioned sub-city. The researcher had an opportunity of offering community services in the form of teaching and training to the schools found under Gulela sub-city. In the meantime, trainers who were on the receiving end of the training were found to have poor understanding of reading instruction. Consequently, the researcher was eager to fathom out their cognition, practices (perceived and actual) of reading instruction. As data from Addis Ababa bureau administrative office revealed that there are ten secondary schools found under Gulella sub-city. Six of them were purposefully selected for the study. So, sixty EFL teachers who were active during 2022 G.C were included for the quantitative study whereas 6 teachers were randomly selected for the interview.

### 3.4 INSTRUMENTS OF DATA COLLECTION

To obtain the required data from the study participants, three data gathering instruments were used. These were questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observation. Questionnaire and interview were used to investigate EFL teachers' cognition and perceived classroom practices of reading instruction whereas classroom observation was conducted to figure out their actual classroom practices of reading instruction.

#### 3.4.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire was employed to fathom out teachers' cognition and perceived classroom practices of reading instruction. In gross, 18 close ended questions were prepared from the literature. Questionnaire was employed for the current study because of three main reasons. First, it helped to collect data from large participants. Second, constructing and analysing it was relatively easy and

manageable. Third, it helped to code up and analyze precisely as compared to word base data (Dorneyi (2007).

#### 3.4.2 INTERVIEW

Interview was used for in-depth exploration of teachers' perceived classroom practices of reading instruction. The researcher used a semi-structured interview format because as Dorneyi (2007) suggested semi-structured interview enables the interviewer to design pre-planned guiding questions for prompts that encourage interviewees to express their ideas on certain issues in an elaborated manner. Such design helps to find out basic information for the research objectives by eliciting their perspectives. Six EFL teachers, from six schools, were involved in the interview. The interview was basically used to substantiate information and to validate the data obtained through the questionnaire and the classroom observations.

#### 3.4.3 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Classroom observation was used to get firsthand account of situations under study. As to Best and Kahan (1989), when combined with other data collecting tools, classroom observation allows for a holistic interpretation of the situations which are being studied. It also helped to examine to what extent teachers' cognition and perceived classroom practices go with their actual classroom practices. The whole instructional activities in the classroom were recorded. Besides, checklist was also used. Classroom observations were conducted in six secondary schools. In gross, the researcher conducted 12 classroom observations.



4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 WHAT ARE EFL TEACHERS' COGNITIONS, PERCEIVED AND ACTUAL CLASSROOM PRACTICES OF READING INSTRUCTION?

4.1.1 EFL TEACHERS' COGNITION OF READING INSTRUCTION

The following diagram illustrates the cognition of EFL teachers' about reading instruction.

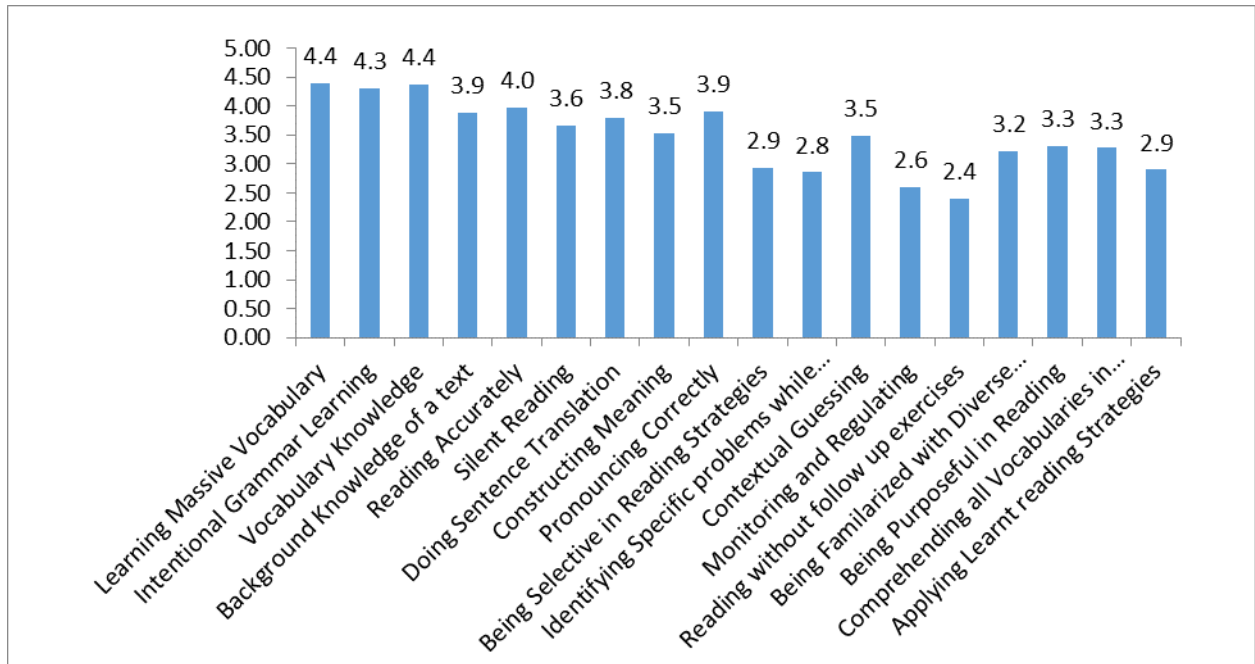


Figure1

As the figure demonstrates, from 18 items, six responses have noticeably high mean responses which range from 3.9 to 4.3. These are; learning massive vocabulary to improve students' reading skills, having a good knowledge of vocabulary for students' reading skill to improve, intentionally teaching grammar, reading accurately with the purpose of improving reading skills of the students, correct pronunciation, and background knowledge of the students (which have means of 4.4, 4.4, 4.3, 4.0 3.9, & 3.9 respectively). This indicates that the teachers' cognition or belief of reading instruction lies on bottom-up reading approach of teaching reading skills which much emphasizes grammar,

vocabulary, reading accurately and correct pronunciation.

Besides, interview had also been carried out to examine teachers' cognition of reading instruction. From six teachers who engaged in interview, four of them strongly advocated that the focus of reading instruction should be on grammar, vocabulary, grammar and factual questions in order to help learners acquire vocabulary and reading skills which enable them to comprehend a reading text with relative easiness. They believe that the ultimate purpose of reading instruction is to help learners' build grammar and vocabulary. They also stressed the importance of reading loudly in the classroom to



improve their pronunciation and boost their confidence. Only two of the remaining interviews claimed that the goal of reading instruction should not be making learners do factual questions; it should go beyond that and encourage learners to construct the authors intended meaning. Moreover, they explained that reading is not getting the surface meaning of the text rather it requires reading deeply to get the implied meaning of the reading texts. They

also said that in the process of reading teachers should be at the center in helping the students integrate and relate their background knowledge with that of the text and make them to predict before starting reading. They also reported that students should be encouraged to tackle difficult vocabulary items while reading by using contextual clues.

#### 4.1.1.1 THEMATICALLY CATEGORIZED TEACHERS' COGNITION ABOUT READING INSTRUCTION

The following chart illustrates the thematically categorized grand mean responses of the study participants about their cognition of reading instruction. The 18 items were thematically categorized into top-down and bottom up approaches to comprehend EFL teachers' cognition.

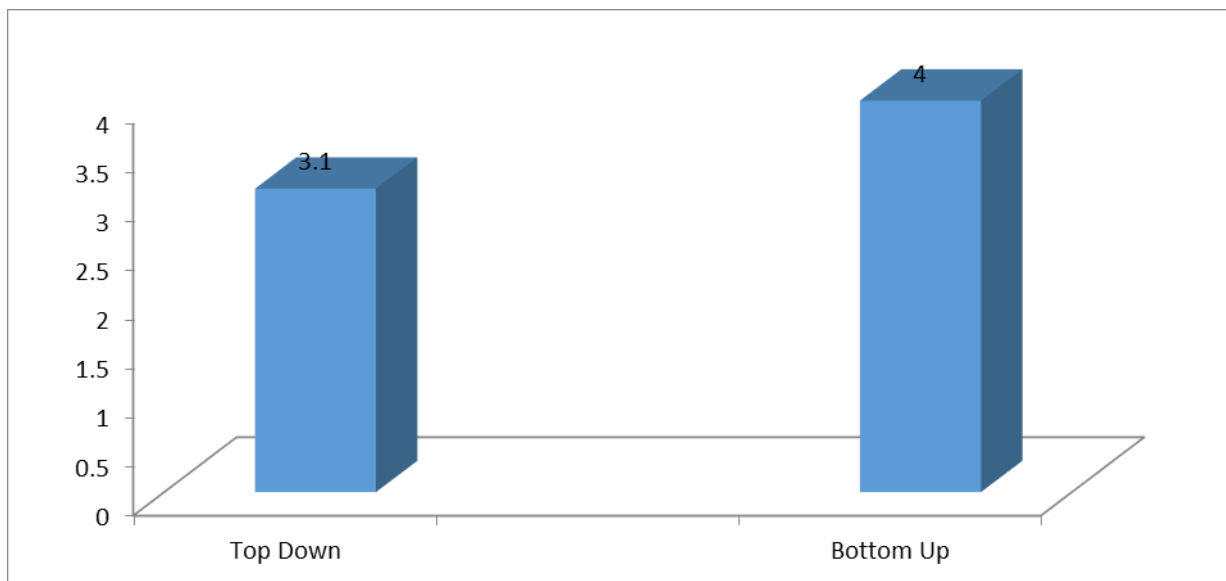


Figure 2:

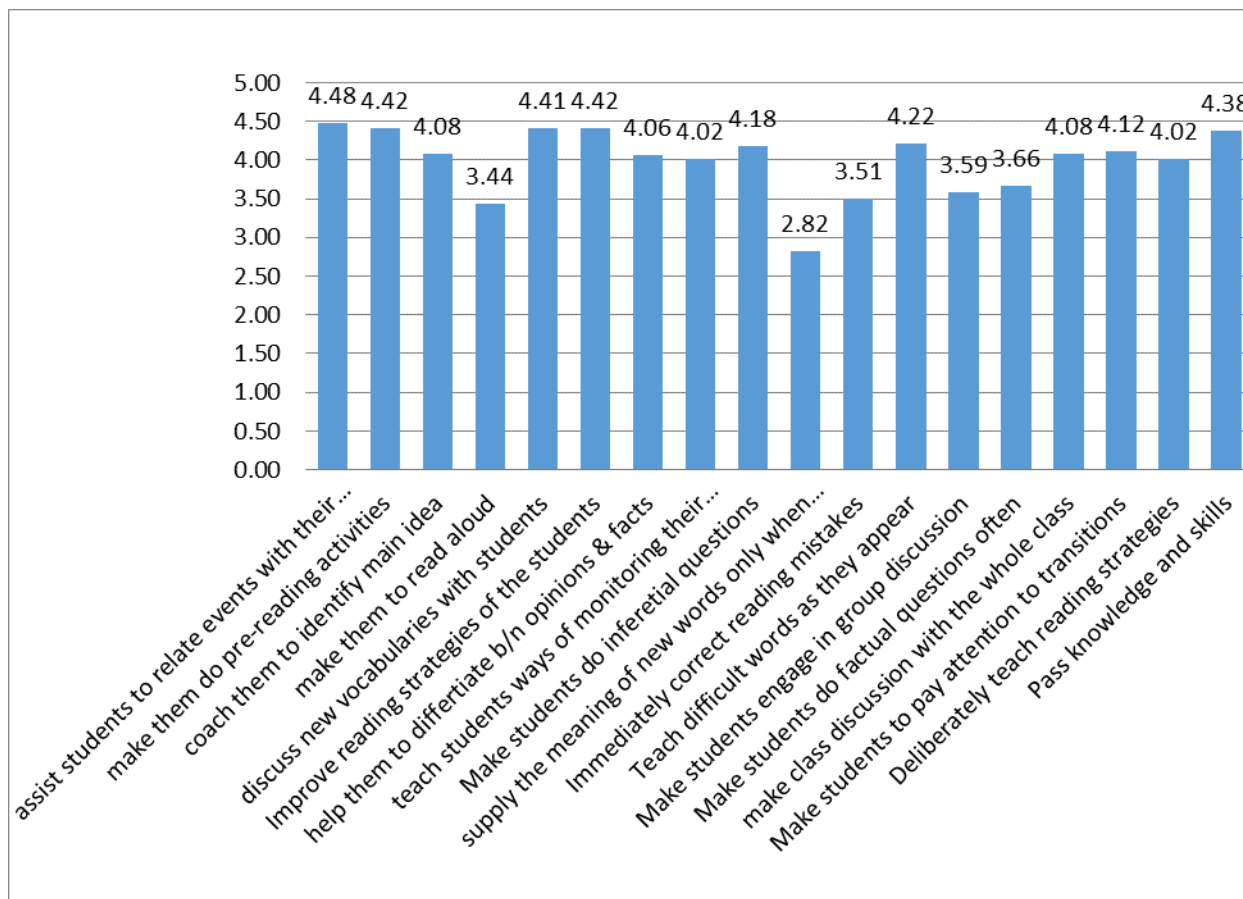
As the figure demonstrates above, the teachers' grand mean response to the top down approach of reading instruction is 3.1 whereas the bottom up approach of reading instruction lies on 4.0. This means that as much of the percentage inclines to

bottom up approach, it can be said that EFL teachers' belief of reading instruction rests on the bottom up approach of reading instruction.



**4.1.2 EFL TEACHERS' PERCEIVED CLASSROOM PRACTICES OF READING INSTRUCTION**

The following chart illustrates EFL teachers' perceived classroom practices of reading instruction.

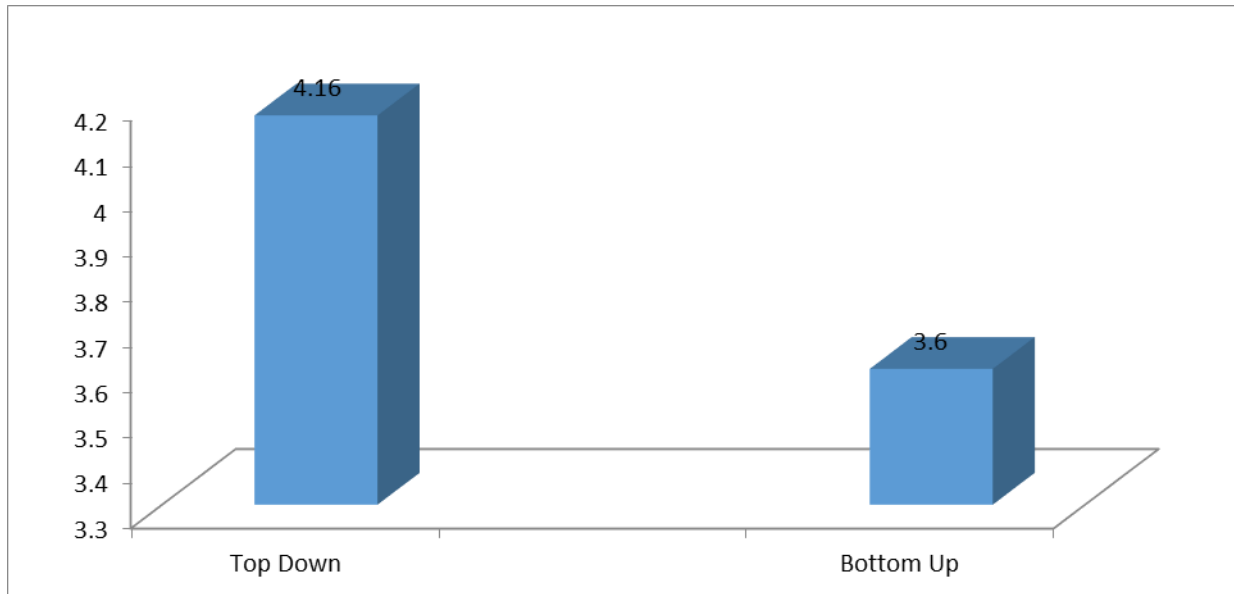


**Figure 3**

As it's shown on figure 2, except few items, teachers showed agreement to most of the items. For example, from eighteen items posed to teachers about their own self-reported classroom practices, only five responses have lower means. To list them, make students do factual questions often, make students engage in group discussion, immediately correct students' reading mistakes, make students to read aloud in the classroom and supply the meaning of new words only when students ask which have means of 3.66, 3.59, 3.51, 3.44 and 2.82 respectively.

**4.1.2.1 THEMATICALLY CATEGORIZED TEACHERS' PERCEIVED (SELF-REPORTED) CLASSROOM PRACTICES**

The following diagram illustrates the thematically categorized grand mean responses of the study participants about their self-reported or perceived practices of reading instruction. Eighteen items were prepared to figure out EFL teachers' self-reported classroom practices during reading instruction. These 18 items were then thematically categorized into bottom up and top-down approaches to comprehend their perceived practices of reading instruction.

**Figure4**

As the figure indicates above, the mean response of 4.16 exhibited that teachers mostly reported to employ the top-down approach during reading instruction as compared to the bottom-up approach of reading instruction which has mean of 3.6.

Furthermore, to unveil the self-reported or perceived classroom practices of teachers, the researcher interviewed six participants about their usual procedures of reading instruction.

For example, Teacher 1 responded his usual procedure during reading instruction. He said that almost always he writes the topic of the reading text on the blackboard, and then he orders learners to open up the page, and sometimes he poses brainstorming questions to the students trying to arouse the students' interest and activate their background knowledge and relate it with the reading text. He justified the reasons for doing these. He

elaborated that he tries to activate learners' background knowledge as he believes their mind is not empty vessel. He said that students learn a lot from their life itself and their surrounding as a result he believed they have something in mind. He then made them to skim the reading text and he does some difficult vocabulary items from the text that he thinks might hinder understanding the text. He then asks them some general understanding questions, the lessons they obtain from the reading text, and encourage them to reading more reading materials.

Asked the same question, Teacher 2 also explained his usual procedures. He said that whenever he teaches reading, he asks learners what they could understand from the title itself before reading the reading text. When he came across difficult words in the text, he writes them on the board and supplies their meanings to the students. Then he made them read the reading text individually



for some minutes. He then gave a chance for seven or eight students to read loudly to the class by taking turn. Lastly, he reads the reading text loudly to the students. He said that finally he made them to do the reading exercises at home.

For the same question posed, teacher 3 said that, firstly, he makes sure that the environment is comfortable or makes sure that there is no noise that could disturb the students because he believes that if there is noise students can't attentively read the text. Then he said that he orders them to read the text and while students read, he checks whether they are reading properly or not. Finally, he said that he asks them some while and post reading questions and give corrections.

Teacher 4 also expounded her usual procedure during reading instruction. She said that first she writes the reading topic of the blackboard and asks the students what they know about the topic to help them relate or connect the topic with their prior knowledge. Then she made them predicate and later collects their predictions. Then she said that she made them read the reading text silently and made them guess the meanings of some key new words. And finally she gives the reading activities to the students as homework.

Likewise, teacher 5 narrated his usual classroom procedure during reading instruction. He said that his approach of reading instruction depends on the nature of the reading text sometimes the text could be poem or verse kind of reading. But in most cases he said that his usual procedure is he first sees the title, trigger their background knowledge then made learners read the text and do the comprehension questions. He said that in the process he made them discuss the reading questions. He said

that he will never order the students to instantly go to the reading passage without activating their background knowledge and by the time they finish the reading text, he said that he make them immediately do the comprehension questions.

Similarly, teacher 6 also explained his usual procedure of reading instruction. He narrated that in reading classes first he writes the date, the title and the lesson on the blackboard and then he said that he always tells them the objective of the lesson orally. Next, he elaborated that he writes the pre-reading activities on the board and make them do the activities in order to motivate and help them handle the reading passage. And he added that whenever there are new vocabulary items, he provides them with their contextual meanings to help them comprehend the text clearly. Finally, he said that if there are post reading questions, he will give them as homework.

#### **4.1.3 EFL TEACHERS' ACTUAL CLASSROOM PRACTICES OF READING INSTRUCTION**

To fathom out the actual classroom practices of EFL teachers during reading instruction, the researchers conducted a total of 12 classroom observations in six schools. Each participant teacher was observed twice.

As observed, teacher 1 mainly focused on dealing with factual questions and doing new vocabulary item from the reading text. He consumed most of his lesson time in teaching vocabularies without proper context. The teacher didn't activate the students' background knowledge nor did he create awareness among the students about the reading text. The students didn't seem to be interested and motivated to do what the teacher



ordered them to do. In many ways, his reading instruction approaches to the bottom-up approach of reading instruction.

Likewise, vocabulary teaching dominated teacher 2's reading instruction. He spent most of the class time in teaching new vocabulary items. The students had no chance of making prediction and relating their already available background knowledge with the lesson. The teacher mostly focused on dealing with factual questions of the reading text. In many ways, teacher 2's instruction approaches to the bottom up approach of reading instruction.

Teacher 3 also entirely focused doing factual questions in the text with the students. He didn't seem to have a good conception of reading instruction. The students were reading the text with no purpose in their mind. It was a very mechanical teaching. He didn't activate the students' background knowledge and integrate with the text. In general, in many ways his instruction resembles to the bottom-up approach of reading instruction.

Similarly, teacher 4 also utterly focused on teaching new vocabulary items drawn from the reading text and working on factual questions with the students. She didn't provide students with a chance of predicting what the story could be about. Her instruction was very far from interactive. She didn't trigger the student's prior knowledge as a result the students were unmotivated to read the text. Shortly, her instruction resembles to the bottom up approach of reading instruction.

Teacher 5's reading instruction was found to be different from his mates. As observed, he first refreshed the students' background knowledge related to the title. By doing so, he caused students

to read the text with some sort of expectation before even turning the page of the reading text. He made learners to read the text on purpose. He then wrote some difficult vocabulary items from the text that the teacher thinks that it could hinder students' to understand the meaning. He also dealt factual question with the whole class. In a nutshell, his reading instruction quite resembles to interactive approach of reading instruction.

Unlike his majority mates, teacher 6 tried to brainstorm the student. He tried to open the students' appetite to read with some sort of excitement and purpose. He tried to activate their background knowledge. He also made them to predict about the text by looking at the title. He also discussed some selected key vocabulary items from the text to help learners read the text with some sort of clarity. And then the teacher did the reading activities with the whole class. In a nutshell, his instruction very much resembles to the interactive approach of reading instruction.

#### **4.2 IS THERE ANY RELATIONSHIP AMONG TEACHERS' COGNITION PERCEIVED AND ACTUAL CLASSROOM PRACTICES OF READING INSTRUCTION?**

The survey and interview results demonstrated that EFL teachers' cognition of reading instruction matched with the philosophy of bottom up approach of reading instruction. Conversely, their perceived classroom practices showed that teachers claimed to favor the top down approach of reading instruction whereas the actual classroom practices result revealed the opposite. Hence, the study showed that there existed an inverse relationship between teachers' cognition and actual classroom practices. It



also revealed an inverse relationship between perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction.

#### 4.3 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

As the results from survey and interview designates that EFL teachers' cognition of reading instruction rested on the bottom up lower level process of reading instruction where teachers prioritize the teaching of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, vocabulary in order for the students' reading comprehension get improved. Carrell, (1988) pointed out that the main focus of the bottom up approach of reading instruction on linguistic clues the text itself supplies in order to comprehend a text.

Regarding the relationship between teachers' cognition and their actual classroom practices, there is no consensus between scholars. Some scholars claim that there is a fit between teachers' cognition and their actual classroom practices, but some others believe that their relationship is a misfit. This finding proved the fact that teachers' actual classroom practices were found to be in line with the cognition they hold. As the classroom observation result revealed, much of the cognitions reported by teachers go with their observed classroom practices. From 12 classroom observations done, most of the observed teachers approached the reading instruction as per their cognition.

The result of this finding in many ways is related with a study done by Gardener (1996). His finding demonstrated that there is slight difference between what teachers claim to know (cognition) and what they actually do in the classroom (actual classroom practices). However, Chou's (2008) study

claimed that in some contexts there could be a misfit between their cognition and actual classroom practices because of the various teaching context EFL teachers' experience which resulted from students' language background, language curriculum, textbook factor, and interest of learning a language.

The results also demonstrated that EFL teachers' perceived classroom practices of reading instruction lied on higher level process of reading instruction where the informants strongly believed that they almost always activate the students' background knowledge, encourage learners to predict and strive to get whether their prediction was right or not, and arouse the students' interest to read the text. It means that teachers' claim of perceived reading instruction is congruent with the top-down approach of reading instruction. Conceptually, Tierney & Pearson, (1994) explains the top-down approach as "an active cognitive process in which the reader's background knowledge plays a key role in the creation of meaning not a passive mechanical activity but purposeful and rational, dependent on the prior knowledge and expectations of the reader or learner."

However, the actual classroom practice results of teachers didn't confirm their claims of them favouring the top down approach of reading instruction. In the actual classroom, teachers spend most of their time factual questions of the reading activities, explaining grammar items and, doing new vocabularies. "In most cases, the lessons in the bottom-up approach of reading instructions are sequentially-introduced skills and teacher-directed ones. So, in this process of learning vocabulary and finding its meaning, students rarely use their own experience and background knowledge, but should



report the exact meanings intended by writers" Wallace (1992). The difference between perceived and actual classroom practices occurred because of the level of teachers, professionalism, the language curriculum and contextual factors EFL teachers' face in the reading classroom.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The study investigated and analyzed EFL teachers' cognition, perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction at grade nine and ten.

As the survey and interview results demonstrate, EFL teachers' cognition inclined to the bottom up approach of reading instruction with which reading is seen as a lower level process of extracting the authors meaning by learning a lot of grammar and vocabulary. The actual classroom observation also justified this fact. Teachers mainly focused on dealing with a lot of grammar and vocabulary to help learners understand the text and improve their reading comprehension ability. Hence, EFL teachers' cognition and their actual classroom practices were found to be congruent with their actual classroom practices.

As results from questionnaire and interview depict, EFL teachers' claimed that their practice of reading instruction is based on the philosophy of the top-down approach of reading instruction where reading comprehension or meaning is resulted mainly from the background knowledge students' bring to the classroom which is contrary to the result of their actual classroom practices.

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