

## The Interplay between EFL Teachers' Perceived and Actual Classroom Practices of Reading Instruction

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### Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to explore secondary school EFL teachers' perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction at Addis Ababa City. To this end, the study used descriptive survey research design. To gather the required data from the research participants, three data gathering tools; namely, questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were employed. Interview and questionnaire were employed to explore EFL teachers' perceived practices of reading instruction. However, classroom observation was done to assess teachers' actual classroom practices of reading instruction. Concerning the research site and participants, eight secondary schools (grade 9 and grade 10) in the Akaki-Kality Sub-city were included for the study. From those eight schools, 70 English language teachers who were teaching in the academic year of 2021 G.C at Akaki-kality sub-city were made to involve in filling the questionnaire whereas, interview and classroom observation were arranged with eight EFL teachers in the same schools. Participants of the study were selected purposively. Finally, the data attained by using questionnaire, interview and classroom observation was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Data from questionnaire (quantitative data) was analyzed by using SPSS version 20, whereas data from interview and classroom observation (qualitative data) were narrated and described.

The finding showed that EFL teachers' perceived classroom practice was found to be contradicting with that of their actual classroom practices. Their perceived classroom practices show that they implement top-down approach of reading instruction. However, their actual classroom practices didn't confirm that fact. They inclined to the bottom-up approach of reading in their actual classroom practices.

**Keywords:** teachers' perceived practice, actual classroom practice, reading instruction, secondary school, Addis Ababa

### 1. Introduction

There is broad consensus among scholars that high-quality instruction is crucial for the overall quality of education. For teachers to be able to provide high-quality instruction, they need training exposures or opportunities to persistently improve their competencies and to learn about recent developments in the subjects they teach as well as new didactic approaches.

Good and Brophy (2003) as cited in Richer, E. & et al (2021), in planning for and interacting with students, teachers are guided by their perceptions about what students need and by their expectations about how students will respond if treated in particular ways. Also, teachers' perceptions about the academic ability of the class or of individual students may influence their curricular, instructional, or evaluative decisions.

Teachers' perceptions of their instruction are an influential force in their decisions and actions. It is also said to affect their behaviors, instructions, activities, and their expectations. Moreover, it impacts learners' achievement or performance. So, the study intended to find answer for the following research questions.

1. What are EFL teachers' perceived practices of reading instruction?
2. How do teachers conduct actual classroom practices of reading instruction?
3. Is there any relationship between teachers' perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Role of Teachers in Language Teaching Classroom**

Teachers play different roles in the classroom in accordance with the perception they hold. Based on the roles teachers play in the classroom, there are three categories. These are: teachers as passive technician, teachers as reflective practitioner and teachers as transformative intellectuals. These three concepts will be discussed as follows.

#### **2.1.1 Teacher as Passive Technician**

This model assumes that the only legitimate knowledge comes from empirical studies, and teacher education privileges the professional experts leading to a hierarchy of knowledge production and consumption (Schön, 1987; Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Theory and research are considered to be the responsibility of university based scientists and scholars where the practitioners are only given the role of passive technicians who learn the content knowledge available in the literature and pass it onto the following generations. They do not have any chance to use their own experience, creativity, or critical reflection in practicing their profession even though they are the ones who know the requirements of their everyday classroom context in contrast to scholars who are usually detached from the classroom reality. In this model, the only role assigned to classroom teachers is to make sure that students comprehend the content knowledge without questioning the validity or relevance of that content knowledge to their students or to their context (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

This model has its own draw back as it dis-empowers teachers by reducing them to the role of passive practitioners who never use critical judgment. Suppressed by the system of teacher education, these teachers find it difficult to find their own voices or styles in teaching and to develop their own philosophies of teaching based on their own experience and context. So is this model teachers will never try to improve themselves and will not be innovative in their classes.

#### **2.1.2 Teachers as Reflective Practitioners**

This model of teaching appeared as a reaction to the disempowering nature of the technicist view of teacher education. As opposed to teachers as passive technicians model, reflective teaching, doesn't see

teachers as passive consumers or transmitters of knowledge, but producers of knowledge offering solutions to the problems in their own setting (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). In this role teachers are seen as problem solvers having "the ability to look back critically and imaginatively, to do cause-effect thinking, to derive explanatory principles, to do task analysis, also to look forward, and to do anticipatory planning" (Dewey, 1933)

Donald Schön made a difference between Reflection-on-action and reflection in action. For him reflection on action occurs before and after a lesson, in other words the lesson plan teachers made for the class and the evaluation of effectiveness of the teaching afterward. On the other hand reflection-in-action occurs during class and teachers can monitor their performance of the class and make the adjustments needed instantaneously. As a result of this reflection teachers will be able to identify how to improve their professional activity in order to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Reflection causes teachers to evaluate what happened and why; it encourages teachers to try out new ideas and promote changes in pupils' learning behavior.

According to Dewey (1933), reflective teachers have three distinguishing characteristics: open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness. The first one is Open-mindedness. Open-minded teachers are tolerant towards different ideas. They evaluate their existing beliefs when they encounter new data, and they are open to accepting the possibility of making mistakes. They are aware of the fact that they may not be right, and they are not in a race to win a debate (Larrivee, 2008). Moreover, they can criticize themselves. Open-minded reflective teachers are flexible enough and they are ready to hear different views from their students and peers and they are capable of adjusting their beliefs and teaching styles according to the different conditions. The second one is responsibility. Responsibility means "taking ownership for the consequences of one's actions" (Larrivee, 2008). Responsible teachers are aware of the fact that even their good intentions may have unintended consequences for others, and they act accordingly. The third one is wholeheartedness. Whole-hearted teachers devote themselves to improve a situation. As to (Larrivee, 2008), whole-hearted reflective teachers look for different alternatives to help their students. They do not give up until they find a solution. Even when there is a lot of uncertainty, confusion and frustration, whole-hearted teachers do not stop looking for answers.

Even though reflective teaching movement has been very influential in the role and image of a teacher, it has its own weak link. This model sees teacher's learning process as an individual one in which the teacher is considered alone in evaluating his/her practice without paying attention to the interaction of that teacher with the social context or the people around him/her. Another drawback of this model is related to its focus on the classroom setting alone without considering the broader sociopolitical factors that influence teachers and the institutional context they work in (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). That means if teachers only focusing on their own role in the classroom alone, teachers are directed to play a submissive role in an education system which tries to suppress teachers to become technicians (Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

### **2.1.3 Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals**

This model of teaching was created in reaction the two teaching models discussed above. This model was suggested by Henry Giroux (1988). Giroux believes that, in the current political and ideological climate, teachers are reduced to the status of technicians responsible merely for the implementation of curricular programs rather than developing those programs in line with the needs of their students or contexts. He argues that teachers should be seen as transformative intellectuals. By focusing on the notion of teacher as an intellectual, he underlines the fact that teachers are reflective practitioners who should take active part in curriculum development efforts. As transformative

intellectuals the teachers have not only to empower students by giving them the knowledge, but they have to develop social skills in the students that they will need in order to be able to function in the larger society; and also educate them for transformative action.

A transformative intellectual teacher has to achieve two things: the educational advancement and the personal transformation. In the case of educational advancement the teacher has to belong to a community of educators dedicated to the creation of meaningful knowledge and construct curricula that takes in consideration the student's needs, wants and real situations they have. On the other hand to achieve the personal transformation the teacher has to educate himself and his students about various forms of inequality and injustice that predominate in our world today and then redress them in purposeful and peaceful ways; transforming life in and outside the classroom.

## **2.2 Approaches of Reading Instruction**

### **2.2.1 Bottom-up Approach**

The bottom-up approach is a traditional approach which views reading instruction as a passive lower-level decoding process. This approach sees reading primarily 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” (Carrell, 1988). Traditional approach advocators argue that if a person is able to correctly decode a text, meaning and understanding will follow. The text contains the message and through the act of decoding the text, the reader discovers what the message is. In a nutshell, a bottom-up approach focuses on linguistic clues to comprehend a text (Fetene, 2021).

Today, the main method associated with the bottom-up approach to reading is known as phonics, which requires the learner to match letters with sounds in a defined sequence. So, in this view of reading, language is a code, and the reader is a passive decoder. In this case, the main task of the reader is to identify graphemes and convert them into phonemes. As with the audio-lingual teaching method, phonics requires a strong emphasis on repetition and on drills using the sounds that makeup words. Information is received and processed beginning with the smallest sound units, and then proceeding to letter blends, words, phrases, and sentences.

ESL and EFL textbooks influenced by this perspective include exercises that focus on literal comprehension and give little or no importance to the reader's knowledge or experience with the subject matter, and the only interaction is with the basic building blocks of sounds and words. Most activities are based on recognition and recall of lexical and grammatical forms with an emphasis on the perceptual and decoding dimension.

### **2.2.2 Top-down Approach**

The top-down approach, as opposed to bottom-up approach, views reading as a top-down and higher-level of reading. The philosophy underlying the top-down approach is that reading is a natural process, much like learning to speak, and that learners exposed to a great deal of authentic, connected text will naturally become literate without much in the way of explicit instruction in the rules and conventions of print text.

The top-down approach advocators claim that meaning of the text is dependent on the background knowledge and understanding that the reader brings. In this approach, the reader forms hypotheses and makes prediction, and only samples the text occasionally to confirm those predictions. In

support of this idea, Goodman (1967) states that “reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game... Efficient reading doesn’t result from precise decoding, but from skill in selection the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses that are right the first time.” Rather than decoding each symbol, the reader begins with a set of hypothesis of predictions about the meaning of the text he is about to read, and then selectively samples the text to determine whether his predictions are correct or not.

Emphasis in a top-down approach is given for meaning. This emphasis on meaning eventually informed the top-down approach to L2 learning, and in the 1960s and 1970s there was an explosion of teaching methods and activities that strongly considered the experience and knowledge of the learner. According to (Goodman 1967; Smith 1994), these new cognitive and top-down processing approaches revolutionized the conception of the way students learn to read.

### **2.2.3 Interactive Approach**

As the name implies, interactive approach is emerged from the combination of both higher and lower-level processes. It acknowledges that 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. Eskey (1988) further explains this point by saying that “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. Although good readers decode automatically with little cognitive effort, second language learners need help in decoding, since for them language is a key problem that cannot be solved by guessing.”

Carrell (1988) also states that efficient and effective reading entails both processes interacting simultaneously, in spite of the fact that the field today is strongly influenced by top-down processing perspectives. 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.

## **3. Materials and Methods**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The main purpose of the study was to gain data from participant EFL teachers about their perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction and to explain the interplay between their perceived and actual classroom practices. To this end, descriptive research design with mixed method was employed. 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. The basic premise of this methodology is that such integration permits a more complete and synergistic utilization of data than separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis do Creswell and Plano Clark, (2011) cited in Fetene Getaw (2021).

### **3. 2 Setting and Participants**

This study was conducted at Addis Ababa, Akaki-Kality Sub-City. The population of the study comprised of grade 9 and grade 10 EFL teachers who were teaching during the academic calendar of 2021 G.C. Seventy EFL teachers at public schools of Akaki-Kality sub-city were involved in this study.

### 3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study area which is Akaki-Kality sub-city is one of the eleven administrative sub-cities of Addis Ababa: the capital city of Ethiopia. From those eleven sub-cities, Akaki-kality Sub-city was selected for the study purposively because the researcher observed the problem in there. As part of community service, the researcher has been providing several trainings in language areas for teachers working at Akaki-Kality Sub-city. While doing so, the researcher spotted that teachers have naive understanding of teaching reading skills; for that reason, the researcher wondered to know their practices of reading instruction. In the sub-city, there are eleven public schools administered by the Addis Ababa bureau administrative office. From those eleven schools, eight of them were again selected purposively. So, seventy English language teachers who were teaching in those eight schools in the year 2021 G.C were included for the quantitative study whereas 8 teachers were randomly selected for the interview.

### 3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

To gain the necessary data from the selected participants, the researcher employed three data gathering tools, namely, questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observation. Questionnaire and interview were used to explore EFL teachers' perceived practices of reading instruction. Furthermore, classroom observation was employed to see their actual classroom practices. Beneath, a detailed discussion of each instrument was given.

#### 3.4.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire was one of the instruments used for this study. It was designed to figure out teachers' perceived classroom practices of reading instruction. Eighteen close ended questionnaire items were used for the current study. According to Dorneyi (2007) questionnaire is used for three major reasons. Firstly, questionnaire could help the researcher to gather data from relatively large number of research participants. In this sense, it was managed to collect data from 70 research participants. Secondly, constructing a questionnaire and analyzing data collected through it are relatively easy and more manageable. Thirdly, it is quicker to code up and analyze than word base data.

#### 3.4.2 Interview

Interview was one of the instruments used for this study. It was used for in-depth investigation on participant teachers' perceived classroom practices of reading instruction. A semi-structured interview format was employed for this study. According to Dorneyi (2007), in semi-structured interviews, the interviewer designs pre-planned guiding questions for prompts that encourage interviewees to express their ideas on certain issues in an elaborated manner. These guiding questions were aimed to find out basic information for the research objectives by eliciting their perspectives. As Gradman and Hanania (1991) cited in Fetene (2021), one of the advantage of an interview over a questionnaire is that interaction with the respondents can improve the chances that the information elicited is accurate and complete. Eight volunteer teachers involved in the interview. The interview was mainly used to supplement information and to validate the data collected through the questionnaire and the classroom observations.

#### 3.4.3 Classroom Observation

Classroom observation was also employed for this study. Classroom observation was mainly used because it gives the firsthand account of situations under study and when combined with other data collecting tools, it allows for a holistic interpretation of the situations which are being studied, Best and Kahan (1989). It also assisted to examine the extent to which teachers' perceived classroom practices were compatible with their actual classroom practices. Instructional event in the classroom was recorded by using audio-recorder. Moreover, checklist was used.

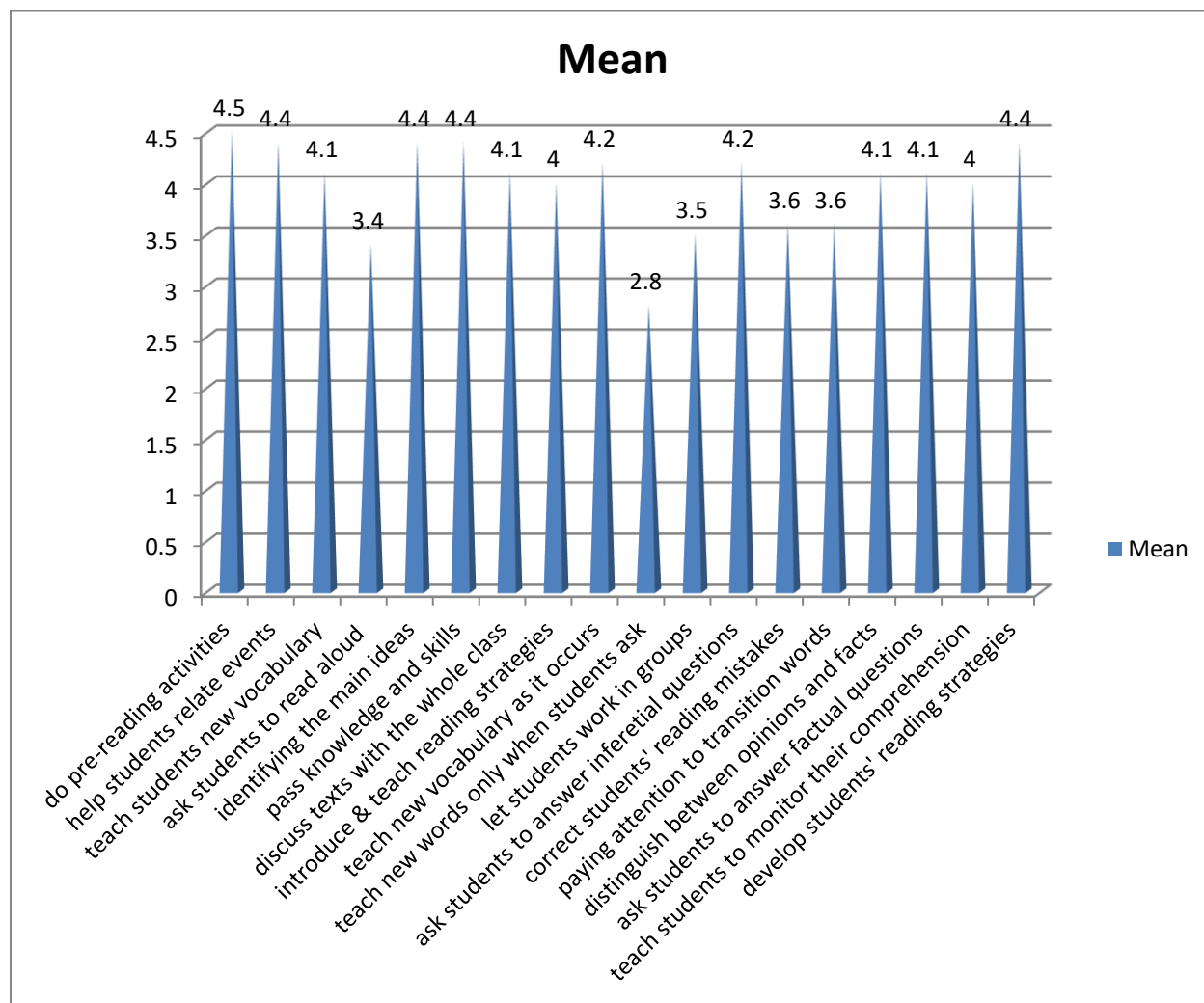
Classroom observations were conducted in eight secondary schools. In total, the researcher carried out 16 classroom observations.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### 4.1 Results

##### 4.1.1 What are EFL Teachers' perceived classroom practices of reading instruction?

The following diagram presents EFL teachers' perceived classroom practices of reading instruction. Eighteen questions were prepared and used to investigate their perceived classroom practices of reading instruction.



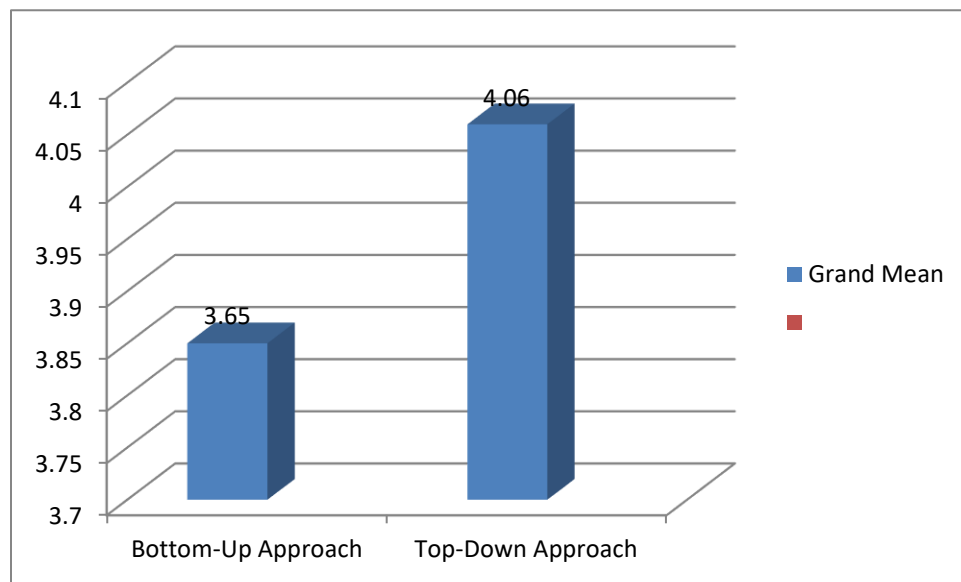
**Figure 1: Teachers' Perceived (Self-reported) Classroom Practices**

As shown on figure 1 above, the teachers' high mean responses indicate agreement to most of the items. From eighteen items asked about teachers' own self-reported classroom practices only five

responses have mean below 4. These are, instructing students to pay attention to transition words in a text (3.66), immediately correcting students' reading mistakes (3.59), letting students spend most of their reading time working in groups (3.51), asking students to read aloud to the whole class on frequent basis (3.44), and teaching new words only when students ask for their meaning while reading or discussing a text (2.82).

#### 4.1.1.1 Thematically Categorized Teachers' Perceived (Self-reported) Classroom Practices

The following table presents the grand mean or cutting point of teachers' responses about their own self-reported classroom practices. Eighteen items were used to fathom out teachers' self-reported classroom practices in teaching reading skills. These eighteen items were then categorized into two thematic categories of bottom-up and top-down reading approaches. This was done in order to see the cutting point of teachers' response about their own self-reported classroom practices. The grand mean response of the two approaches is presented below.



**Figure 2: Thematically Categorized Teachers' Perceived or Self-reported Classroom Practices**

As figure 2 indicated above, mean response of 4.06 showed that teachers mostly reported of employing top-down approach of reading instruction in their classroom practices than bottom-up approach of reading instruction which has grand mean of 3.65.

Moreover, to find out teachers' perceived or self-reported classroom practices, eight of the participants were asked about the usual procedure they follow when teaching reading skills. For this question, teacher 1 said that, firstly, he prepares the reading text that the students are going to read then after that he makes the environment comfortable to them to read. He further explains what he means by making the environment comfortable. He said that if there is a disturbance around the students or in the classroom, students can't learn reading skills, so he checks whether the classroom is comfortable to the students. He also said that he has to prepare the condition; it should be good condition to the students. Secondly, he provides the material to the students and makes them to read. Thirdly, he checks whether the students are reading properly or not. For that he asks them questions while they are reading to crosscheck whether they are reading or not. Finally, he asks them some questions after reading.



Teacher 2 also elaborated her usual procedure of teaching reading skills by saying:

As I try to tell you in the previous, in the beginning, and I also told you in my previous elementary teacher influence on my reading skill, I first try to give the topic of the reading text and ask them what they know about the topic to make them to connect the title with their prior knowledge and environment and then after they predicate, after I try to collect their prediction, we try to look at what is really given in the reading text. They try to read silently the reading text and then also try to guess meanings of some new words are they reading text and so on.

Similarly teacher 3 narrated his usual classroom procedure by saying:

it depends of course sometimes the text may be poem other times the text may be some prose kind of reading. But the usual approach is what influenced me at the college level, so first seeing the title, triggering the background knowledge then coming to the reading of the text and coming to the reading comprehension questions, so this is the usual method. I don't order the students to go right to the passage without triggering to their background knowledge, so the procedure is first we may see pictures related to the text, or we may see the title I just make them discuss first in groups or in pairs then they reflect then they go to the reading passage and then whenever they finish the reading passage, they immediately do the comprehension question. This is the strategy.

Teacher 4 also describes his usual procedures in elaborated manner. He said that whenever he conducts a reading lesson, first he asks probing questions related to the title what they know about the title, next if there are related words, he writes the bold words on the blackboard and then asks them the meaning of those bold words especially difficult and new words and then he asks them to read the whole passage individually by giving them some minutes according to the length of the passage. He then asks some students usually five or six students to read the passage turn by turn to the class loudly. Finally, he reads the whole passage very fast in a way that it is easy to the students, and then they do the exercise.

Teacher 5 also responded his usual procedure while teaching reading skills. He narrated that first he writes the topic on the board, and then he tells the students to open the book, then he writes the topic and sometimes he asks them to brainstorm questions like what they know about the topic in order to help students to match their prior knowledge with the outside world experience. He further explained that he activated the students' background knowledge because he believes that the students mind is not empty vessel. They have something in mind because they learn a lot from the life itself outside world. He helps them to bring that with the class. He also said that After he presents and tells them what to do, he orders the students to skim the passage to make them familiar with the topic even with the passage even with the participants with the characters ideas that are mentioned, to try to get new vocabularies after that he goes to the next session which is he orders them to scan the passage. After that he said that he asks them questions like what they understood from the passage, what lesson did they get, what's the purpose or the mission of the author, how do they understand, what was good, what was bad, what lesson did they get. He explained that these kinds of questions could help them to get information from the passage and to encourage them to read another passage.

Teacher 6 was also asked about the procedure he follows whenever he teaches reading skills. And he reported that in reading classes, the first thing he does is just writing the title, the lesson, and the day on the black board. After he wrote the lesson on the board, he said that he tries to tell them the lesson

objectives orally. The next thing, he will write the pre-reading questions which motivates them to handle the text. And if there are new words, he said that he will tell them their meanings that might help them to understand the text clearly and if there are post reading questions, he reported that he will write them on the board. According to him, that is the usual procedure he follows whenever he teaches reading skills.

Teacher 7 was also asked to elaborate the usual procedure he follows when teaching reading skills. He then responded by saying:

My procedure is introduction, presentation, and stabilization. I write the topic on the board then I explain the objective of the subject as part of introduction, next I present what I want to teach them at that time and finally I stabilize it by asking questions and answering it lastly giving them homework or oral questions in the class.

Teacher 8 said that first of all, he wrote the topic of the reading passage on the board, and then he says something about the general concept of the reading text or ask the students what they are going to read, so brainstorming or asking questions then he lets the student read the text according to the instruction of the text. Next, he orders them to scan or skim. Then he orders them to do the comprehension passage based on the instruction. Finally he asks the students to respond to the reading questions individually or in pair or in group then he gives them general feedback.

#### **4.1.2 How do Teachers Conduct Actual Classroom Practices of Reading Instruction?**

To figure out how EFL teachers conduct actual classroom practices in reading instruction, a number of classroom observation was conducted in different schools. In total, 16 classroom observations were done in eight schools with eight teachers. Each of the eight teachers was observed twice each. Their classroom reading instruction was presented as follows.

Vocabulary instruction dominated teacher 1's reading lesson. He spent more than 75% of the reading time on dealing with new vocabulary items. He was not interested at all in activating the students' background knowledge and making them predict about the lesson to crosscheck the students' expectation with that of the reality they get during reading. There was no group arrangement, and his instruction was not interactive. In a nutshell, his reading instruction resembles to the bottom-up approach of teaching reading skills.

Teacher 2 focused on dealing with vocabularies and factual questions in her reading instruction. She didn't activate the students' background knowledge. She also didn't ask them to predict about the text. She didn't make the reading lesson to be interactive, nor did she make any effort to arouse the students' interest to read the text with some sort of eagerness. Her reading instruction resembles to the bottom-up approach of teaching reading skills.

Teacher 3 mainly focused on dealing with factual questions in his reading instruction. The teacher didn't seem to know the role of activating the students' background knowledge and integrating it with the current reading text in order to grab the meaning of the text. He also didn't make any attempt to arouse interest among students to make them to read the text with some sort of excitement. Generally, his reading instruction resembles to the bottom-up approach of teaching reading skills.

Teacher 4 tried to remind students background knowledge related to the title. He also tried to make learners to have some sort of expectation about the reading text even before they started reading the text. By doing so, he tried to create excitement in the minds of the learners. He also dealt with

vocabularies and factual questions in her reading instruction. Generally, his reading instruction resembles to interactive approach of teaching reading skills.

Teacher 5 entirely focused on dealing with vocabularies and factual questions. He spent the majority time dealing with vocabulary and doing the factual questions. Without activating the students' background knowledge and creating any awareness among students about the title of the reading text, the teacher delved into dealing with the while reading activities. He also didn't make the reading lesson interactive either. In short, his reading instruction resembles to the bottom-up approach of teaching reading skills.

Before students start reading the text, teacher 6 brainstormed the students very well. He also tried to refresh the knowledge the students have already and tried to refresh it by activating their background knowledge. He also tried to raise eagerness among students by making them predict about the text. He also discussed the meaning of key vocabularies with the students before they read the text that the teacher thought could hinder students' reading comprehension. The teacher also made learners to do factual questions in his reading instruction. Generally, his reading instruction resembles to the interactive approach of teaching reading skills.

Teacher 7 also brainstormed the students very well. He made them to get the gist of the reading text by looking at the title first without even started to read the text. He also made them to predict about the story from the title itself. By doing so, he tried to raise expectation in the mind of the students. He also discussed the meaning of key vocabularies with the students before they read the text that the teacher thought could hinder students' reading comprehension. The teacher also made learners to do factual questions in his reading instruction. In summary, his reading instruction resembles to the interactive approach of teaching reading skills.

In most of the reading instruction time, teacher 8 entirely focused on dealing with vocabularies and factual questions. The teacher didn't activate the students' background knowledge and he didn't attempt to integrate it with the current reading text to make reading easier for students. He also didn't make any effort to arouse curiosity among students to make them to read the text with some sort of enthusiasm. In general, his reading instruction resembles to the bottom-up approach of teaching reading skills.

The researcher observed variations between and among observed teachers. Teacher 4, Teacher, 6 and teacher 7 employed interactive approach in teaching reading skills. They made learners to try to integrate the knowledge the reading text itself supplies with that of what they knew already from their background knowledge or real life. They also made them to infer the meaning of new vocabulary items they faced in reading with the context the text itself supplies. On the other hand, teacher 1, teacher 2, teacher 3, teacher 5, and teacher 8 entirely focused on bottom-up approach of teaching reading skills. They made learners to focus only dealing with factual questions. They also made the students read the text without activating their background knowledge and without giving them any clues of what the text was about.

#### **4.1.3 Is there any Relationship between Teachers' Perceived and Actual Classroom Practices of Reading Instruction?**

The results of survey and interviews revealed that teachers perceived classroom practices are found to be in line with top-down approach of reading instruction. Conversely, their actual classroom practices revealed that teachers' favor the bottom-up approach of reading instruction in teaching reading

skills. Hence, based on the result, it can be said that there is an inverse relationship between teachers' perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction.

#### **4.2 Discussion of the Results**

As results from questionnaire and interview indicate, teachers' perceived classroom practices of reading instruction rests on higher level process of reading instruction where teachers claimed that they dominantly emphasize on activating the students background knowledge, arousing interest among learners to read the text, encouraging learners to make prediction about the text they are about to read and make them to be eager to crosscheck their expectation with that of what they get after reading the text. So, this in other way round informs that teachers' claim of perceived reading instruction lay on the top-down approach of reading instruction. In line to this, Tierney & Pearson, 1994 supports this fact that top-down approach is seen 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. A schema theory strengthens this point. Schema theory describes in detail how the background knowledge of the learner interacts with the reading task and illustrates how a student's knowledge and previous experience with the world is crucial to deciphering a text. According to top-down approach instruction advocators, the ability to use this schema, or background knowledge, is fundamental for efficient comprehension to take place.

There is difference among scholars about the interplay between teachers' perceived and actual classroom practices. Some researchers claim that there is congruence between teachers' perceived classroom practices and their actual classroom practices. However, some others believed in the opposite. As opposed to their claimed or perceived classroom practices, the actual classroom practices of teachers indicated that teachers followed bottom-up approach of reading instruction in teaching reading. They dominantly focused on dealing with factual questions of the reading activities, grammar, vocabulary and stuff like that. According to Wallace (1992), in bottom-up approach of reading instruction, instructional practices view learning language as skills that need to be acquired and practiced in the classroom, using graded basal readers or curricula organized according to levels of vocabulary and grammar. The lessons, in bottom-up approach of reading, are teacher-directed lessons and sequentially-introduced skills. 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.

The results of this study come up with the finding that there is a significant difference between EFL teachers' actual classroom practices and their perceived classroom practices of reading instruction. Such difference between teachers' perceived and actual classroom practices mainly come from the level of teachers' professionalism, the language curriculum they make use of and contextual factors teachers face in the classroom.

#### **5. Conclusions**

This study meticulously explored and analyzed high school EFL teachers' perceived and actual classroom practices of reading instruction.

As results from questionnaire and interview reveal, the teachers perceived practice of reading instruction were found to be the top-down approach of reading instruction which sees reading comprehension is the result of the background knowledge learners bring to the text instead of the linguistic clues the text itself supplies.

The actual classroom observation on the other hand shows that teachers' actual classroom practices of reading instruction inclined to the bottom-up approach of reading instruction. This means that teachers mainly claim that having good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary are the key to reading. So, teachers' perceived practice of reading instruction was found to be incompatible with that of their actual classroom practices.

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