

Exploring EFL Teachers' Instructional Roles in the Application of Reading Strategies: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

This study aims to scrutinize EFL teachers' instructional roles in applying the pre-, while, and post-reading strategies while teaching reading comprehension lessons. Edget Chora Secondary School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia is purposefully selected. The study adopts an exploratory case study design. Using the convenience sampling technique, six experienced EFL teachers were selected. The data collection method involves observations, and interviews. Using NVivo 10 software, the interview data were open-coded, and categorized into themes and sub-themes. The interview results show that the participants apply pre-reading strategies to help students minimize comprehension barriers, predict the passage, and activate their background knowledge. Besides, during reading, they organize the students to read and comprehend the passage silently and individually and do comprehension questions. As a post-reading strategy, the participants assign students to answer comprehension questions both in the classroom and at home. However, the observation data indicate that they infrequently implemented the pre-, while, and post-reading strategies. In light of the results, the study concludes that the participating EFL teachers do not have consistent instructional roles in applying the pre-, while, and post-reading strategies. The situation calls for in-service training, workshops, and continuous professional development programs for EFL teachers in the target secondary school.

Key words: Application of Reading Strategies; EFL Teachers; Instructional Roles

Introduction

Like many nations worldwide, English is taught as a foreign language in Ethiopia (MoE, 1994). To learn this vital international language, students need to master the basic language skills. Hence, for effective teaching and learning of the English language, EFL teachers should apply well-designed teaching procedures, and carefully chosen activities, methods, and strategies. EFL teachers' instructional role in teaching reading comprehension plays a critical role in students' language skills growth (Taye et al., 2018).

English as a foreign language teachers have an indispensable instructional role in assisting their students in reading comprehension classes. Therefore, by applying the relevant reading strategies, EFL teachers need to assist their students in comprehending the text. Duffy (2009) explained that reading strategies are classified under the three basic stages of reading comprehension lessons. These are pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. Hence, EFL teachers should implement such reading strategies while teaching reading comprehension. More

specifically, during the pre-reading phase, teachers need to implement strategies to link the readers' schema (prior knowledge) with the new knowledge by predicting, improving interest in reading, and anticipating what will be read. Using the while-reading strategies, teachers can help students cope with new vocabulary and contexts, as well as bridges between existing knowledge and the new text. By applying the post-reading strategies, teachers can also help students to interpret, confirm predictions evaluate their understanding of the text, and make generalizations and connections to their own lives (Cekiso, 2012).

Several studies overseas have been conducted recently regarding the effect of pre-reading and post-reading strategies on students' reading comprehension skills. Imran Ahmed et al.; (2024); Tanjung (2019); Safrianti, (2020) ; (Cekiso, 2012) are to mention a few. However, these studies followed experimental and quasi-experimental designs that are methodologically different from the study at hand.

In the Ethiopian context, few studies have been conducted in connection to the interplay between secondary school EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of reading strategies in reading comprehension classes. Atinafu (2018) investigated the interplay between Bahir Dar Town Secondary School EFL teachers' beliefs and practice in reading strategy use. The study found teachers tend to believe that promoting reading strategy training is crucial in empowering learners to become efficient readers, although they do not train their students to use the strategies properly. Teachers try to use few pre-reading strategies; however, most of the while-reading and post-reading strategies do not appear to be employed. In the same vein, Regassa & Teshome (2015) conducted a study on Jimma and East Wollega Zone High School EFL teachers' belief systems of teaching reading and their classroom practices. The study revealed that EFL teachers hold their belief system of teaching reading; however, their belief was incongruently implemented in the classroom. The above studies investigated issues quantitatively.

However, as to the knowledge of the researchers, few local qualitative studies have been conducted to examine EFL teachers' beliefs and execution of reading comprehension strategies at the secondary school level. For instance, Mekonnen (2020) conducted an exploratory case study of the pedagogic strategies that three secondary school EFL teachers apply in teaching reading comprehension during the different stages of reading. Likewise, through a descriptive interpretative case study design, Nurie (2017) examined the current practices of teachers in teaching reading and how the teachers handle and organize reading comprehension. None the less, these studies did not examine deeply the instructional roles of secondary school EFL teachers in applying the reading strategies under the three phases of reading comprehension lessons. The theoretical assumption of the study is that EFL teachers should put in practice and integrate the pre, while and post-reading strategies in their actual reading comprehension lessons. This would in turn help students to be familiar with and practice such important reading comprehension strategies so as to fix comprehension difficulties they may face while reading the text.

At the local level, little attention is given to exploring the instructional roles of secondary school EFL teachers in applying reading strategies. This study intends to fill such methodological as well as empirical gaps. In this study, therefore, through a qualitative approach, an attempt was made to obtain an in-depth insight into EFL teachers' instructional roles in

applying the pre-, while, and post-reading strategies when teaching reading comprehension lessons. Given that, the study sought to attain the following objectives:

1. To examine the pre-reading strategies EFL teachers apply to assist the students to get ready for reading,
2. To identify the while-reading strategies EFL teachers practice to facilitate the students' reading comprehension, and
3. To scrutinize the post-reading strategies EFL teachers use to help students extend their initial understanding of the text.

1. Method

1.1.The Research Design

This exploratory study is entirely qualitative. Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting (Creswell, 2014).The qualitative approach was preferred because the researchers believe that in-depth insights regarding EFL teachers' practices of the pre-, while, and post-reading strategies can better be explored through observations and interviews than through a quantitative approach. In addition, as far as the researchers' knowledge is concerned, only two qualitative studies were done locally that addressed EFL teachers' beliefs and their pedagogical practices in handling and organizing reading comprehension. However, these studies did not examine deeply the instructional roles of secondary school EFL teachers in applying the reading strategies. Therefore, this study hopes to fill such empirical as well as methodological gaps at the local level. To carry out this study, a case study design was chosen because the study dealt with a single case, looking at a specific grade (Grade nine) and a specific number of participants (six EFL teachers) in a particular government secondary school (Edget Chora Secondary School) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

1.2.Participants and Sampling

To select the target school, purposive sampling was employed as a guiding sampling technique. Since the study applied a case study design, one government secondary school was purposefully chosen. Through convenience sampling technique, therefore, among ten grade nine EFL teachers under the English department in the target secondary school, six teachers were selected and took part in the study based on their willingness. All of them participated in individual interviews and reading comprehension lesson observations. The reason for choosing only six cases (participants) was to ensure that the data generated from such a limited number of participants would be manageable given the laborious nature of a qualitative study. The demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1. Short codes are used for all participants to maintain the anonymity of data.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information

No	Participants	Gender	Age	Qualification	Teaching experience
1	T1	Male	40	B.Ed.	16 years
2	T2	Male	51	MA in TEFL	32 years
3	T3	Male	36	MA in TEFL	14 years
4	T4	Male	52	MA in TEFL	29 years
5	T5	Male	40	MA in TEFL	17 years
6	T6	Male	39	MA in TEFL	18 years

As regards the profile of participants shown in Table 1, all of them were experienced, with 14 up to 32 years of service. The age range of participants was 36-51. The data signified that they were mature enough. Hence, they could provide ample data regarding their beliefs and practices of pre-reading strategies in their reading comprehension classes. Except for one participant, five of them were MA degree holders in TEFL, so it was expected that they had taken relevant courses on teaching reading comprehension. Thus, the participants were likely to deliver valuable data concerning the issue under study.

1.3. Instruments of Data Collection

1.3.1. Observation

Reading comprehension lesson observation was the major data collection tool for this study. Twelve reading comprehension lesson observations were conducted by adopting a non-participant observation approach. In espousing this approach, the researchers acted as an outsider of the group of students and the teachers in the classroom being observed. During observation, the researchers took field notes on accounts of particular events in how the participating EFL teachers practiced the pre, while, and post-reading strategies in their reading comprehension classes.

1.3.2. Individual Interview

The purpose of the individual interview was to collect relevant data about the participating EFL teachers' actual practices of the pre, while, and post-reading strategies to assist students in becoming motivated, getting ready for reading, comprehending the given passage, and extending their understanding and connecting the theme of the passage with their real-life situations. The interview was conducted using a structured interview guide because every participant in a structured interview responds to the same questions, so it was easier to find and compare responses during analysis. The interview questions were designed and refined based on insights gained from the relevant literature review. The interview data were helpful to substantiate the results of observations.

1.4.Data Collection Procedures and Ethical Issues

First, permission was obtained from the school principal to collect data from the target secondary school. Second, a good rapport was maintained with all grade nine EFL teachers of Edget Chora Secondary School to get approval for participation in lesson observations and interviews. Following this, using an information letter, the participants were made aware of the purpose of the study. Then, they signed a consent form to confirm their willingness to participate in the study.

Then, to run the lesson observation smoothly, with the consent of the participants, two representative reading comprehension lessons were selected. This situation was helpful to gather observation data regarding EFL teachers' actual practices of pre, while and post-reading strategies under similar framework of lessons and classroom contexts. During reading comprehension lesson observations, field notes were taken about activities, interactions, and dialogues made by the teacher and the students during the reading comprehension lessons. The lessons were not video recorded to avoid artificiality on the part of teachers and to minimize frustration among the students. To aid the data analysis and interpretation work, based on the field notes (descriptive notes), the reflective notes were recorded immediately after each observation. This was important to give meaning to the field notes taken during the lesson observations. Hence, based on the observation schedule, the six participants were observed twice. In sum, twelve reading comprehension lesson observations were conducted. The lesson observations started on December 6, 2023 and ended on January 3, 2024.

Next, the interview sessions were kept to the second phase of data collection to minimize artificial classroom behaviors that the participants may manifest during observation due to prior contamination of data which might alert them about the issue of investigation and might have affected the quality of data expected from the participants.

Then, the interview schedule was set with the respondents' full consent. Accordingly, six EFL teachers who were teaching grade nine students in the target secondary school volunteered to participate in the interview sessions. The interview was carried out in Amharic (Ethiopian native language) and translated later into English. This was important to avoid the language barrier which might affect the quality and quantity of the expected data from the participants. All of the individual interviews were audio-recorded using a TECNO DP10A tablet. The researchers also took notes during the interview to avoid any impulsive data loss. Therefore, the audio files were exported to NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software to facilitate the data translation (Amharic into English) and verbatim transcription (changing audio data into textual data) work which continued immediately after the interview sessions. To conduct a single individual interview, an average of 50 minutes was needed.

1.5.Reliability and Validity of Data

Ensuring the reliability and validity of data is a critical issue in qualitative study. Qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects (Gibbs, 2007). According to Yin (2011) qualitative researchers need to document the procedures of their case studies and to document as many of the steps of the procedures as possible. He also recommends setting up a detailed case study protocol and database. Based on the ideas of scholars, the researchers repeatedly checked interview transcripts and they did not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription. Also, we make sure that

there is no drift in the definition of codes or a shift in the meaning of the codes during the process of open coding with NVivo-10 software.

Validity on the other hand is one of the strengths of qualitative research, and it is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account. Hence, Creswell (2013) recommends the use of multiple strategies, and these should enhance the researcher's ability to assess the accuracy of findings as well as convince readers of that accuracy. Among the primary strategies suggested above the researchers took the following measures to add to the validity of the findings of the study.

The data obtained from different sources i.e., interviews, and observation (field notes and reflective journals), have been triangulated by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes extracted through analysis of textual data. For instance, the interview results about implementation of reading strategies were compared and contrasted with the results of observation. Regarding this issue, Creswell (2009) noted "if themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants, then this process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study" (p.177). Therefore, member checking was used to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings by taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to participants and determining whether these participants felt that they were accurate and providing an opportunity for them to comment on the findings. Hence, all of the six participants agreed with the findings of the study after reviewing the copy of the findings presented to them. Besides, in the data analysis and discussion section, rich and thick descriptions of the findings were conveyed. In doing so, the findings from interviews, and observations were described in detail taking into account the multiple perspectives of the participants. Such descriptions are also supported by accounts of direct quotations from the interview transcripts. This made the results more realistic and richer and added to the validity of the results of the study.

1.6.Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were edited and repeatedly read for better understanding. The irrelevant and repeated interview items along with the responses given were refined and polished from the transcripts. The QSR NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software was used to do the open coding process. Primarily, the responses given for the interview questions related to implementation of the pre, while and post-reading strategies were organized and imported to QSR NVivo 10 software. Then, the open coding of data continued using a line-by-line coding technique so as not to miss important results that can be generated from the textual data. After open coding of data ended, the repeated ideas (similar ideas) taken from each participant's responses are categorized under themes and the corresponding sub-themes. Themes and sub-themes emerged as a result of open coding of each interview transcript were organized in to tables parallel to each participant. In the narration of results, direct quotations taken from interview transcripts are incorporated to show evidence of results.

For the observation data analysis, a reading comprehension lesson observation framework (RCLOF) adapted from (Henk et al.,2000) was utilized. This was imperative to compare and contrast the observation data with the pre-, while, and post-reading strategies

incorporated in the RCLOF to dig out the instructional roles of participants in the application of such strategies in reading comprehension classes. To secure the anonymity and confidentiality of the information, the representative codes were given to each participant (where, T1=Teacher 1, T2=Teacher 2, T3= Teacher 3, T4= Teacher 4, T5=Teacher 5 and T6= Teacher 6) for data analysis, and discussion purposes.

1.7.Results and Discussion

The study intended to explore secondary school EFL teachers' instructional role in the application of the pre-, while, and post-reading strategies in their respective reading comprehension classes. In doing so, reading comprehension lesson observations, and individual interviews were used to generate data. In this section of the study, therefore, the results of the interview and observation about the six participants' accomplishment of the pre-, while, and post-reading strategies are presented in line with the themes and sub-themes of results. The results are also triangulated, interpreted, and subsequently discussed in light of the results of other studies.

1.7.1. Results Concerning Application of the Pre-reading Strategies

The participant EFL teachers were asked five interview questions to explore the reading strategies they implement at the pre-reading stages of the reading comprehension lessons. The questions focused on the pre-reading strategies the participants applied to facilitate the students' comprehension of the given passage. More specifically, the interview focused on pre-reading strategies such as avoiding comprehension barriers, assisting the students in predicting the passage, and activating the background knowledge (schemata) of the students related to the text they are going to read. Hereafter, the open coding results from each interviewee along with the subsequent themes and sub-themes obtained from interview data are presented.

Table2. Codes and Themes Established from Interview Data Regarding Application of Pre-reading Strategies

No.	Codes	Themes	Sub-themes
1	Ask students questions related to the passage; show pictures; so that they can predict about the passage.[T1]-students share ideas about pre-reading questions to facilitate their schema[T2] ask their expectation about the passage ; they do pre-reading questions[T3] -Students do pre-reading questions in pairs and reflect ideas [T4]-Elicit students' prior knowledge through questioning.[T5]-Students do pre-reading questions in pairs and in groups.[T6]	-Using pre-reading strategies to facilitate the students' comprehension of the passage	-Ask questions about the passage to elicit students' prior knowledge -Students share ideas to activate their prior knowledge -Students explain their expectations -Do pre-reading questions

2	Advise students to consult a dictionary and to read the text at home; pre teach key vocabulary (antonyms & synonyms); teach prefixes and suffixes to help students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words [T1] -Advise students to guess the meaning of words based on context clues, antonyms and synonyms [T2] -Pre teach unfamiliar words taken from the passage [T3] -Students do vocabulary activities after reading the passage. [T4] -Do not pre-teach key vocabularies before reading; use context clues. [T5] -Pre teach key vocabularies; advise students to use context clues to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words [T6]	-Assisting students in avoiding comprehension barriers such as unfamiliar words	-Consulting a dictionary -Pre teach key vocabulary -Students guess the meaning of words using affixes and context clues
3	-Do not teach students text structures; assist students to re-read the text [T1] -knowing text structures facilitate comprehension ; Do not teach students the text structures [T2] -Do not teach text structures before reading [T3] -Advise students to look at information about the source and type of text ; do not teach text structures[T4] -Assist students to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words.[T5] -Do not teach text structure for the students [T6]	-Strategies used to help students avoid text structure barriers	-Do not teach text structures -Let students see the source of text -Let students to look at sources and type of the text
4	Assist students to do pre-reading questions and to answer teacher made questions related to the passage [T1] -Make students look at the title & pictures of the passage; discuss on pre-reading questions to predict about the passage [T2] -Ask questions related to the passage to help students predict about the passage.[T3] -Students do pre-reading questions to predict about the content of the passage[T4] -Students do pre-reading questions to predict about the passage [T5] -Students do pre-reading questions to predict about content of the passage[T6]	The strategies applied to assist the students to predict about the passage	-Help students do pre-reading questions -Look at the title and pictures about the passage -Let them to look at the title and pictures related to the passage -Ask students questions about the passage before reading
5	-The students reflect on ideas they know about the title of the passage[T1] -Before reading, ask students questions related to the passage to activate their prior knowledge[T2] -To facilitate schema and what they know about the title of the passage, students reflect orally on their experiences.[T3] -Students reflect orally on what they know about the title of the passage[T4] -Help students to reflect on what they know related to the title of passage.[T5] -Ask students to respond to questions related to the passage[T6]	-Strategies applied to activate the background knowledge of the students in connection to the reading passage	-Students explain information they know about the passage -Ask students questions about the passage to activate their schemata before reading

Theme 1: Using Pre-reading Strategies to Facilitate Students' Comprehension of the Passage

As the interview data in Table2 depicts, to facilitate the students' comprehension of the text, all of the participants agreed that they activate the background knowledge (schemata) by assisting the students to do pre-reading questions in pairs and small groups. They also said that they ask questions to stimulate the students' prior knowledge about the passage they are assigned to read. The participants also clarified they make students reflect on their prior knowledge and look at pictures related to the title of the passage. Hence, students can predict (tell their expectations) about the content of the passage.

Theme 2: Assisting Students in Avoiding Comprehension Barriers such as Unfamiliar Words

T1 and T6 said they assist students in using context clues to enable them to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words while reading the passage. T1 for instance said, "...I advise students to consult a dictionary and to read the text at home, pre-teach key vocabularies (antonyms & synonyms), and teach prefixes and suffixes to help students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words." Additionally, T3, T4, and T6 pointed out that they pre-teach key vocabulary taken from the passage to help students avoid vocabulary-related barriers to comprehension. On the other hand, T5 indicated he did not pre-teach key vocabularies rather he advised students to use context clues to find out the meaning of unfamiliar words during the actual reading. About this T1 recounted:

Mainly the students encounter vocabulary related obstacles. Hence, I advise them to consult dictionary when reading. I also encourage them to read the passage at home ahead of time. I also list out and pre-teach key vocabularies taken from the reading passage to minimize the effect of language barriers on students' comprehension of the text. Besides, I try to assist students to know the antonym and synonym of key words. Again, I help them to identify the prefix and suffix of key words extracted from the passage so as to find out the meaning of unfamiliar words. **TR1**

Theme 3: Strategies Used to Help Students Avoid Text Structure Barriers

Text structure barriers are hindrances that students might experience while reading the passage. Except for T5, the rest participants indicated that they did not teach students about the text structures to aid their reading comprehension. Meanwhile, T4 pointed out that he advises students to look at information from the passage about the source and type of text. In the same way, T1 said that he guides students to re-read the passage rather than teaching them the text structures. In this regard, T2 said:

There are expository and scientific texts. I believe knowing text structure helps students to comprehend the text better. However, I have no experience of pre-teaching students about text structure. It is new for me. I try to use this strategy for the future when I teach reading comprehension lessons. **TR2**

As the interview data indicated, the majority of the participants did not teach their students the text structure before the while-reading phase.

Theme 4: The Strategies Applied to Assist the Students to Predict About the Passage

Except for T3, the other participants stated that they assist students in doing pre-reading questions so that the students can predict the content of the passage. In addition, T1 and T3 clarified that they asked teacher-made questions related to the passage to assist students in predicting the passage. Unlike others, T3 said, “Students look at the title and pictures related to the passage. These activities enable the students to predict the content of the passage they are about to read.”

Theme 5: Strategies Applied to Activate the Background Knowledge of the Students

Except for T1, all of the participants said that they assist students to reflect orally on what they know about the title of the passage as this could activate their background knowledge (schemata). Therefore, the students can comprehend the passage better. T2 also said, “...before reading, I ask students questions related to the passage to activate their prior knowledge.”

The observation data indicated that T1 did not effectively implement the pre-reading strategies to assist students in activating their prior knowledge, predicting the passage, being motivated to read, and avoiding comprehension barriers (both linguistic and text structure barriers). T2 did not elicit students’ prior knowledge by assisting them to look at pictorial descriptions given for each paragraph to assist students to better comprehend the passage. As the data exhibited, T2 did not implement the pre-reading strategies consistently during the first and second rounds of observations. In other words, T2 did not activate students’ background knowledge about the passage. Consequently, they may have confusion about the purpose of reading. In addition, they might not be able to choose and apply the while-reading strategies because the teacher said nothing about the selection and utilization of reading strategies before the actual reading.

Except for his effort to pre-teach key vocabulary during the first round of observation, T3 did not implement the pre-reading strategies consistently. His practice fluctuates from lesson to lesson. Such instructional inconsistency may suggest that he did not show a firm stand to regularly implement the pre-reading strategies in reading comprehension classes.

However, during the first round of observation, T4 tried to implement the pre-reading strategies such as activating the background knowledge of students to assist them in connecting their prior knowledge with the text they are going to read. Also, he tried to motivate students to read. He drew students’ attention to the title of the passage to help them predict the content of the passage. However, during the second round of observation, T4 completely ignored the pre-reading strategies. Thus, the data may suggest that his implementation of the pre-reading strategies is found to be inconsistent. He failed to regularly assist the students in implementing the pre-reading strategies.

Essentially, except for his effort to make students familiar with a few vocabularies taken from the passage, T5 did not effectively implement the pre-reading strategies. Therefore, the students might not be fully motivated and engaged in reading comprehension activities since they were not able to activate their schemata and get motivated to read the passage.

Similarly, during the first round of observation, T6 tried to implement the pre-reading strategies like activating the background knowledge of students to assist them in connecting their prior knowledge with the passage they are assigned to read. Also, he tried to motivate students to read. He drew students’ attention to the title of the passage to help them predict the content of the

passage. Conversely, during the second round of observation, he completely ignored the pre-reading strategies. The data may suggest that similar to the majority of the participants, his implementation of the pre-reading strategies is found to be inconsistent.

1.7.2. Results Pertaining to Practices of the While-reading Strategies

Three interview questions were devised to elicit the participants' endeavors in applying the while-reading strategies when teaching reading comprehension lessons. In the following section of the study report, the open coding results of interviews and the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the codes are presented. Next, the results of observations are presented.

Table3. Codes and Themes Established from Interview Data Regarding Implementation of While-reading Strategies

No	Codes	Themes	Sub-themes
1	-Monitor students whether they read the passage or not ; motivate them to answer comprehension questions within the given time.[T1]-Read individually and answer comprehension questions in groups; they exchange ideas gained from the passage.[T2] Make them exchange ideas gained from the passage; Motivate them to read the passage and do comprehension questions.[T3] -Adjust strategies useful to find general and specific information ; Identify the type of comprehension questions first.[T4] -Assign students to read within the given time.[T5]-Students read silently & individually.[T6]	Strategies used to help students comprehend the passage better	-Assign students to read within the given time -Encourage them to read silently, individually, and do comprehension question in pairs and groups -Let them skim and scan the passage
2	-Help students to answer comprehension questions in groups and pairs [T1] -Answer comprehension questions individually; They exchange ideas gained from the passage; Cross check answers with peers.[T2] -Students read in small groups ; Read the passage individually; Answer comprehension questions[T3] -Do not regularly arrange students in groups and pairs; Students answer comprehension questions in small groups[T4]-Students read individually based on their sitting arrangements ; Do not organize students in different way[T5]-Students answer comprehension questions based on their sitting arrangements (in small groups) [T6]	Organizing students to help them discuss on comprehension questions and find answers	-Help the students to comprehend the passage individually -Let them answer comprehension questions in groups and pairs and crosscheck answers -Exchange ideas taken from the passage
3	-Students skim the passage to get general ideas and scan for specific ideas[T1]-Ask general questions to help them identify main ideas of the passage ; assist student to identify the location of key vocabularies.[T2] -Assist students to skim the passage for general information and scan for specific information.[T3] Based on the text book, they skim for general ideas and scan for specific ideas of the passage.[T4] Encourage students to scan and skim for specific and general information respectively.[T5] Instruct students to skim and scan the passage to get general and specific information[T6]	Assisting students in reading the passage in the shortest possible time	-Let the students skim for general ideas and scan for specific ideas -Ask general questions -Assist them to find the contextual meanings of key vocabulary

Theme 1: Strategies Used to Help Students Comprehend the Passage Better

As regards the implementation of the while-reading strategies the data in Table3 shows that the participants help students to comprehend the passage in a better way, and implement the while-reading strategies such as monitoring students whether they are reading or not. They also motivate the students to read and comprehend the passage and help them to read silently and individually. Additionally, they reported that they assist students in exchanging ideas gained from the passage and crosscheck answers to comprehension questions with peers. Besides, the participants explained that they adjust skimming and scanning strategies to make students find out general and specific information from the passage.

Theme 2: Organizing Students to Help them Discuss Comprehension Questions and Find Answers

The majority of the participants replied that they assist students in reading the passage individually and answer comprehension questions in pairs and small groups based on their regular sitting arrangements. About this, T4 said:

In the absence of adequate text books, students answer comprehension questions in small groups based on their regular sitting arrangements. I do not rearrange students in pairs and in groups while teaching reading comprehension lessons. Students tend to do comprehension question in groups since most of them seek help from peers. **TR4**

Theme 3: Assisting Students in Reading the Passage within the Shortest Possible Time

All of the participants agreed that they assist students during the while-reading stage in using skimming and scanning strategies so as to enable them to search for the general and specific information from the given passage in a shortest possible time.

The observation data revealed that T1 did not effectively implement the while-reading strategies to make the students concentrate on reading and comprehending the passage. Students sit in small groups and share textbooks; however, due to inadequate number of textbooks, they were unable to skim and scan the passage effectively. Similarly, T2, T3, T4, T5, and T6 did not get students to set the purpose of reading and become familiar with the reading strategies before the actual reading of the passage. The observation also disclosed all of the participating EFL teachers were unable to implement the while-reading strategies to assist students in reading and comprehending the passage silently and individually, skimming and scanning for information from the passage, to avoid comprehension barriers, to read for inferences, and to guess the contextual meaning of unfamiliar words while reading for better comprehension.

Opposing the interview results, however, the results of observation displayed, during the first and second round observation of the while-reading stage, all of the participants immediately instructed the students to be in groups where they could access textbooks and let them read the

passage. This is a traditional way of teaching reading comprehension. Loud reading dominates the class. Students did not have the opportunity to read silently due to a shortage of textbooks. Due to such unfavorable conditions, almost all of the students did not worry about reading and comprehending the passage. The teachers move around and try their best to monitor students' reading activities. However, due to the large class size and inadequate number of textbooks, they were unable to make students fully involved in reading comprehension activities. The participants did not guide the students to skim for general gist and to scan for specific ideas from the passage. Students simply sit in groups [6-7 students] and share textbooks. Nevertheless, due to the very few numbers of text books available in the classrooms, it was difficult for students to read and search for the general gist as well as the specific information from the passage. All of the participants aimed at doing reading comprehension questions.

1.7.3. Results Concerning Application of the Post-reading Strategies

Two interview questions were asked to incite the participants' accomplishments of post-reading strategies after students finish reading passages in the classroom to help them extend their initial understanding of the passage, interpret the theme, and connect it with their real-life experiences. In the following section of the study report, the open coding results of interview data along with the themes and sub-themes are presented. Also, the observation results are presented.

Table 4. Codes and Themes Established from Interview Data Regarding Implementation of Post-reading Strategies

No	Codes	Themes	Sub-themes
1	-After reading the passage ,students do comprehension questions; reflect on ideas they gained from the passage [T1]-Through general questions, and by letting students reflect on the theme of the passage, check students' overall comprehension of the passage [T2]Post-reading strategies are important to help students extend their understanding; Students do post-reading activities in the classroom and at home [T3]- Students become bored to extend their understanding of the passage during post-reading stage.[T4]-Make students respond to comprehension questions turn by turn [T5] Students read the passage and comprehend accordingly.[T6]	Strategies used to help students extend their initial understanding of the text	-Students answer comprehension questions both in the class and at home -They reflect on the theme of the passage orally -Students become bored to make reflections after reading

2	-Ask them more questions related to the passage to help extend ideas gained from the passage[T1] -After reading the passage, discuss on important issues to connect ideas with students' real life experiences; Do not intentionally assign students to do more tasks after reading [T2]-Post-reading strategies are given very less attention[T3]-Due to students' demotivation and time constraints post-reading phase is usually ignored; Most of the instructional time is devoted to the while-reading phase [T4] -Encourage the students to evaluate the significance of ideas taken from the passage [T5]-Students reflect orally about the theme of the passage [T6]	Strategies applied to support students to develop more meaningful interpretations about the theme of the text and connect it to their-life experiences	-Ask them more questions -Let them discuss about important issues of the passage -Post-reading strategies are given less emphasis -Let the students evaluate the significance of the passage
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Theme 1: Strategies Used to Help Students Extend their Initial Understanding of the Text

The data organized in Table 4 indicates, T1, T3, T4, and T5 replied that they assist students in doing comprehension questions at the post-reading stage to help the students extend their initial understanding of the passage. For instance, T4 said, "...during the post-reading stage, most of the students are not motivated to extend their initial understanding of the passage." Likewise, T2 elucidated:

We sometimes discuss on important issues taken from the passage and try to relate them conceptually with students' real life experiences. I do not intentionally assign students to do further tasks at home on the theme of the passage they have already read interpret it and connect it with their real life situation. **TR2**

Theme2: Strategies Applied to Support Students to Develop Meaningful Interpretations about the Meanings of the Text and Connect it to Their Real-life Experiences

The participants also said that they implement post-reading strategies like asking further questions about the passage, assisting students in discussing important issues related to the passage, and making oral reflections on the theme of the passage. Further, they reported that they instruct students to evaluate the significance of the main ideas taken from the passage. On the other hand, some of the participants said they ignored the post-reading strategies.

All the participants agreed that they assist students in practicing skills integration activities vis-a-vis discussing and reflecting on the central issues of the passage and writing the summary in the form of sentences and paragraphs. However, as the results from the reading comprehension lesson observations revealed, during the post-reading stage, all of the participants instructed students to answer comprehension questions based on the given passage. Very few of the students who have access to the textbook try to skim and scan the passage and search for evidence. Nevertheless, the majority of the students sit idle since they do not have access to the textbooks. Within the small groups, very few students who can read the textbook respond to the comprehension questions randomly. Most of the participants ignore the post-reading questions available in the textbook and focus on other comprehension questions. The participants assign

students to answer comprehension questions at home. They also did not assist the students to discuss and reflect on ideas gained from the passage to extend their initial understanding of the text. By generating more questions after reading, the participants did not assist the students to interpret the theme of the passage and connect it with the real-life experiences of the students.

The observation data indicated that T1 ignored the post-reading questions in the textbook though there was enough instructional time. He asked the students to do matching questions at home. He did not meaningfully implement the post-reading strategies. He emphasized letting the students do reading comprehension questions rather than assisting them to extend their initial understanding of the passage, give more interpretations for the theme of the passage, and connect ideas with their real-life situations. Likewise, the observation showed that T2, T3, T4, T5, and T6 did not implement the post-reading strategies effectively. Depending on the ideas gained from the passage, they did not assist the students in extending their understanding of the passage through discussion and oral reflection.

When we compare and contrast the observation data concerning the implementation of the post-reading strategies with the reading comprehension lesson observation framework (RCLOF), the participating teachers did not encourage the students to extend their initial understanding of the passage by reflecting on their personal opinions. Using different activities, the teachers did not assist the students in relating the text with their background knowledge or experience. Similarly, they did not let the students summarize the passage orally or through writing after reading and evaluating the idea of the passage. Furthermore, they did not help the students to do writing activities like writing sentences and paragraphs as a follow-up to reading to make students practice language skills in an integrated manner. Also, the participants did not encourage the students to do any speaking activities such as group discussions, retelling what they have read, debates or arguments, expressing opinions, and oral summary as a follow-up to reading activity related to the reading passage. Besides, they did not help the students to appreciate, react to, and state feelings of interest or any other emotional responses to the author's ideas or feelings after reading the passage.

1.8.Discussion

This study intends to explore the instructional roles of secondary school EFL teachers in the application of the pre-, while, and post-reading strategies when teaching reading comprehension lessons. The discussion of results of individual interviews and reading comprehension lesson observations are presented below taking into account the themes and sub-themes obtained as a result of open-coding of interview data. Moreover, the results of interviews and observations are interpreted, triangulated, and discussed in light of the findings of similar studies.

The instructional roles of EFL Teachers in Applying the Pre-reading Strategies to assist the students in getting ready for reading

The interview results revealed that about applying the pre-reading strategies to facilitate the students' comprehension of the passage, the participants ask questions about the passage to elicit students' prior knowledge. They also help students share ideas to activate their prior knowledge, explain their expectations, and let them do pre-reading questions. Several studies (e.g., (Yeni Mardiyana Devant, 2017; Irawati, 2019) reported that the pre-questioning technique helps to elicit background knowledge and has a positive effect on students' reading comprehension achievement. This finding implies that the participants have experience in asking pre-reading questions to facilitate the students' reading comprehension abilities. Hence, the students can activate their prior knowledge and connect it with the text they are assigned to read. As a result, their reading comprehension difficulties will be minimized by far.

Regarding assisting students in avoiding comprehension barriers such as unfamiliar words, the participants advise the students to consult a dictionary. Besides, they help the students guess the meaning of words using prefixes and suffixes, and context clues. They also pre-teach key vocabulary. This finding is consistent with the results of some studies (e.g., Mousavian & Siahpoosh, 2018; Taye et al., 2018; Chowdhury & Ara, 2021) that revealed that pre-teaching key vocabulary at the pre-reading stage improves the reading comprehension of students. This finding implies when students know the meaning of key vocabulary taken from the reading passage, they will be able to comprehend the passage better. However, as the observation data publicized, by generating discussion points or questions about the topic before reading the passage, the EFL teachers did not create interest in reading. They also did not introduce and discuss new vocabulary in meaningful contexts focusing on those new words that were central to understanding the passage the students were assigned to read. In this regard, the discrepancy among the results of interviews and observations happened perhaps due to limited sample size and observation rounds.

As far as the application of pre-reading strategies to help students avoid text structure barriers is concerned, the interview results indicated that the participants supported the students to look at the sources and types of the texts though they did not teach the students text structures. This finding contradicts the results of some studies (e.g., Armbruster et al., 1987 ; Aghasafari & Malayeri, 2015 ; Eliata & Miftakh, 2021) that confirmed teaching text structures could enhance the student's reading comprehension ability. This finding might be partly attributed to the participant EFL teachers' lack of awareness of the value of pre-teaching text structures to facilitate the students' reading comprehension. Besides, this finding might emanate from potential biases that happened due to the short observation duration of reading comprehension classes.

In connection to the pre-reading strategies applied to assist the students in predicting the passage, the participants help the students do pre-reading questions, let the students look at the title and pictures related to the passage, and ask students questions about the passage before reading. Additionally, they assist the students in looking at the title and pictures of the passage. As Phuong & Trang (2021) elucidated the role of pictures is highly appreciated by the teachers during the pre-reading stage to improve students' reading comprehension. This implies in

addition to prediction, the students may also get motivated to read the passage if they have kept certain clues in mind by looking at pictures about the passage before actual reading.

About pre-reading strategies applied to activate the background knowledge of the students, the interview results indicated that the participants help the students explain information they know about the passage and ask students questions about the passage to activate their schemata. Contrarily, as the observation results revealed students were not encouraged to activate their background knowledge (schemata) by responding to relevant questions, brainstorming ideas related to the passage, and letting them reflect on what they know about the topic of the given passage. These findings obtained from observation results do not go in line with the results of studies which revealed activating the students' background knowledge helps in facilitating their reading comprehension skills (Smith et.al.,2021;Deshpande,2016; Oluoch et al.,2023). Furthermore, the observation results show that the participants did not assist the students to engage individually, in pairs, or group discussions of pre-reading questions. In this regard, the contradiction among the results of interview and observation might emanate from EFL teachers' lack of awareness and experience of activating the students' schemata during pre-reading stages of reading comprehension lessons. This could also be partly due to lack of commitment of teachers and scarcity of instructional time.

As the observation data show, some of the participants sparingly practice the pre-reading strategies such as pre-teaching key vocabulary, activating the background knowledge by asking questions related to the passage and motivating the students to read. They also did not assist the students in predicting the content of the passage by looking at the title of the passage. Contrary to this finding, several studies (e.g.Agustina,2012;Azizifaret.al.,2015;Sumiraret.al.,2019; Alfisyahrin,2022) reported that using a prediction guide improves students' reading comprehension. This result could imply that the participants are neither committed to implementing prediction strategies nor aware of such strategies. This situation might be attributed to EFL teachers' lack of pedagogical readiness, commitment, and absence of insufficient knowledge to fully implement strategies meant to assist students in predicting the content of the passage. In this regard, the results of the interview contradict the results of the observation. This might be due to limited observation duration and sample size. If the observation rounds were more than three per participant and the sample size increased, the study might have yielded different results.

Conversely, the observation results indicated the majority of the participants did not consistently ask the students to preview the text by having them read the title of the passage, look at the illustrations (pictures), and then discuss the possible contents of the text. In this regard, Iklima et al. (2019) claimed that the more the students can preview before reading the text, the more they can understand the whole text easily and they will achieve better reading skills. This finding might be attributed to the observation duration and limited sample size. If both observation duration and sample size had had increased, the study might have brought different results.

Likewise, the observation results designated students were not encouraged to state or write predictions related to the topic of the reading passage regularly. Before reading occurred, the teachers did not help the students identify the types of text structures that they were going to read to determine what their purpose should be for reading the passage in reading comprehension classes. This finding also appeared to be contradictory to the results of studies that pointed out raising students' awareness about text structure can facilitate their reading comprehension skills

(Aghasafari & Malayeri, 2015; Ghorbani Shemshadsara et al., 2019). In connection to implementing the prediction strategies during pre-reading stage, and teaching text structure, there are also disparities among interview and observation results. This situation happened perhaps due to limited sample size of the study and limited observation duration of reading comprehension lessons. Hence, the issue calls up further investigation by increasing duration of observations and sample size. In doing so, future studies may come up with different results.

The Instructional Roles of EFL Teachers in Applying the while-reading strategies to facilitate the students' reading comprehension

As regards assisting students in reading the passage in the shortest possible time, the interview results designated the participants to ask the students general questions, and assist them to find the contextual meanings of key vocabulary. The participants also let the students skim and scan the passage. This finding is consistent with the results of some studies such as Azmi et al., (2020) and Dhillon et al., (2020) which stated that students who apply skimming and scanning strategies have positive opinions towards the strategies and their reading comprehension abilities improve significantly. This finding implies that when students develop a sense of positive view towards skimming and scanning strategies probably they can apply those strategies to find out specific as well as general information from the passage they are assigned to read. Thus, the students can boost their reading comprehension capabilities. Regarding the while-reading strategies used to help students comprehend the passage better, the interview results show that the participants assign students to read within the given time, encourage them to read silently, and individually, and answer comprehension questions in pairs and groups. Concerning organizing students to help them discuss comprehension questions and find answers, the interview results show that the participants help the students to comprehend the passage individually, let them answer comprehension questions in groups and pairs, crosscheck answers, and exchange ideas taken from the passage.

When we compare and contrast the observation data on the implementation of the while-reading strategies with the reading comprehension lesson observation framework (RCLOF), it was found that the participants couldn't assist the students to focus their attention on the reading passage and assist them to read silently and individually due to an inadequate number of textbooks. They did not help the students to skim and scan the passage. (Extracting the main ideas and the specific information or supporting details) though few of them tried occasionally.

Also, they did not help the students to infer information that was not explicitly stated in the passage and to guess the meaning of new words from context. Also, the teachers did not remind the students to use their knowledge of text structure and solving strategies like (re-reading, reading slowly guessing meanings of unfamiliar words, etc.) to fix up comprehension difficulties they may encounter while reading. Besides, the participants did not assist the students in using global strategies (like setting a purpose for reading, using prior knowledge, skimming the text, etc.) to fix comprehension difficulties. Besides, the observation indicated that participants did not help the students to use support strategies like (taking notes, reading aloud, summarizing, etc.) to fix comprehension difficulties while reading the passage. However, the above findings do not conform to the results of numerous studies (e.g., Batang, 2015; Haque, 2019; Amina, 2022 ; Bouknify, 2023) that explained metacognitive strategies facilitate students' reading comprehension. These findings can be attributed to the participants' lack of theoretical

awareness of metacognitive strategies. Besides, it can be said that teachers fail to assist students apply metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension classes because of various instructional obstacles that need further investigation. It might be also due to teachers' lack of experience in applying such strategies to enable the students to use them and fix comprehension difficulties at the while-reading stage.

The Instructional Roles of EFL Teachers in Applying the Post-reading Strategies to help students extend their initial understanding of the text

In connection to the post-reading strategies used to help students extend their initial understanding of the text, the interview results indicated the participants helped the students answer comprehension questions both in the classroom and at home and reflect on the theme of the passage orally. Meanwhile, the interview results indicated that students become bored with making reflections after reading. About the post-reading strategies applied to support students to develop more meaningful interpretations of the meanings of the text and connect it to their real-life experiences, the interview results elucidated the participants ask the students more questions, let them discuss important issues of the passage, and evaluate the significance of the passage. However, the interview results displayed that post-reading strategies were given less emphasis. These findings imply that the participants' endeavors to apply the post-reading strategies were inconsistent.

As far as applying the post-reading strategies is concerned, the interview and observation results are consistent in some way as both show the participants advocate assigning students to answer comprehension questions both in the classroom and at home. On the other hand, the observation results exhibited, that the majority of the participants did not assist students in evaluating the passage, extending their initial understanding, giving more interpretations to the main ideas of the passage, and connecting such ideas with their real-life experiences. These findings contrast with Akbari et al.,s (2018) study which claims the role of post-reading strategies in the development of comprehension skills is undeniable. By talking and writing in response to reading, students become more engaged in reading and develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of various texts. Still, these observation results were yielded because the study applied a limited number of observation rounds. The limited sample size can be another reason for such observation results to emerge.

Conclusion

The interview results revealed that the participants applied the pre-reading strategies that would help to facilitate the students' comprehension of the passage. Specifically, the participants apply pre-reading strategies to minimize comprehension barriers such as unfamiliar words and text structure barriers. They also apply strategies to assist the students in predicting the passage and to activate the background knowledge of the students before reading. Nevertheless, the observation results indicated the majority of the participating EFL teachers did not consistently implement the pre-reading strategies. Their instructional roles fluctuate from lesson to lesson. The disparities between the interview and observation results happened perhaps due to the small sample size and short duration of observation of reading comprehension lessons. The full picture of EFL teachers' instructional roles may be obtained by increasing the sample size and rounds of observation. The interview results displayed that the participants applied the while-reading

strategies to help students comprehend the passage better. Specifically, the interview results confirmed that the participants organized the students to read and comprehend the passage silently and individually, do comprehension questions, and exchange ideas taken from the passage. Conversely, from the observation data, it can be inferred that the teachers and the students did not employ the while-reading strategies regularly. As the observation data portrayed, the majority of the participants concentrated on assisting the students to read the passage and respond to comprehension questions rather than helping them to become familiar with and apply the while-reading strategies to fix comprehension difficulties they may face to comprehend the text efficiently. Again such discrepancy between interview and observation results may be created due to biases of data collection from the small sample size of the study using limited observation rounds. As regards the implementation of the post-reading strategies, both the interview and observation results were partially consistent in that they revealed participants focus on assigning students to answer comprehension questions both in the classroom and at home. However, as observation results exhibited, the majority of the participants did not assist the students in evaluating the passage, extend their initial understanding, give more interpretations to the main ideas of the passage, and connect such ideas with the real-life experiences of the students. Relying on the findings it is possible to conclude that the participants were not able to implement the post-reading strategies consistently. This situation might be attributed to several reasons such as shortage of instructional time, lack of commitment, and lack of motivation and interest on the part of the students to extend their understanding of the passage after reading.

From the overall results obtained, it seems possible to deduce that the participants do not have persistent instructional roles in implementing the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading strategies in their respective reading comprehension classes. However, they implement some of the reading strategies infrequently. Therefore, the participants may not regularly assist the students in applying those strategies whenever they require them in reading comprehension classes or other nonacademic reading contexts. This implies their roles in assisting the students to be aware of the reading strategies and to become strategic and independent readers in the long run was found to be unsatisfactory.

To enhance their instructional roles in applying the pre-, while, and post-reading strategies in reading comprehension classes, EFL teachers need to take part in continuous professional development programs, in-service training, and workshops. They should also update their theoretical awareness by reading contemporary literature related to the teaching of reading comprehension. Being informed of the current theories of reading comprehension strategy instruction, the teachers can tangibly enact such strategies in their actual reading comprehension classes persistently.

Any study could not be devoid of limitations. The sample size determined for this study was very limited. This might affect the transferability of the results of the study to other educational settings. Also, the researchers of this study applied only two rounds of observation for each participant to capture data on the trends of application of reading strategies in the actual reading comprehension classes. However, the reliable picture of EFL teachers' instructional roles may be portrayed better through extended classroom observations. The potential bias of the researchers such as subjectivity and self-experiences might interfere with interviewing, data translation, and interpretation of results. All these situations may influence the study results one

way or the other. Hence, by increasing the sample size, rounds of observations of reading comprehension lessons, and the number of target secondary schools, interested researchers can get further insights into the instructional roles of EFL teachers in applying the reading strategies.

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