



Language Teaching and Educational Research

e-ISSN 2636-8102
Volume 8, Issue 1 | 2025

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To cite this article:

Bogale, B., & Woldetensay, S. (2025). EFL teachers' beliefs and instructional roles in the application of pre-reading strategies. *Language Teaching and Educational Research (LATER)*, 8(1), 71-93. <https://doi.org/10.35207/later.1584200>

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EFL teachers' beliefs and instructional roles in the application of pre-reading strategies: A qualitative study

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Article Info

Type: Original research

Received: 16 November 2024

Accepted: 10 January 2025

Keywords:

Beliefs
Practices
Pre-reading strategies
Reading comprehension

DOI:

10.35207/later.1584200

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Abstract

In reading comprehension classes, EFL teachers should implement pre-reading strategies to activate the students' prior knowledge, avoid comprehension barriers, and motivate them to read and predict the passage's content. This exploratory case study examines English as a Foreign Language teacher' beliefs and instructional roles in the application of pre-reading strategies in secondary school reading comprehension. Edget Chora Secondary School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia was purposively selected to do this qualitative study. Six experienced EFL teachers who teach ninth graders were selected using convenience sampling technique. Data collection methods involved observations and individual interviews. The collected data were open coded, and categorized into themes using Nvivo10 qualitative data analysis software. The findings from interview revealed teachers' noticeable positive views on the instructional importance of pre-reading strategies. Although they acknowledged the value of these strategies, they perceived them as time-consuming and instructionally demanding. The observation data showed that the participants apply few pre-reading strategies, such as pre-teaching key vocabulary, focusing on the title of the passage, and asking questions related to the passage. Therefore, the study concluded that regardless of their positive beliefs, EFL teachers apply inadequate pre-reading strategies. Hence, this situation calls up a need to improve their instructional role through continuous professional development and in-service training.

Suggested APA citation: Bogale, B., & Woldetensay, S.(2025). EFL teachers' beliefs and instructional roles in the application of pre-reading strategies. *Language Teaching and Educational Research (LATER)*, 8(1), 71-93. <https://doi.org/10.35207/later.1584200>

Ethics statement: We hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. We take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.

Statement of interest: We have no conflict of interest to declare.

Funding and Acknowledgements: None

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an essential component of both teaching and learning because it provides access to knowledge and information in a combined manner, whether in print or digital form (Sun et al., 2013). It is considered the most crucial skill for academic performance (Chen & Intaraprasert, 2014).

The English language plays an essential part in Ethiopian education. The main objective of teaching the language in Ethiopia is to create students who can effectively adjust to the fast-paced, complex environment. It is necessary to have students who can read English-language materials, analyse, synthesize, and evaluate information and scientific facts, come up with well-considered solutions, and make decisions. English is taught as a required subject from first grade through higher education in order to achieve this goal. In Ethiopia, secondary and university education are taught in this language (MoE, 1994).

Few studies conducted abroad looked at the beliefs of secondary school EFL teachers and their actual use of reading strategies. For example, Khomatri and Salimi (2010) looked into how the beliefs of EFL high school teachers interacted with their use of reading strategies in the classroom. There was some disparity between teachers' self-reported practices and their views, according to the data. Kuzborska (2011) investigated the connections between reading research and the beliefs of EFL teachers in secondary schools. The results demonstrated that a skills-based approach to reading teaching, with an emphasis on vocabulary, reading aloud, translation, and whole class discussion of texts, was represented in the beliefs that were found to be consistent with the practices of the majority of the teachers.

Additionally, Bamanger and Gashan (2014) investigated the opinions of in-service EFL teachers in secondary schools about the teaching of reading strategies. Based on data from the questionnaire, the findings demonstrated that in-service EFL teachers definitely valued teaching reading skills highly. It was discovered that teachers think that guessing the meaning of ambiguous vocabulary, explaining vocabulary items, scanning the text, and asking questions to gauge students' comprehension are the most crucial reading strategies. In contrast, they think that translating words into Arabic is the least significant strategy.

Al-Husban (2019) also looked at how EFL teachers taught reading comprehension in secondary schools. The study found that teachers taught reading comprehension in a traditional way and that most of the teachers who were observed and interviewed knew the names of the reading comprehension strategies and the stages of teaching reading comprehension, but they were unsure of how to use and practice them. Similarly, Çak (2016) investigated the beliefs of secondary school EFL teachers regarding the use of reading strategies, and the findings showed that they believe in the necessity of the strategies and prefer to use them almost at every stage. Additionally, the study's findings indicate that post-reading strategies are the least preferred.

Secondary school EFL teachers' beliefs and their use of reading strategies in reading comprehension classes have not been extensively studied in Ethiopia. Atinafu (2018) examined how EFL teachers at secondary schools in Bahir Dar Town used reading strategies and how their beliefs and practices interacted. According to the study, teachers do not adequately teach their students how to employ reading strategies, despite their belief that doing so is essential to enabling them to become proficient readers. A few pre-reading strategies are tried by teachers. Nonetheless, the majority of while-reading and post-reading strategies are disregarded. Similar to this, Regassa and Teshome (2015) studied the beliefs of EFL teachers at Jimma and East Wollega

Zone High Schools about reading instruction and classroom practices. According to the study, EFL teachers have their own set of beliefs about teaching reading, but these beliefs are not always used in the classroom. The studies mentioned above investigated the issues quantitatively.

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, few qualitative studies have been carried out in Ethiopia that investigate secondary school EFL teachers' beliefs and actual implementation of reading comprehension strategies. Mekonnen (2020), for example, carried out an exploratory case study of the pedagogical approaches used by three EFL teachers in secondary schools to teach reading comprehension at various reading stages. Nurie (2017) also used a descriptive, interpretative case study design to study how teachers handle and arrange reading comprehension as well as how they teach reading. As a result, there appear to be few qualitative case studies that address the beliefs of secondary school EFL teachers and how they apply strategies in reading comprehension classes. In a broader sense, this research paper may contribute to the existing literature that secondary school EFL teachers' beliefs have significant impact on determining the type of reading strategies prior to teaching reading comprehension. It may indicate ways that EFL teachers can apply pre-reading strategies within the classroom constraints. It may also particularly suggest some important instructional roles of EFL teachers that should be emphasized in the pre-reading phase of the reading comprehension classes.

This study differs from the previous local and international studies in that it used a qualitative approach to investigate in depth the EFL teachers' beliefs and application of pre-reading strategies in secondary school reading comprehension classes. Therefore, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What beliefs do EFL teachers hold regarding the application of pre-reading strategies in reading comprehension classes?
2. Which pre-reading strategies do EFL teachers apply in their actual reading comprehension classes?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This exploratory case study is entirely qualitative. Inquiry into a social or human issue through qualitative research is based on creating a comprehensive, multifaceted picture with words, documenting the in-depth opinions of informants, and taking place in a natural setting (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative method assisted the researchers in conducting a thorough analysis of the phenomenon they were studying. Therefore, a case study approach was selected to carry out this study since it was focusing on a single instance, examining a particular grade (grade nine) and a specified number of participants (six EFL teachers) in a specific secondary school (Ediget Chora Secondary School) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Research setting

There are two secondary schools in the sub-city of Lemi Kura, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. One is a private secondary school, and the other is government-owned. The target school chosen for the study was Ediget Chora Secondary School, which is government-owned. It was established in 2014. Under the English department, 24 EFL teachers were on duty during data collection. There were most experienced EFL teachers in the target school compared to the other private school. Hence, the researchers were convinced that the participants could deliver rich data.

Participants

To select the target school, as a guiding sampling method, purposive sampling was used. Since the study followed a case study design, one government secondary school was purposefully chosen. Ten EFL teachers who teach ninth graders were available in the target school. Therefore, using the convenience sampling technique, six were selected and took part in the study based on their willingness. All of them participated in interviews and reading comprehension lesson observations. The reason to choose only six cases (participants) was to ensure that the data generated by such 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. To secure the anonymity and confidentiality of the information, short codes were given to each participant (T1 = Teacher 1, T2 =Teacher 2, T3=Teacher3, T4=Teacher4, T5=Teacher 5, and T6=Teacher 6).

Table 1.Demographic information of participants

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 teachers, with 14 up to 32 years of service. The age range of participants was 36-50. The data signified that they were matured enough. Hence, they could provide ample data regarding their beliefs and practices of pre-reading strategies in their respective 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.

Data collection instruments

Observation

The primary method used in this study to gather data was observation of reading comprehension lessons. A non-participant observation approach was applied to carry out twelve reading comprehension lesson observations. The researchers conducted observations acting as an outsider to the students and the teachers. Field notes were taken by the researchers as they observed specific incidents related to the participating EFL teachers' application of pre-reading strategies in their reading comprehension classes.

Individual interview

Through individual interviews, pertinent information regarding the participants' beliefs and use of pre-reading strategies was gathered. The data from the interviews helped to validate the data from the observations. A structured interview guide was used for the interview since it was simpler to locate and compare responses during data analysis because each participant answers the same question in a structured interview. The interview guide was designed and refined based on insights gained from the relevant literature. Additionally, each interview guide

question was repeatedly checked by an associate professor of ELT in Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. Finally, the guide was modified according to the expert's comments. The final version of the interview guide included nine questions i.e., four questions addressed the beliefs about the pre-reading strategies whereas, five questions considered the application of the pre-reading strategies.

Data collection and analysis

First, permission was obtained from the principal to collect data from the target secondary school. Second, the researchers maintained a good rapport with all grade nine EFL teachers at Edget Chora Secondary School to get approval of their participation in lesson observations. Following this, using an information letter, the participants were made aware of the purpose of the study. There were five units to be covered during the first semester, according to the Grade nine English annual lesson plans. Under each unit, there was one reading comprehension lesson. In sum, five reading lessons were expected to be covered in one semester.

To conduct the lesson observation smoothly, with the consent of the participants, two representative reading comprehension lessons were selected. (Unit 4: Reading Skills: National Park in Ethiopia, and Unit 5: Reading Skills: Horticulture). Hence, this situation was helpful in gathering observation data regarding EFL teachers' actual practices of pre-reading strategies under similar frameworks of lessons and classroom contexts.

During reading comprehension lesson observations, field notes were taken to collect data about activities, interactions, and dialogues made by the teacher and the students during the pre-reading phase. The lessons were not video recorded to avoid artificiality by teachers and to minimize frustration among the students. The researchers preferred to capture observation data by taking field notes since the reading comprehension instruction was going on at a manageable pace. To aid the data analysis and interpretation work, based on the field notes (descriptive notes), the reflective notes were organized immediately after each observation. This situation 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 took 480 minutes. The lesson observation task was completed within four weeks.

The interview sessions were kept to the second phase of data collection to minimize artificial classroom behaviours that the participants may manifest during observation because of prior contamination of data, which might alert them about the study and might have affected the quality of data expected from the participants.

The interview data were translated and transcribed consecutively. The interview transcripts were edited and repeatedly read for better understanding. The irrelevant and repeated interview items and the responses given were refined and polished from the transcripts. The NVivo-10 qualitative data analysis software was used to facilitate the open coding process. The open coding of data continued using the line-by-line coding technique, not to miss important results that could be generated from the textual data. Primarily, the responses given for the first and second research questions regarding EFL teachers' beliefs and implementation of the pre-reading strategies were coded, respectively. The process was inductive and bottom-up (data-driven), moving from the particular to the general (from data to themes), and in the end, the data were interpreted (Creswell, 2014). 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.

More specifically, the interview data were analyzed using a thematic analysis, which entails categorizing and organizing data thematically based on techniques borrowed from Lewis & Ritchie (2003) study. Consideration was given to the identification and reporting of themes that appeared in the data. A thorough coding of the data, exposing the experiences, perceptions, and realities that were communicated by the participants was emphasized (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, the researchers used a thematic analysis of the interview data to examine in great detail EFL teachers' beliefs and application of pre-reading strategies during teaching reading comprehension in the target secondary school.

To maintain inter-coder reliability in thematic analysis of interview data, the researchers first established a coding framework based on the research questions of the study. Next, the two researchers coded the interview data individually and identified themes to prevent biases. Then, they compared the coded findings, checked for discrepancies and reached an agreement on themes and interpretations. The researchers made sure if there was consistency between their codes to ensure validity in data analysis.

In general, drawing on (Dornyei, 2007) the process of data analysis involved the following inductive analysis stages: translation and transcription of voice data, coding of data, and thematic categorization of data followed by a description, interpretation and concluding were made.

For the observation data analysis, a reading comprehension lesson observation framework (RCLOF) adapted from Henk et.al. (2000) was used as a rubric. To ensure validity, the researchers aligned the content of the rubric with the study's research questions. This rubric was not directly used to collect observation data from the actual reading comprehension classes. However, it was applied to compare and contrast the observation data collected by means of note-taking with the post-reading strategies incorporated in the rubric. This rubric was important to dig out and to double check the extent of the participants' application of the pre-reading strategies while teaching reading comprehension using the three phase approach i.e., the pre, while and post-reading phases.

Ethical issues

After a smooth relationship was maintained with the participants, the interview schedule was set with the respondents' full consent. Before the interview, the participants were given an information letter to make them aware of the purpose of the interview and ethical considerations. Then, they signed a consent letter to confirm their willingness to participate in the study. Six EFL teachers who were teaching ninth graders in the target secondary school volunteered to participate in the interview sessions. The interview was carried out in Amharic (the Ethiopian native language) and translated later into English. This situation helped to avoid the language barrier, which can possibly affect the quality and quantity of the expected data from the participants.

Next, after the researchers gained the participants' consent, all the individual interviews were audio-recorded using the Tecno DP10A tablet. We also took notes during the interview to avoid 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 ended. An average of 50 minutes was needed to conduct a single individual interview. The individual interviews started and finished within four weeks.

Validity of data

Verifying the validity of data is essential in qualitative study. According to Gibson (2007), qualitative reliability reveals that a researcher's methodology is consistent across numerous projects and researchers. Qualitative researchers need to document the techniques of their case

studies and to document as many of the procedures as possible (Yin, 2011). In addition, he suggests creating a thorough database and protocol for case studies. Accordingly, the researchers frequently reviewed interview transcripts in light of these academic theories, and they revealed no obvious transcription errors. Additionally, we ensured that during the open coding process using NVivo-10 software, there was no drift in the definition of codes or a change in their meaning.

Creswell (2013) suggests using a variety of strategies that should improve the researcher's capacity to evaluate the quality of findings and persuade readers of their accuracy. One of the benefits of qualitative research is validity, which is based on determining whether the conclusions are true from the perspective of the participant, the researcher, or the readers of an account. In addition to the main approaches mentioned above, the researchers took the following actions to increase the validity of findings of this study. The data gathered from diverse sources i.e., interviews, and observations (field notes and reflective notes), have been triangulated by assessing evidence from the sources and applying it to develop a cohesive rationale for themes derived through analysis of textual data. For example, the outcomes of the observations were compared and contrasted with the interview data regarding the application of pre-reading strategies. In reference to this issue, Creswell (2009) stated that "the process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study if themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants" (p.177). Member checking was employed to ascertain the accuracy of the qualitative findings by returning the completed report or particular themes or descriptions to the participants and asking them to confirm that the findings were accurate. Therefore, after looking over the copy of the study's findings given to them, all six of the participants agreed with it. Furthermore, the data analysis and discussion section provided detailed and comprehensive explanations of the results. Consequently, the results of the observations and interviews were thoroughly explained, taking into consideration the various viewpoints of the participants. Accounts of specific quotes from the transcripts of the interviews further strengthen these statements. This made the results more realistic and richer and added to the validity of the results of the study.

FINDINGS

The study intends to explore secondary school EFL teachers' stated beliefs and their actual application of the pre-reading strategies in their respective reading comprehension classes. Individual interviews and reading comprehension lesson observations were used to generate data to respond to the research questions. Hereafter, the results of the study are presented in line with the research questions.

Results of the interview on EFL teachers' beliefs about application of pre-reading strategies in reading comprehension classes

The first research question was intended to explore beliefs the participating EFL teachers hold about the reading strategies that can be applied in the pre-reading phase of reading comprehension classes. Six participating EFL teachers responded to four interview questions.

Table 2. Codes and themes established from interview data regarding beliefs about application of pre-reading strategies

No	Codes	Themes	Sub themes
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1	<p>-Pre reading strategies activate students' background knowledge; They help students to get ready for reading [T2]. It helps students to predict the passage; helps to connect students' background knowledge with the passage [T3] It helps to activate the background knowledge of students ; It motivates students to get ready for reading [T4]</p> <p>-Helps to assist students connect their background knowledge with the text they are assigned to read; it is also important to make students curious and motivated for reading. [T5]</p> <p>-It helps students to get ready for reading, to predict about the passage; to connect students' prior knowledge with the passage. [T6]</p>	The instructional importance of implementing pre-reading strategies	<p>Participants' believe that pre-reading strategies:</p> <p>-Activate students background knowledge & connect it with the passage</p> <p>-Predict the content of the passage</p> <p>-Motivate students for reading</p>
2	<p>-Believes that reading strategies are necessary; however, there is scarcity of time to handle pre- reading strategies [T1]</p> <p>-If done according to plan, they are not time taking; most of the instructional time should be devoted to the while-reading strategies [T2]</p> <p>-Believes that reading strategies are instructionally important. [T3]</p> <p>-Pre-reading strategies help them to relate their prior knowledge with the text they are going to read; post reading strategies are given less emphasis. [T4]</p> <p>-Believes that except the negligence, pre, while and post reading strategies are necessary; due to time constraints, I ignore the pre-reading activities. [T5]</p> <p>-The pre-reading strategies are time taking since they take 5-10 minutes; thirty minutes are left to accomplish while-reading activities.[T6]</p>	Beliefs about the necessity or time taking nature of implementing pre-reading strategies	<p>The participants believe that :</p> <p>-Time constraints to practice reading strategies</p> <p>-More emphasis should be given for the while reading strategies</p> <p>-Less emphasis is given to the post-reading strategies</p> <p>-Ignoring the pre-reading strategies to save time for reading the passage</p>
3	<p>-Escapes the pre-reading strategies due to shortage of instructional time; devote more time for the while-reading strategies[T1]</p> <p>-Less emphasis is given to the post-reading strategies; most of the instructional time should be given for the while- reading strategies[T2]</p> <p>-Devotes much of the instructional time for the while-reading strategies[T3] -The aim of RC lesson is to help students develop the RC skills; Beliefs much attention should be given for the while-reading strategies [T4]</p> <p>-Post-reading strategies are inescapable; they are helpful to check students' overall comprehension. [T5] -Beliefs that the aim of teaching reading is to assist students to comprehend the passage; Beliefs much attention should be given for the while-reading strategies.[T6]</p>	Beliefs about frequent application of pre-reading strategies	<p>-shortage of instructional time</p> <p>-Ignore the pre-reading strategies to save time</p> <p>-Much attention is given to the while-reading strategies</p>
4	<p>The purpose of teaching reading is not only to help students understand the passage; Its aim is to assist them to become familiar with the RC strategies; It is also to help students become strategic readers.[T1]</p> <p>-The aim of teaching reading is to help students to be strategic readers; It is also to help students become familiar with and apply reading strategies in both academic and nonacademic contexts; when students emphasize comprehension questions they become exercise oriented.[T2]</p> <p>-Pre-reading strategies help students to be familiar with the passage; Doing comprehension questions helps students to be aware of RC strategies; while-reading strategies would help to check students' comprehension.[T3]</p> <p>-Its aim is to assist students to become strategic readers; to help students develop reading skills; to make students apply the reading strategies in both academic and non-academic contexts.</p> <p>-To help students familiar with the reading comprehension strategies.[T4]</p> <p>Believes that reading becomes mechanical if teachers allow students to use strategies; when students try to use reading strategies, they fail to comprehend the passage; students shouldn't know the reading strategies not to divert their attention while reading;</p>	Beliefs about more important notion in teaching reading comprehension	<p>-The participants believe in:</p> <p>-Teaching pre, while and post-reading strategies.</p> <p>-Assisting students to be strategic readers.</p> <p>-Assisting students to apply reading strategies in academic and non-academic reading contexts</p> <p>-The aim of teaching reading is both to assist students become familiar with reading strategies and comprehend the passage</p>

teachers should know the strategies and techniques of reading; believes that the aim of teaching reading comprehension is to assist students develop the skills [T5]
 -Believes that the aim of teaching reading is both to assist students to comprehend the passage and to make them familiar with reading comprehension strategies.[T6]

Theme No1: The instructional importance of implementing pre-reading strategies

Interview Question 1 sought responses to the beliefs that participant EFL teachers hold about the instructional importance of implementing the pre-reading strategies. The assumption behind this question is that if teachers believe that pre-reading strategies are important, they are likely to implement these strategies during their reading comprehension instruction. As the data shows, most of the participating EFL teachers believe the pre-reading strategies are instructionally important. Unlike others, T1 said, "I escape the pre-reading strategies because of a shortage of instructional time. Whereas, T2 mentioned, "pre-reading strategies activate students' background knowledge. These strategies help students get ready for reading." T4, on the other hand, explained that the pre-reading strategies help to activate the background knowledge of students. These strategies motivate students to get ready for reading. According to the views of T5 and T6, "the pre-reading strategies assist students to connect their background knowledge with the text they are assigned to read. They believe these strategies are also important to make students curious and motivated to read." One way or another, most of the participants disclosed similar perspectives about the instructional importance of pre-reading strategies. In this regard, T3 illuminated:

I believe the aim of pre-reading strategies is to enable students to connect their prior knowledge with the text they are about to read. By having background knowledge about the text, they can predict what comes next in the passage during the actual reading phase. I ask students questions to dig out what they know in relation to the passage.

Theme No.2: The necessity of implementing pre-reading strategies

Interview Question 2 aimed to examine whether the participants believed that using pre-reading strategies during the reading comprehension instruction was time-consuming and unnecessary. T1, T2, T3, and T5 believe that the pre-reading strategies are necessary, though they confess that such strategies require portions of the instructional time. Conversely, T1 said, "The strategies are necessary; however, there is a scarcity of time to handle pre-reading strategies." Opposed to T1, T2 said, "...if done according to plan, the pre-reading strategies are not time-consuming; however, most of the instructional time should be devoted to the while-reading strategies." T3 said that reading strategies are instructionally important. Similarly, T5 indicated, "...except for the negligence, pre-reading strategies are necessary; however, because of time constraints, I ignore the pre-reading strategies." Contrary to other participants, T6 stated that the pre-reading strategies are time-consuming (take 5–10 minutes). Hence, he noted that from the regular class time, thirty minutes are left to accomplish the while and the post-reading strategies.

Theme No.3: Regular application of pre-reading strategies

Interview Question 3 was asked with the intention of getting information about the reading strategies that the participants regularly implement. T1, T2, T4, and T6 clarified that the aim of teaching reading is to assist students in comprehending the passage. T1 said, "I skip the pre-reading strategies due to a shortage of time. Rather, I devote more time to the while-reading phase." T2 explained, "less emphasis is given to the post-reading phase; most of the instructional time should be given to the while-reading phase." T5 elucidated, "The post-reading strategies are inescapable; they are helpful to check students' overall comprehension." In sum, as the data

exhibited, the participant EFL teachers give most of the instructional time for the implementation of the while reading strategies. This shows there is a tendency to ignore pre-reading and post-reading strategies. In relation to this, T3 said:

I spent much of the instructional time on the while-reading and post-reading phases since the aim of teaching reading is to assist students in comprehending the text. I believe pre-reading questions are important to give students a clue about the new passage they are assigned to read. I believe most of the instructional time should be devoted to the while and post-reading phases [T3].

Theme No.4: More important notion in teaching reading comprehension

Finally, the purpose of interview question 4 was to dig out the participants' responses to the notion they believe is more important in teaching reading comprehension. T1, T2, T3, T4, and T6 believe that the purpose of teaching reading is not only to help students comprehend the passage. Its aim is to assist them in becoming familiar with pre-reading strategies and being strategic readers. In contrast, T5 disclosed: "I believe reading becomes mechanical if teachers allow students to use reading strategies. When students try to use reading strategies, they fail to comprehend the passage because their attention will be diverted from focusing on reading and comprehending the passage."

Results of observation on application of the pre-reading strategies

Six sample excerpts showing the pre-reading phases are taken from the first round of observation data base or field notes recorded during 12 rounds of reading comprehension lesson observations. The reading comprehension classes of the six participants were observed twice. Based on the lesson observation data, the analysis and results on how the participants' apply the pre-reading strategies are presented below. For consistency, the sample lesson observations focused on unit four, reading comprehension, 'National Parks in Ethiopia.' (In the following lesson transcripts, T1 up to T6 represent the six participants whereas, S/Ss represent a student or students)

Extract 1: Sample Reading Comprehension Lesson

Lesson 1: Unit 4: Reading Skills: National Parks in Ethiopia

Pre-reading phase [1:30-1:40]

Observation Round-1

T1: Good afternoon.

Ss: Good afternoon teacher.

T1: Previously, we have learned about how to write an informal letter (Revision). Today we are going to read the passage. Then, the teacher writes on the whiteboard" Unit Four: National Parks in Ethiopia. Page, 88." He jots down key vocabulary taken from the passage [reserve, endemic, wildlife, and species.] on the whiteboard.

Ss: Copy the list of vocabularies from the whiteboard.

T1: Rearranges students in groups since most of the students didn't have the textbooks.

Ss: Move from one group to another to share the textbooks.

During the first round of observation, T1 tried to pre-teach key vocabulary taken from the passage. This could help students to become familiar with definitions of key vocabulary to facilitate comprehension. During the second round of observation, the teacher didn't apply the pre-reading strategies that could help students to activate their prior knowledge, to predict the passage, to get motivated to read, and to avoid comprehension barriers (both linguistic and text

structure barriers). The data imply that the participant did not exhibit instructional consistency in applying the pre-reading strategies.

Extract 2: Sample Reading Comprehension Lesson

Lesson 1: Unit 4: Reading Skills: National Parks in Ethiopia

Pre-reading phase [9:30 -9:40]

Observation Round-1

T2: Good morning students.

Ss: Good morning teacher.

T2: Today, we will read the passage, "National Parks in Ethiopia.." But, before that I want you to do pre-reading questions on page 88. Then, he writes the title of the passage on the board. What do you know about national parks?

Ss: Wild animals like lions, zebras, etc., live in national parks.

T2: Yes, you are right. What about you? He points to a student.

S: Tourists come to national parks.

T2: Yeah, tourists visit national parks. Then, he lists down keywords taken from the passage. (reserve, endemic, wildlife, species) on the whiteboard and said, " Study the words."

Ss: Copy down the words in their exercise book.

T2: Now, in your groups, please read the passage silently.

During the first round of observation, T2 tried to pre-teach key vocabulary to minimize comprehension barriers. He also let the students do pre-reading questions to connect students' schema with the passage they are assigned to read. However, he did not elicit students' prior knowledge by assisting them to look at pictorial descriptions given for each paragraph to help students better comprehend the passage.

As the data exhibited, T2 did not implement the pre-reading strategies during the second round of observation. He did not activate the background knowledge of students about the passage, so they could not feel curiosity about the text they are going to read. Consequently, they may have confusion about the purpose of reading. In addition, they might not choose and apply the while-reading strategies because the teacher said nothing about the selection and utilization of reading strategies before the actual reading. There seems instructional inconsistency in applying the pre-reading strategies in reading comprehension classes.

Extract 3: Sample Reading Comprehension Lesson

Lesson 1: Unit 4: Reading Skills: National Parks in Ethiopia

Pre-reading phase [11:45-11:53]

Observation Round-1

T3: Good morning.

Ss: Good morning teacher.

T3: Do you remember what we learned last period?

Ss: About adverbs of frequency.

T3: What can you say, Cristina?

S: We have seen about the position of adverbs of frequency.

T3: Yeah, an adverb of frequency can be placed before the main verb except auxiliary verbs. Letter writing is given to you as an assignment. Today, our next topic will be a reading comprehension lesson. Unit Four: National Parks in Ethiopia. What do you know about national parks?

S: It is a place where animal species and birds live in.

T3: Yes, do you agree? In the national parks, different species of animals live. Now go to the desks where you can access textbooks. We are going to read the passage about National Parks in Ethiopia. But before that let us study the contextual meaning of some key words taken from the passage.(reserve, endemic, wildlife, species). Then, immediately the teacher gives the students the contextual meanings of words (reserve=resource, endemic=native, wildlife=untamed animals, species=variety, race. Now read the passage silently and then you will do comprehension questions.

During the first round of observation, the teacher asked one general question (what do you know about national parks?) to elicit students' background knowledge in relation to the passage, but it was not adequate. During the second round of observation he completely ignored the pre-reading strategies. Except for his trial to pre-teach key vocabulary during the first round of observation, T3 did not implement the pre-reading strategies consistently. Such instructional inconsistency may suggest that he did not take a firm stand to implement the pre-reading strategies in reading comprehension classes regularly.

Extract 4: Sample Reading Comprehension Lesson

Lesson 1: Unit 4: Reading Skills: National Parks in Ethiopia

Lesson1: Pre-reading phase [9:30 -9:40]

Observation Round-1

T4: The teacher cleans the board and writes the topic of the lesson 'Unit Four: Reading: National Parks in Ethiopia' and says good morning students.

Ss: Good morning teacher. We are fine thank you.

T4: Let's do pre-reading questions on page 88. What is your previous knowledge about national parks?

Ss: Different animals live in national parks.

T4: Yes, but wild animals live in national parks. Good, he said. Then, he jots down keywords taken from the passage.(Reserve, endemic, wildlife, species) on the whiteboard. Copy the words in your exercise book and study them. You can do it together in your groups.

Ss: Copy down the words in their exercise book.

T4: Now, be in your groups and read the passage silently as much as possible.

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 were 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. But during the second round of observation, T4 completely ignored the pre-reading strategies. Thus, the data may suggest that his application of the pre-reading strategies is inconsistent. He failed to assist the students in implementing the pre-reading strategies regularly.

Extract 5: Sample Reading Comprehension Lesson

Lesson 1: Unit 4: Reading Skills: National Parks in Ethiopia

Pre-reading phase [11:45-11:55]

Observation Round-1

T5: Good morning.

Ss: Good morning teacher.

T5: Last week we learned about adverbs. Do you remember? Yes, an adverb of frequency can be placed before the main verb. For example, the boy always reads the poem. Which one is the adverb of frequency?

Ss: 'Always'

T5: Yes, you are right. It is located before the main verb 'reads' yes.

Ss: Yes.

T5: For today we will have a reading comprehension lesson. That is Unit Four: National Parks in Ethiopia. By the way, what do you know about national parks?

S1: Tourists visit national parks.

T5: Yeah, it is good. What else?

S2: Many animals live in national parks.

T5: yeah, but what kind of animals?

S3: Wild animals like lions, giraffes, and monkeys live in national parks.

T5: Good. We are going to read the passage about National Parks in Ethiopia. But before that let us study the following words. (Reserve, endemic, wildlife, species). Then, immediately the teacher orders the students to copy down the words in their exercise books without attempting the contextual meanings of words.

While the first round of observation was going on, the teacher asks few questions to elicit the students' background knowledge. He pre-teaches key vocabulary to minimize comprehension barriers. During the second observation, except for his trial to make students familiar with a few vocabulary words taken from the passage, T5 did not effectively implement the pre-reading strategies. Therefore, the results show that students might not be fully motivated and engaged in reading comprehension activities since they could not activate their schemata and get motivated to read the passage.

Extract 6: Sample Reading Comprehension Lesson

Lesson 1: Unit 4: Reading Skills: National Parks in Ethiopia

Pre-reading phase [9:30 -9:40]

Observation Round-1

T6: Good morning students.

Ss: Good morning teacher.

T6: For today we read the passage entitled, "National Parks in Ethiopia Page, 88. He then writes the title of the passage on the whiteboard. Before that let's try the pre-reading questions on page 88. What do you know about national parks?

Ss: Different wild animals live in national parks.

T6: Yes, we know that various wild animals live in national parks.

S: Tourists come to national parks to visit wild animals.

T6: Yeah, tourists usually visit national parks. Good, he said. Then, he jots down keywords taken from the passage. (reserve, endemic, wildlife, species) on the whiteboard. Copy the words in your exercise book and study them. You can do it together in your groups.

Ss: Copy down the words in their exercise book.

T6: Now, be in your groups and read the passage silently as much as possible.

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 were assigned 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 application of pre-reading strategies. The data may suggest that, similar to most of the participants, his implementation of the pre-reading strategies was inconsistent.

It seems logical to compare and contrast the pre-reading observation data (reflective notes) with the strategies incorporated under the reading comprehension lesson observation framework (RCLOF) or rubric to understand the extent of participants' endeavours in implementing the pre-reading strategies. Therefore, some participants infrequently practice pre-reading strategies like pre-teaching key vocabulary, activating background knowledge by asking questions related to the passage, motivating the students to read, and assisting them to predict the content of the passage by looking at the title. On the other hand, the majority of participants did not consistently invite the students to read the passage's title, examine the pictorial descriptions related to the passage, and then have a discussion on the contents.

Students were not encouraged to activate their background knowledge (schemata) by responding to relevant questions, brainstorming ideas related to the passage, and reflecting on what they know about the topic of the given passage. Additionally, the participants failed to help the students participate in individual, pair, or group discussions on pre-reading questions. By raising a discussion point about the topic prior to reading the passage, the teachers failed to motivate the students for reading. They failed to introduce and discuss unfamiliar words in a meaningful context, focusing on those words that were central to an understanding of the passage the students were assigned to read.

Likewise, the students were not encouraged to state or write predictions related to the topic of the reading passage on a regular basis. 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.

Results of the interview on the application of the pre-reading strategies

The participant EFL teachers were asked five interview questions to explore the reading strategies they apply at the pre-reading stage to assist students in activating their schemata, get them motivated to read, and become familiar with the passage they are assigned to read.

Table3. Codes, themes and sub-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 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 -They answer 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] Advising 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 vocabulary before reading; Use context clues. [T5]-Pre teach key vocabulary; Advise students to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues [T6]	-Assisting students in avoiding comprehension barriers such as unfamiliar words.	Consulting a dictionary Pre teach key vocabulary Students guess the meaning of unfamiliar 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 students text structure [T6]	-Strategies used to help students avoid text structure barriers	Do not teach students text structures Help students see the source of text Assist students to look at sources and type of the text
4	Assist students in doing pre-reading questions and answering teacher made questions related to the passage. [T1] Make students look at the title & pictures of the passage; Discuss pre-reading questions to predict about the passage. [T2] Ask questions related to the passage to help students predict about the passage.[T3] Students answer pre-reading questions to predict about the content of the passage[T4] Students answer pre-reading questions to predict about the passage [T5] Students answer pre-reading questions to predict the passage[T6]	The strategies applied to assist the students to predict the passage	Help students answer 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	<p>The students reflect on ideas they know about the title of the passage [T1]</p> <p>Before reading, ask students questions related to the passage to activate their prior knowledge.[T2]</p> <p>To facilitate schema and what they know about the title of the passage, students reflect orally on their experiences.[T3]</p> <p>Students reflect orally on what they know about the title of the passage.[T4]</p> <p>Help students to reflect on what they know related to the title of passage.[T5]</p> <p>Ask students to respond to questions related to the passage[T6]</p>	<p>Strategies applied to activate the background knowledge of the students in connection to the reading passage</p>	<p>Students explain information they know about the passage</p> <p>Before reading, ask students questions about the passage to activate their schemata</p>
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Theme No.1: Facilitating the students' reading comprehension

Interview question 1 focused on exploring the pre-reading strategies the participants execute to facilitate the students' comprehension of the given passage. This general question was deliberately asked to provoke the participants' views about the implementation of pre-reading strategies before they are asked specific questions that conceivably offer them unnecessary clues.

As the interview data indicated, all of the participants agreed that to activate students' background knowledge (schemata), they encourage students to answer pre-reading questions in pairs and in small groups. They also said that they ask students questions to stimulate the students' prior knowledge about the passage they are assigned to read. The participants also clarified that 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 No.2: Assisting students in avoiding vocabulary barriers

Interview question 2 was intended to ascertain the pre-reading strategies the participants may implement to assist students in avoiding comprehension barriers like unfamiliar words. As regards such issues, T1 and T6 highlighted that they assist students in using context clues 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 vocabulary (antonyms and synonyms), and teach prefixes and suffixes to help students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words. " Additionally, T3, T4, and T6 described that they pre-teach key vocabulary taken from the passage to help students avoid vocabulary related barriers to comprehension. In opposition, T5 indicated he did not pre-teach key vocabulary; rather, he advised students to use context clues to find out the meaning of unfamiliar words during the actual reading. In connection to this issue, T1 recounted:

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

Theme No.3: Helping students avoid text structure barriers

Interview question 3 concentrates on portraying the participants' reactions to the strategies they may apply during the pre-reading stage to avoid the text structure barriers. Text structure barriers are hindrances that students might experience while reading the passage. Except for T5, the rest of the participants illustrated 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 specified that he guides students to re-read the passage rather than teach them the text structures. T2 remarkably explained that:

There are expository and scientific texts. I believe knowing text structure helps students to comprehend the text better. However, I have no experience in 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.

As the data indicated, the majority of the participants did not teach their students the text structure prior to the while-reading phase. Therefore, this finding shows that the students may not become aware of the text structures due to teachers' lack of experience and commitment to teach them text structures during the pre-reading phase to aid the students' comprehension capabilities.

Theme No.4.Assisting students in Predicting the passage

Interview question 4 was intended to obtain responses related to the pre-reading strategies that the participants implement to assist the students in predicting the passage they are going to read. 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 ask 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 No.5.Activating the students' background knowledge

Interview question 5 was asked to get responses to the kind of pre-reading strategies the participants implement to activate the background knowledge (schemata) of students related to the text they are going to read. Except for T1, all of the participants revealed that to facilitate the background knowledge (schemata) of students related to the passage, they assisted them in reflecting orally what they knew about the title of the passage. Therefore, the students can comprehend the passage better. T2 said, " Before reading, I ask students questions related to the passage to activate their prior knowledge. "

DISCUSSION

The next section presents the discussions of major findings gained from interviews and observation data parallel to each research question of the study. Then, the discussion was made in light of the findings of previous studies.

EFL teachers' beliefs regarding application of pre-reading strategies

The findings drawn from interview data elicited that the participants have positive beliefs about the instructional importance of the pre-reading strategies. These positive views may encourage them to implement the pre-reading strategies when teaching reading comprehension. However, due to lack of instructional time, the majority of the participants do not apply the pre-reading strategies. These findings run counter to the findings of Zhang's (1993) study which says modern reading activities in contrast to traditional materials entail three-phase procedures: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. Comprehension is facilitated by explicitly introducing schemata through pre-reading activities. Therefore, the findings of this study in this regard would suggest that teachers do not let students do pre-reading activities. Consequently, the students do not get opportunity to get motivated for reading, solve text structure as well as linguistic barriers, and activate their schemata to facilitate comprehension. This situation may negatively affect the improvements of students' reading comprehension abilities.

As the findings from interview data vividly disclosed, the majority of the participants believe EFL teachers should assist students both to comprehend the passage and to become familiar with the relevant pre-reading strategies. This would in turn enable them to get motivated to read and to activate their schemata for better comprehension. Contrarily, the majority of the participants believe much attention should be given to the while-reading strategies. They give less attention to the pre-reading strategies. This mind-set would affect EFL teachers' endeavours in assisting students in getting ready psychologically and linguistically prior to the actual reading phase.

Application of pre-reading strategies

According to the results of the interviews, the participants apply the pre-reading strategies such as asking the students questions about the passage to elicit their prior knowledge and comprehend the text. They also help students explain their expectations, complete pre-reading questions, and assist students in exchanging ideas to draw on their past knowledge. According to a number of studies (e.g., Yeni Mardiyana Devant, 2017; Irawati, 2019), the pre-questioning strategy improves students' reading comprehension performance and aids in eliciting background information. This result suggests that the participants have prior experience posing pre-reading questions to help students improve their reading comprehension skills. As a result, students will be able to draw on their past knowledge and relate it to the text they are required to read. Their reading comprehension difficulties will therefore be significantly reduced.

The participants suggest that students use dictionaries to help them overcome comprehension obstacles such as unfamiliar words. Additionally, they advise students to use context clues, prefixes and suffixes to help them guess the meaning of words. They also pre-teach key terminologies useful to comprehend the passage. This finding is in line with the findings of other related studies (e.g., Mousavian & Siahpoosh, 2018; Taye et al., 2018; Chowdhury & Ara, 2021) showing students' reading comprehension is enhanced when important vocabulary is taught to them before they begin reading. However, as the observation data revealed, the EFL teachers failed to motivate students in reading by raising discussion topics or questions about the title before they even read the text. Besides, they did not focus on unfamiliar words that were essential to comprehending the text the students were required to read, nor did they present and explain the new vocabulary in context. In this sense, the disparity between the findings of the observations and the interviews may have resulted from limited observation rounds and the small sample size of this study.

Regarding the use of pre-reading strategies to assist students in avoiding obstacles related to text structure, the findings of the interviews showed that, despite not instructing the students in text structures, the participants encouraged them to examine the sources and kinds of texts. This finding is not consistent with the results of studies (e.g., Armbruster et al., 1987; Aghasafari & Malayeri, 2015; Eliata & Miftakh, 2021) which revealed teaching text structures can improve the reading comprehension skills of then students. This may be partially attributed to the participating EFL teachers' lack of awareness of the importance of teaching text structures beforehand in order to improve the students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, this result may happen due to biases brought about by the little observation period of reading comprehension classes used in this study to gather data.

In connection to the pre-reading strategies used to help the students predict the passage, the participants aid the students in answering pre-reading questions, allow the students to preview the title and accompanying images, and pose questions on the text prior to reading. According to Phuong & Trang (2021), teachers greatly value the significance that pictures play in helping the students' reading comprehension throughout the pre-reading phase. This suggests that in addition to making predictions, students might become more inclined to read the passage if they had retained specific hints from viewing images related to it prior to reading it.

Regarding the pre-reading strategies used to engage the students' prior knowledge, the interview findings showed that the participants asked students questions about the passage to activate their schemata. This would also assist the students in explaining what they already knew about it. On the other hand, the observation results showed the students were not prompted to use their prior knowledge (schemata) by answering pertinent questions, or by allowing them to consider what they already knew about the content of the text. These observational results contradict the research findings that showed students' reading comprehension skills are improved by activating their prior knowledge (Smith et al., 2021; Deshpande, 2016; Oluoch et al., 2023). Also, the findings of the observation demonstrate that the participants did not help the students participate in discussions of the pre-reading questions either individually, in pairs, or in groups. In this sense, the discrepancy between the observational and interview results may stem from EFL teachers' lack of experience of how to activate students' schemata during the pre-reading phases. This condition may also happen due to the fact that teachers lack dedication and have limited amount of instructional time. This may inhibited them to apply those pre-reading strategies efficiently.

According to the observation data, some participants infrequently use pre-reading strategies including pre-teaching important terminology, encouraging students to read, and activating prior knowledge by posing questions about the passage. They did not help the students guess the theme of the passage based on its title. In contrast, a number of studies (e.g., Augustina, 2012; Sumirate et al., 2019; Alfisyahrin, 2022) found that students' reading comprehension is enhanced when they use a prediction guide. The finding of this study in this regard would suggest that the participants were not aware of or dedicated to help students apply prediction strategies. EFL teachers' lack of pedagogical preparedness, dedication, knowledge and skills to fully implement strategies intended to help students predict the text may be the cause for this problem. In this sense, the findings of the observation and the interview were different. This could be because of the small sample size and short observation period of data collection. The findings might have been different if each participant had undergone more than two observation rounds and the sample size had increased.

On the other hand, the findings of the observation showed that most of the participants did not always ask the students to preview the text by reading the title, examining the images, and then talking about the potential contents of the text. According to Iklima et al. (2019), students will be able to comprehend the entire text more readily and develop their reading skills if they have more time to preview the material before reading it.

According to the observation results, students were not often encouraged to make or write predictions about the content of the reading passage. In reading comprehension classes, the teachers did not assist the students in identifying the kinds of text structures they would read or in determining why they should read the passage before reading it. This finding contradict with the results of studies (e.g., Aghasafari & Malayeri, 2015; Ghorbani Shemshadsara et al., 2019) that showed increasing students' understanding of text structure can improve their reading comprehension abilities. There are also differences between the results of interviews and observations with regard to teaching text structure and putting prediction strategies into practice during the pre-reading stage. Such disparities may mean the participants could not translate in to practice their theoretical awareness about the value of text structure in developing reading comprehension abilities of the students.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn on the basis of the findings generated from the data gathered by means of individual interviews and reading comprehension lesson observations (field notes, reflective journals). Based on the findings, it seems reasonable to conclude that though the majority of the participants acknowledged the instructional advantage of the pre-reading strategies, they presume the pre-reading strategies are time-consuming and instructionally

demanding. They also admitted most of the instructional time should be given to the while-reading strategies. Hence, they give less attention to the pre-reading strategies. This situation may hamper the required support that should be given by the teachers to the students during the pre-reading phase in order to assist them in activating their schemata, getting them motivated, and comprehending the given passage well. This situation may affect the students' readiness for reading the passage. During pre-reading phase, teachers and students may also miss the opportunity to resolve linguistic as well as psychological barriers that students may encounter during the actual reading comprehension phase. Consequently, they cannot fully achieve the ultimate objectives of reading comprehension lessons.

As the findings from the interview indicated, all of the participants presume that the aim of teaching reading comprehension is both to assist students in becoming strategic readers and to develop reading comprehension skills. Having such insights in mind, the participating EFL teachers may devote time to support students to read and comprehend the content of the given passage. Also, they will attempt to assist the students in selecting and applying the necessary reading strategies to comprehend the passage with relative ease. Hence, the teachers and the students will be able to achieve the intended objectives of the reading comprehension lessons. To the contrary, the observation results indicated that the majority of the participating EFL teachers apply few pre-reading strategies. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that regardless of their positive beliefs, EFL teachers' show limited application of pre-reading strategies. Hence, this situation calls up a need to improve their instructional role through continuous professional development and in-service training.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that to enhance the instructional role of EFL teachers in utilizing the pre-reading strategies, continuous professional development programs or in-service training and workshops should be arranged. This may enable the teachers to assist the students in enhancing their reading comprehension strategy use in the long run. Furthermore, EFL teachers should read contemporary literature pertaining to reading comprehension strategy instruction to update their knowledge or theoretical awareness. Thus, the teachers can alter their positive beliefs about the instructional benefits of the pre-reading strategies into tangible enactments of such strategies in reading comprehension classes.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

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 pre-reading strategies in the actual secondary school reading comprehension classes. However, the reliable picture of EFL teachers' instructional roles in applying pre-reading strategies may be portrayed better through extended classroom observations. Hence, by increasing the sample size, rounds of observations of reading comprehension lessons, and the number of target secondary schools, it seems possible to get further insights into the instructional roles of EFL teachers in applying the pre-reading strategies.

Further qualitative investigation can be carried out by future researchers to come up with an in-depth insight into the students' awareness, beliefs about the pre-reading strategies, and application of such strategies in reading comprehension classes. The current study didn't address the personal and the contextual factors that may affect EFL teachers' application of the pre-reading strategies. Hence, all these issues require more investigations by interested researchers through mixed methods and longitudinal approaches.

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