

APPLYING INTERACTIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE EFL TERTIARY STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AT A LOCAL UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM: TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICE

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TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC ĐỊA PHƯƠNG Ở VIỆT NAM:
NIỀM TIN VÀ THỰC TẾ GIẢNG DẠY CỦA GIÁO VIÊN

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ABSTRACT: *The issue of classroom interaction has attracted the researchers' attention worldwide since the early 1970s. Educational studies in the field of classroom interaction including interactive activities (IAs) in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) have provided realistic viewpoints about how interactive activities can be employed, and what benefits they bring to EFL teaching and learning. These studies showed that using interactive learning activities in EFL classrooms helped teachers create a successful and exciting environment for teaching and learning, facilitating the students' involvement in the lesson, establishing and maintaining the social relationships between teachers and students in the classroom environment where the learners can discuss, negotiate and express their ideas through the activities initiated by the teachers. In English reading classes, however, the application of interactive learning approach still remains limited in tertiary contexts. In addition, a modest number of studies has focused on whether teachers' beliefs and practices of IAs as scaffolding strategies may help to facilitate EFL tertiary students' learning reading comprehension (RC) skills. This qualitative case study aims to investigate how three teachers perceived and employed IAs in teaching EFL reading comprehension subjects. A triangulation of research instruments including in-depth interviews, classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews were used for collecting data. The significance of the study demonstrates the necessity of applying IAs into improving students' reading motivation and offers a collaborative environment for enhancing students' reading comprehension skills despite some inconsistencies in teachers' beliefs and practices.*

Key words: *Classroom interaction, interactive activities, tertiary, reading comprehension, EFL.*

TÓM TẮT: *Các nghiên cứu trong lĩnh vực tương tác trong lớp học như các hoạt động tương tác trong dạy học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ đã đưa ra những quan điểm khác nhau về cách thức vận dụng các hoạt động tương tác và những lợi ích mà chúng mang lại cho việc dạy và học tiếng Anh. Các nghiên cứu này cho thấy việc sử dụng các hoạt động tương tác trong lớp học tiếng Anh đã giúp giáo viên tạo ra một môi trường dạy và học tích cực và thú vị, tạo điều kiện cho học sinh tham gia vào bài học, thiết lập và duy trì các mối quan hệ xã hội giữa giáo viên và học sinh trong môi trường lớp học nơi người học có thể thảo luận, đàm phán và bày tỏ ý kiến của mình thông qua các hoạt động do giáo viên khởi xướng. Tuy nhiên, trong các lớp đọc tiếng Anh ở bậc đại học, việc áp*

dụng các hoạt động tương tác vẫn còn hạn chế. Ngoài ra, một số nghiên cứu cũng đã tập trung vào việc luận giải liệu niềm tin và thực tiễn của giáo viên về các hoạt động học tập tương tác như là chiến lược làm nền tảng có thể giúp tạo điều kiện thuận lợi cho sinh viên đại học chuyên ngữ học kỹ năng đọc hiểu hay không. Nghiên cứu định tính này tập trung điều tra cách ba giảng viên nhận thức và vận dụng các hoạt động tương tác trong việc giảng dạy học phần đọc hiểu cho sinh viên chuyên ngữ. Ba công cụ nghiên cứu bao gồm phỏng vấn sâu, quan sát lớp học và phỏng vấn hồi tưởng đã được sử dụng để thu thập dữ liệu. Kết quả nghiên cứu chứng tỏ sự cần thiết của việc áp dụng các hoạt động tương tác để nâng cao động lực đọc của sinh viên, đồng thời tạo ra môi trường hợp tác tích cực để nâng cao kỹ năng đọc hiểu của sinh viên cho dù vẫn có một số điểm không tương thích giữa niềm tin và thực tiễn của giảng viên về vấn đề này.

Từ khóa: Tương tác lớp học, hoạt động tương tác, bậc đại học, đọc hiểu, tiếng Anh.

1. INTRODUCTION

Among various teaching approaches used in teaching English, interactive learning approach has been widely employed since its popularity in the early 1970s. Educational studies in the field of classroom interaction have provided realistic viewpoints about how interactive activities can be employed, and what benefits they bring to EFL teaching and learning. These studies show that using IAs in EFL classrooms may help teachers create a successful and exciting environment for teaching and learning, facilitating the students' involvement in the lesson, establishing and maintaining the social relationships between teachers and students in the classroom environment where the learners can discuss, negotiate and express their ideas through the activities initiated by the teachers. It is also noticeable that this approach is seen as a productive teaching technique since it enables the learners to develop their command of the English language as well as foster the effectiveness of English teaching and learning in a certain context (Yu, 2009; Yusuf, 2011).

An interactive reading classroom has been proved to play a very important part in

facilitating the students in reading texts, as well as helping them understand the texts and deal with the tasks more easily and effectively (Biswas, 2015; Ríos-Revoredo, 2017). One way to help students enhance their reading comprehension (RC) is through interactive reading activities. However, as far as the researcher's understanding, the application of interactive learning approach still remains limited in tertiary contexts. In addition, a modest number of studies has focused on whether teachers' beliefs and practices of IAs as scaffolding strategies may help to facilitate EFL tertiary students' learning RC. Such curiosities led the researcher to a desire of investigating the topic of interaction, particularly focusing on the interactive activities in EFL reading classes. Thus, two research questions were posed to seek for the answers.

1. What are EFL teachers' beliefs in using interactive activities in EFL tertiary reading comprehension classes?

2. How do EFL teachers actually practice using interactive activities to teach EFL tertiary reading comprehension?

Together with examining the teachers' beliefs of IAs in teaching EFL reading subjects, the researcher focuses on

investigating their actual practices. Grounded on the research findings, possible implications to improve the teaching of RC at tertiary level in EFL language teaching context and the suggestions for bettering the teachers' employment of IAs in reading classes were recommended as well.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' beliefs

Mo (2020) viewed teachers' beliefs as

“individual, subjectively true and value-laden mental constructs that are of relatively stable results of substantial social experience and that have a significant impact on one's interpretations of and contributions to classroom practices” (p. 53). He builds a framework of teachers' beliefs system including Theoretical belief, Action beliefs, Context beliefs, and beliefs about teachers' roles as modeled in Figure 1 below.

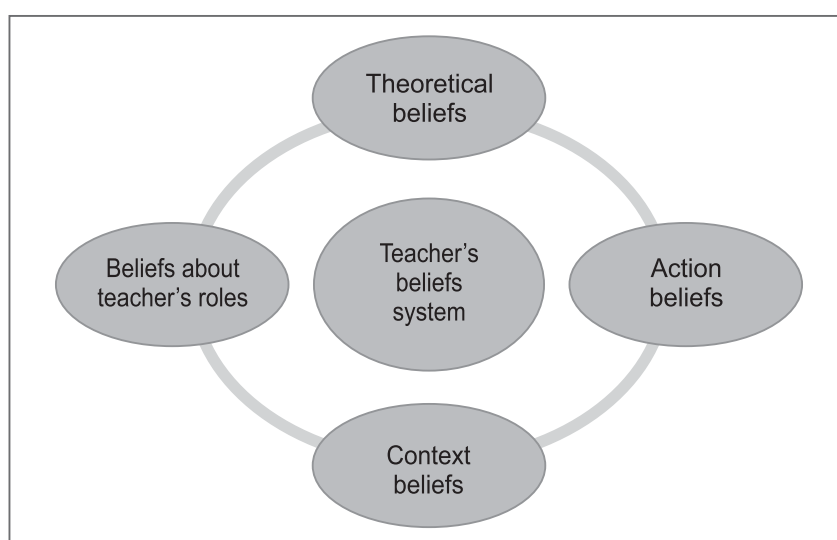


Figure 1. Teachers' beliefs system suggested by Mo (2020)

Grounded on Mo's (2020) teachers' beliefs system, in this study, teacher's beliefs mainly refer to teachers' interpretation or understanding of teaching and learning EFL reading with interactive activities, which helps to solidify this foundation and studies the relationship of the beliefs and practices of the EFL teachers working in a local university in Vietnam with reference to their application of interactive activities into teaching RC.

2.1. Teachers' practices

Teachers' practices may be interpreted as what teachers do in the classroom with

different types of activities. They are also shaped by “the social, psychological and environmental realities of the school and classroom” (Borg, 2003, p. 94). This researcher also emphasized some factors such as curriculum mandates, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, standardized tests and availability of resources as those affecting the way the teachers actually do in their teaching process.

Regarding the relationship between teachers' beliefs and teachers' practice in teaching RC, Mo (2020) addresses four

typical factors that may foster or hinder the consistency level between EFL teachers' beliefs and their practices of teaching EFL reading skills in the Chinese tertiary context: (1) an examination style, (2) the roles of the teacher, (3) working conditions, and (4) teachers' professional development. Some other researchers (Boonchum, 2020; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017) also addressed the factors affecting teaching reading skills. These researchers drew out a number of significant factors sharpening teachers' beliefs such as teachers' professional training, instructional materials, teachers' experiences, students' previous knowledge and language proficiency, lack of experts' pedagogical theories, etc. Therefore, the success of teaching RC skills is affected by different factors, which should be concerned by the teachers in the field. Especially, teachers' professional development, working condition, teaching hours, testing style, authentic materials for the course and students' background knowledge and language competence can be addressed as the major factors affecting the effectiveness and proficiency of teaching and learning RC.

2.2. Interactive activities in reading comprehension

Unlike other language skills, teaching RC is a rather complex task since the process of reading can be done internally and individually. However, in the current trend of language teaching and learning, using IAs in RC classrooms seems to be preferable by the teachers because they may meet the needs of students with different levels. As stated by Hedge (2000), in EFL reading class, IAs are those

the readers use to comprehend the meanings conveyed in the reading texts. These activities are also those which require the interaction among/between different levels of knowledge of the readers during the process of making sense of the text. In this case, IAs are seen as interactional scaffolding activities which help the teacher allow his/her learners to interact and express their ideas, and guide them to become more reciprocal, which is considered to be essential for teachers to manage their class. In the present study, the term “interactive activities” is defined as teacher's interactional scaffolding activities taking place in RC classes to motivate students' participation, collaboration, and exchanging ideas for constructing the meaning conveyed in the reading texts. This interpretation not only aims to express the nature of interaction taking place inside a foreign language classroom but also serves the purpose of investigating what teachers believe and what they really do in their reading class with the activities they design and/or organize to encourage their students' collaboration in reading lessons.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research approach

Qualitative approach is regarded to be the best choice for the present study since it appropriates with the research aims of understanding the EFL teachers' beliefs of deploying IAs in RC classes and their practices within their teaching context

3.2. Research design

A case study was employed to conduct this study. This research design is expected to facilitate a deep investigation into EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of applying

IAs in teaching RC in the context of Vietnamese higher education. Within this teaching context, this study aimed to seek answers to the key issues relating to (1) teacher's beliefs, (2) teachers' practices, and (3) the relationship between the EFL teacher's beliefs and their real practice in RC classes.

3.3. The Research Setting

Within the scope of this study, only tries to focus on EFL teachers who are currently teaching EFL reading skill at a local university in the northern central Vietnam. This selection is based on such representative criteria as geographical location, the development process of the selected university and the research design. The selected university is believed to be representative of tertiary settings where the living condition is still limited, the investment for higher education is not sufficient enough, the student's background knowledge is, in general, limited, and the teachers lack potential chances to update the teaching methodology. It is obvious that although its findings might not be

generalized for the whole system of tertiary education in Vietnam as it is expected, this study is absolutely possible to be conducted in a smaller scale with a desire to depict the picture of EFL teaching in some similar Vietnamese context.

3.4. Participants of the study

In this study, three teachers from the Foreign Language Department of a local university in central Viet Nam were invited to join as participants. Since a major part of this investigation focuses on the IAs used in reading classes, all of the participants were asked for a commitment to follow the teaching reading procedure during the intervention. The names of the participants, as committed from the beginning, were anonymously called as T1, T2 and T3 for the ethical issues with personal profile in terms of age, gender, qualification, teaching experience and majors of teaching (Table 1). With these pseudo names, the participants felt more secure and comfortable when taking part in the interviews or observation procedure conducted.

Table 1. Information of the teacher participants

Profiles	Participants		
	T1	T2	T3
<i>Age</i>	35	37	42
<i>Gender</i>	F	F	F
<i>Qualification</i>	MA in TESOL	MA in TESOL	MA in TESOL
<i>Years of teaching</i>	11	13	18
<i>Majors</i>	Reading, Writing, ESP	Reading, Writing, ESP	Reading, Writing

3.1. Data Collection methods and Procedures

This research was designed in the form of a qualitative case study exploring IAs

employed by three teachers in teaching RC to English-majored students. In-depth interviews and classroom observations were used to collect data for the study. The

first instrument, in-depth interviews with three teacher participants were carried out to collect insightful information about teachers' beliefs of interactive activities in EFL tertiary RC classes. This instrument aimed to explore teachers' personal biographies, how they feel about the ongoing research topic, their attitudes, opinions and emotions about the relating issue as suggested by Cohen, et al. (2011). The second one, classroom observations were used to gather data about teachers' actual performance in their teaching process, which helps the researcher to “investigate the actual event by probing particular subject in real situation” (Yang, et al, 2018).

In this study, twelve out of thirty periods of the whole course were observed by the researcher. Each period lasted 50 minutes. The reading classes were allocated with four teacher-instructed periods per week, which meant that the researcher spent three weeks observing each of the selected teachers. After finishing the observational task, all of the details observed were transcribed. The data collected from classroom observation were analyzed in combination with the participant's responses in the interview. Every interview lasted from 30 to 40 minutes so that the teacher participants had enough time to share what they thought about the investigating issue. All interviews were voice recorded by an MP3

device and transcribed according to the interviewer and interviewee turns of speech. These data were used to compare and combine with the data obtained from the classroom observation in order to seek an insight into EFL teachers' beliefs of IAs in their RC classes.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The focus of the findings was on the teachers' beliefs of IAs frequently used in teaching RC. In addition, the teachers' practice in actual reading classes with IAs were also analyzed. Finally, the issue of matching or mismatching between the teachers' beliefs and their actual practice were also identified.

4.1. Teachers' belief of interactive activities in EFL tertiary reading comprehension

Data collected from the in-depth interviews with three participants of this study were analyzed as the following sequences: (1) the teachers' awareness of IAs in RC classes, (2) their beliefs of the benefits and (3) difficulties commonly encountered when applying IAs, and (4) the teachers' roles in RC classes with IAs.

4.1.1. Teachers' awareness of interactive activities

Teacher participants' response revealed that they all heard and understood about IAs in ELT in general. When asked “*Could you please tell me how interactive activities could be defined?*”, they shared their conceptions as follows:

Table 2. Teachers' responses of how they perceived about interactive activities

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Responses</i>
T1	Interactive activities, as far as my understanding, are activities that teachers often use in classrooms that need the collaborative participation of the students with the support and guidance of the teacher.
T2	Interactive activities, according to me, is the communicative activity between two or more people or groups of people to exchange ideas in the process of teaching and learning.
T3	In my opinion, interactive activities can be understood as activities to exchange information in the classroom environment between teachers and students, or among students themselves.

From the participants' responses, it was found out that the term “*interactive activities*” was understood in nearly the same ways. All three responses shared the same ideas that IAs usually took place in the classroom which needed the students' collaboration in every activity that the teachers gave with teachers' support and guidance. It was seen as the action of acting together in classroom environment in order to achieve a certain purpose in the lesson.

4.1.2. Teachers' beliefs of interactive activities in reading comprehension

Data collected from in-depth interviews with three selected teachers (Table 3) indicated that reading activities should not be done internally and individually but socially instead. It seemed that the teacher participants tended to direct their students to interpersonal learning styles rather than intrapersonal ones, where their students could develop their language competence through social interactions with teacher and peers rather than did it by themselves. The socially interactional aspect was more emphasized when the teachers tried to engage their students into the activities they employed. The atmosphere in reading class might be more socio-culturally-oriented than cognitively-

oriented, since the process of comprehending a reading text is not restricted in individual work but the process of collaboration through certain activities. Despite the fact that teaching reading skill is somewhat different from other basic skills of English in the way that reading classes are often quieter than the others, IAs are beneficial and should be used. Teachers' responses also revealed that comprehending a reading task can be individually achieved; however, this process is better gained by collaborative work, which is proved by the teacher participants affirming that in their teaching process, they tried to motivate their students' involvement into the reading texts by setting up activities for them to join. That teachers regularly encourage collaboration among students in reading activities helps to meet the need of social connection and may not only promote shared reading but deeper reading as well. By organizing IAs such as discussing, questioning, enquiring, negotiating, responding, and critically analyzing a variety of questions and situations, these teachers could maximize their students' frequency of using oral language in RC classes. In addition, social interaction

creates a positive teaching - learning environment, provides a means for the students to have as deep understanding about the assigned reading topics, and enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The findings also

indicated the importance of building a good relationship between the teachers and their students which contributed to the development of the teacher- students' interaction in reading classes.

Table 3. Summary of teachers' beliefs of interactive activities in teaching reading comprehension

No	Items	Sub-items	Participants' responses		
			T1	T2	T3
1	Goals	<i>Motivating participation of students</i>	Providing students with more opportunities to discuss different tasks to comprehend the reading text more deeply	Activating students' involvement into the reading text, Providing them with more positive attitudes toward learning	Engaging students into a collaborative atmosphere as a small social environment
		<i>Increasing students' communicative language use</i>	- make good classroom management; - maximize the amount of Ss' language use	Students are encouraged to share what they know or comprehend as much as they can	help increase practical use of language by interacting with teacher and partners in an appropriate way
		<i>Improving students' social interaction skills</i>	Students are given chances to interact with teacher and partners in different activities such as negotiating, arguing, reviewing, summarizing...	IAs make the RC classes more socially collaborative and arouse students' high order thinking skills	IAs not only help the students be positive in their learning process but improve their social interaction in a small social environment
2	Principles	<i>Establishing students' active engagement</i>	Maximizing collaborative work in reading activities may lead students to the sense of being closely engaged into their group	Students should be encouraged to share what they are reading actively and enthusiastically	Students are motivated to share their opinions, more confident and creative in the learning process which may enhance their reading skill
		<i>Fostering RC classes with collaborative work</i>	Students share their ideas, learn from teachers and peers, feel safer and more encouraged	Students are given opportunity to share their ideas, discuss the reading tasks in English in collaboration with their classmates	Teachers set the collaborative activities/ tasks for students to work in group or in team
		<i>Facilitating students in</i>	Students' positivity, determine their level of comprehension in	Through collaborative classroom activities, students can form	Establishing a strong sense of community in the

		<i>building collaborative learning community</i>	RC class and developing foreign language RC ability	habits of mutual sharing and collaborative working manners to improve their own RC ability	students' awareness can help them more positive in comprehending the reading texts
		<i>Building good teacher – students rapports</i>	Teacher – student relationship is more promoted, and Ss have more positive attitudes toward learning	Good teacher - student relationship can encourage students to share ideas, give responses, guess or predict something new basing on the content presented in the reading text in a natural and appropriate way	Good relationship between teacher – student creates friendliness in the RC classroom
3	Contexts	Advantages			
		<i>University support</i>	Providing enough teaching and learning facilities	Concerning the innovation of English teaching method	highly appreciate the necessity of improving the quality of teaching
		<i>Main textbooks</i>	clear format and suitable content	easy for teacher to use without worrying about the level of difficulty	Clearly-instructed tasks
		<i>Students' efficacy of collaborative work</i>	Students feel eager and excited working in pair, in group or in team	Students feel interested in reading activities/tasks	Students show eagerness and active participation in learning RC with IAs.
		Disadvantages			
		<i>Time limitation</i>	Insufficient for deploying many IAs	Teacher's use of IAs may be better in the unlimited time than in the limited time condition	Inadequate time allocated for RC classes
		<i>Students' background knowledge and language proficiency</i>	Students' low - level background knowledge/ Unbalanced language proficiency between Students are the challenges in organizing IAs	Students whose background knowledge of English is poorly obtained may often get stuck when dealing with the reading text	Low – level background knowledge and language proficiency
		<i>Classroom management</i>	- Distracted students - Noise	Not easy to control students' chaos and maintain good classroom management	ignorance of some students in IAs organized
4	Teacher's roles		instruction, organization facilitation motivation	instruction, motivation evaluation	Instruction facilitation evaluation

The data collected from the three participants proved that all of them felt satisfied with the management policies of the university. Furthermore, the textbook that follows the criteria descriptors of CEFR is seen as a noteworthy advantage since it makes the teachers free from taking too much time and effort to select the suitable reading texts for both the curriculum requirement and the students' language levels. More importantly, students' efficacy in collaborative work in EFL reading class was also regarded as a beneficial factor that may have a positive effect on the students' outcomes. However, as confessed by the teachers, three main obstacles confronted by the teacher participants reported in the findings were time limitation, students' background knowledge and language proficiency, and classroom management. The insufficient allocated time is often seen as a challenge for the teachers, and makes negative impact on students' reading performance. Although IAs are expected to engage the students' active participation into the reading tasks for the sake of helping them understand the meaning that the reading texts intended, the imbalance in the level of the students' background knowledge and language proficiency might hinder the teachers' using IAs in their teaching process. The students' passiveness in learning more or less affected the learning motivation of other students, and, to some extent, made it difficult for the teacher to carry out such activities in the reading tasks. Regarding teachers' roles, instead of playing the role of controllers who always dominated the talking time in class, teachers' responses revealed that they played multiple roles in interactive reading

classes. They regarded themselves as important factors in the process of teaching RC. According to them, teachers are firstly a motivator or a facilitator. The teacher's motivation makes the greatest difference in students' achievement. In the case of present study, with the IAs implemented in reading classes, the selected teachers' role of motivating their students seems to be clearly shown.

4.1.3. Teachers' practice of using interactive activities in reading comprehension classes

The findings of this study showed that all of the teachers more or less tried to organize IAs in three stages of teaching reading to motivate their students' engagement in the reading texts, and maximizing their use of English in reading classes as an interactive social environment. All activities found out in the findings (Table 4) were seen as the means to make students more motivated and engaged in the reading texts. The observed data showed that students tend to be more active in reading when they were motivated to read from other more capable peers. In the observed reading lessons, providing opportunities for students to increase their communicative language competence were the teachers' focus. It appeared that these teachers tried to break the silent and monotonous atmosphere as when students were asked to solve the reading activities individually without sharing, discussing or negotiating with their teacher and other students. Furthermore, those IAs helped facilitate the interaction among the three triangular components in reading comprehension, i.e. reader - text - activity as suggested by Snow (2002).

Table 4. A Summary of main interactive reading activities used in observed reading classes

Reading Stages	Interactive Activities used by T1	Interactive Activities used by T2	Interactive Activities used by T3
Pre-reading Stage	- Asking and Answering questions to lead in - Checking students' answers - Practicing the dialogue - Students' sharing answers - Previewing the reading titles	- Guessing (the title of the reading text) - Sharing ideas voluntarily - Warm-up questions - Pair/ Group discussions - Asking students to share their thoughts	- Guessing - Pre-reading questions - Brainstorming
While-reading Stage	- Vocabulary check - Pair/ Group discussion - Giving instructions - Giving hints - Controlling and assisting students' discussions - Asking students to share/ exchange ideas - Provide students with difficult words - Asking students to read the text loudly - Guessing - Jig-saw reading	- Pair/ Group discussions - Asking students to share ideas - Reading-out-loud - Checking students' pronunciation - Explaining new words - Giving instructions - Repeating students' response verbatim - Team work - Information exchanging - Modifying students' ideas - Comparing students' answers	- Giving hints - Giving instructions - Teacher Questioning - Student Responding - Individual thinking and sharing - Evaluating - Arguing - Explaining - Take-turn reading - Silent reading - Pair work - Confirming selected options - Paying compliments
Post-reading Stage	- Integrated writing - Assigning homework	- Integrated speaking	- Assigning homework

Being aware of this advantage of IAs in reading classes, all three selected teachers attempted to employ IAs to develop the students' collaborative skills. By providing the students with different types of activities for their collaboration such as idea – sharing, problem-solving, role-playing, question asking-answering and so on, the participating teachers could create a friendly and supportive learning environment, which focused on the collaborative community of learning by the construction of knowledge through social negotiation. This finding adds an interesting support in terms of the ways teacher organize their reading classes so

that both teachers and students can play active roles when they collaborate together. More interestingly, all of the participating teachers tried to build a good teacher - student rapport in RC classes. This relationship was not one-way interaction in which the teachers were knowledge transmitters and students were passive listeners, but mutually interactive relationship where teachers played the roles of the instructors, scaffolders, facilitators, evaluators and encouragers. The friendly learning atmosphere in observed reading classes created positivity and creativeness for both teachers and students, which contributed to bettering

students' reading outcomes.

4.1.4. Compatibility between teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching EFL reading skills with interactive activities

There appeared to be less inconsistent between T3's beliefs and practice in comparison with T1's and T2's. For instance, this teacher focused on guiding and explaining the reading texts and asked her students to solve reading tasks individually instead of organizing pair, group or team activities for the students to join. T3 set the overall goals for employing IAs in reading class which emphasized the collaborative learning environment for the students to be engaged in. However, in her teaching practice, she did not organize many activities for her students to do as in T1's and T2's classes. This teacher mainly provided her students with new words, reading techniques and asked them to work individually to seek the answers for every reading task in the text/lesson before interacting with her and the whole class. In T3's belief, IAs should be used to facilitate students' positivity and confidence; yet, in practice, the teacher kept guiding the class most of the time. Interaction between teacher and students was dominated in most of the activities while very few student(s) - student(s) interactions were implemented. As observed, the teacher-talk frequency overwhelmed the total class time of the lesson. Instead of discussing, sharing ideas with others, the students mostly followed the teacher's guidance or instruction, listened to the teacher with little minimal interruptions. and the student-centered approach turned into teacher-centered approach. More than that, chances for students to correct

misunderstandings or mistakes were not routinely provided by the teacher.

Another inconsistency was the time allocation for each stage of the reading lessons. Normally, the leading-in or warming-up activities often take a little amount of time in the whole reading lesson. Yet, in T1's reading classes, the teacher spent about ten to fifteen minutes out of 50 minutes allocated for a reading lesson on the leading-in activities, which somewhat conflicted with her response in the interview that she did not have enough time to organize IAs for her students. When asked about this mismatch, she said that since her students were in their first year at the university, they were not familiar with the teaching speech at the university level. And when they were at high school, the reading lesson was organized quite differently, so she spent more time on such activities to engage the students into the reading lesson with a friendly and natural classroom environment rather than forcing them to focus on the reading text immediately. Teaching hours and students' familiarity with learning styles at the university can be addressed as the hindrance resulting in the inconsistencies between teachers' perceptions and their practices of using IAs in their RC classes.

5. CONCLUSION

This study investigated EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of employing interactive activities in teaching reading skills in tertiary context. The qualitative analysis process exposed findings in relation to two research questions. Firstly, regarding EFL teachers' beliefs of using IAs in teaching reading, the findings provided reliable evidence to indicate that

those EFL teachers viewed interactive activities as important and useful tools to help promote students' comprehending competence. All three participating teachers were aware of the nature of the interactive teaching approach which emphasized student - centeredness, therefore, these teachers tried not to control students in every reading activity. Instead, they created a collaborative learning environment where students are encouraged and motivated to participate in all reading activities in a positive and interactive way.

Emphasizing collaborative working environment as a crucial element in making reading classes interactive, the selected

teachers organized interactive reading activities in different ways such as pair work, group work, team work or even individuality interchangeably and flexibly. What the selected teachers perceived in terms of goals, principles, contexts and their roles was mostly compatible with what they actually acted in practice. The findings also pointed out the mismatch between the teachers' beliefs and their practice relating to the issue under investigation: The major incompatibilities were the teachers' domination in reading classes, the allocated time for the subject, and the infrequent use of interactive activities in RC classes as perceived.

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