
Metacognitive Practices in Saudi EFL Classrooms: A Glaserian Grounded Theory Approach

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates Saudi Arabian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' preferences for metacognitive strategy instruction and the factors influencing its classroom implementation. Utilizing a Glaserian grounded theory approach to develop a theoretical model, the research adopted a qualitative methodology. Data collection involved video-recorded observations of three teachers, followed by semi-structured interviews integrating stimulated recall, and subsequent data verification. Findings revealed that the integration of specialized EFL teacher education with strategic pedagogical practices directly nurtures autonomous learning skills in EFL learners. The study identified effective classroom management and an adaptable pedagogical approach as two main factors critically impacting this process.

Keywords: Metacognitive Strategies, EFL Teachers, Grounded Theory, Autonomous Learning, Pedagogical Practices.

Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language is one of the more demanding professions, which has gone through many changes (Al-Seghayer, 2024) over different time frames. In recent times, there has been more emphasis on the

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teaching of English as a foreign language in a way that allows learners' autonomy, improves strategic thinking and reflective teaching. With the growing emphasis on modern teaching methods, metacognition has been recognized as a key factor in promoting effective teaching practices and students' learning outcomes, a view promoted by recent findings that emphasize the positive influence of metacognitive strategy use on EFL learners' academic performance and autonomy (Talok, Erom, Djehatu, & Panis, 2023). Nevertheless, the majority of the research work has been concentrated in the contexts where English plays a more substantial role and teachers are prepared in such approaches. This guides us to point out a significant gap in understanding how metacognitive regulation strategies are recognized, interpreted and implemented by EFL practitioners in under-researched settings. To foster the learners' autonomy and deep learning outcomes in an EFL classroom, it has been emphasized that the metacognitive strategies of regulation enhance learning.

The present research was conducted in an institute where English is a foreign language, and teachers do not have any formal exposure to MSR, which means they lack specific skills related to planning, monitoring, and evaluating their teaching processes. These strategies, although proven useful in promoting learners' academic performances in EFL teaching, as demonstrated in recent empirical studies (for example, Swaie, 2023; Lee, 2025), and enhancing the effectiveness of teachers, remain rarely practised in these settings. Consequently, classroom instruction tends to rely on traditional, teacher-centred practices that do not promote student self-awareness or autonomous learning.

In such situations, teachers often instruct their students with their beliefs and cultural expectations, rather than systematically applying reflective strategies, a pattern observed in Alghamdi's (2021) study, where many instructors, despite favouring communicative, student-centred approaches in principle, continued to rely on traditional teaching methods in practice. Without an understanding of metacognitive strategy regulations, teachers struggle to promote autonomous learning in students and improve their teaching practices. In the same line, due to Cultural factors, many Saudi learners rely heavily on teacher-centred methods and struggle with independent learning (Alrabai, 2017). Therefore, it is a suitable time to explore how EFL teachers understand, interpret, and effectively integrate MSR into their instruction.

This study investigates EFL teachers' practices in EFL classes lacking MSR training, aiming to provide real-world evidence for teachers' improvement through training initiatives. The research questions are as follows:

- 1) What processes do EFL teachers engage in when incorporating metacognitive regulation strategies in non-native EFL classrooms?
- 2) What are the consequences of applying metacognitive regulation strategies (MSR) in EFL instruction?

These questions led the researcher to discover the Glaserian Grounded Theory (GT) from the collected data of the EFL classroom from the teachers' perspective. It will also guide us on how teachers believe and practice in EFL classrooms.

Literature Review

Metacognition is described in the words of Flavell (1979) as, 'thinking about thinking'. In the words of Martinez (2006), metacognition is the monitoring and controlling of thought. In other words, it involves actively reviewing and overseeing your thought processes. Teachers' use of metacognition in the classroom and later reflection on their teaching is the basic objective of this study. This will cover the teachers' background and education level, which is quite relevant to cognition and its application. Existing knowledge is used to produce new knowledge through the application of the process is cognition. Teachers make use of this cognition to find ways and means to improve their teaching styles if they are interested in doing so. On the other hand, metacognition is very old, and it overlaps with concepts like 'reflection, attribution, perspective taking, and theory of mind' (Miller, 2012; Tarricone, 2011). John Flavell and Ann Brown are commonly credited to use term metacognition in the late 1970s. When it comes to defining metacognition, Flavell (1979, p.232) says that "the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes . . . usually in service of some concrete goal or objective". To define simply, metacognition is 'thinking about one's thinking and regulation of that thinking' (Flavell, 1979).

Likewise, the learning of students is important, and metacognition is an essential, but often neglected, component of a 21st-century education that teaches students how to learn (Wilson & Conyers, 2016). It gives the idea to the teachers whether the students follow the instruction constructively, or they

just skipped it without knowing the main theme of teaching. Metacognition involves thinking about one’s thinking, or cognition, to improve or boost learning (Wilson & Conyers, 2016). In other words, metacognition is knowledge about one’s ability and the process to reach the target with the help of cognitive strategies. Cognition and metacognition are used to complement each other. For example, to help a person to achieve a specific goal, cognitive strategies are used. Metacognitive strategies are used to consolidate the goal, which is achieved with the help of cognition. I would follow the definition of John Flavell: “Thinking about one’s thinking and regulation of one’s thinking” For example, if you understand a text and you want to know whether that text is learned in a real way or not, you evaluate yourself with the help of a quiz or question. Likewise, if students consent that they have understood, then a small quiz or activity can help the teacher know whether the learners have grasped the idea fully. Such actions are cognition and metacognition applied by teachers in the classroom.

Metacognition can take many forms; according to John (Flavell, 1979) and (Brown & Palincsar, 1985). There are two components, which are metacognitive knowledge and regulation, and (Martinez, 2006) points out three major categories of metacognition: metamemory and meta-comprehension, problem solving, and critical thinking. (Metcalf & Shimamura, 1994) describe three components of metacognition as metacognitive knowledge, regulation, and experience. These components are visualized in Figure 1.

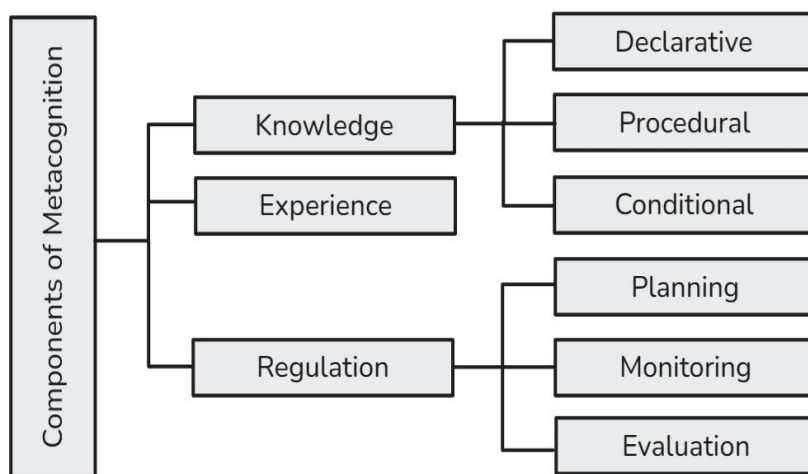


Figure 1. Components of Metacognition (Schraw, 2001)

Metacognitive knowledge or awareness is related to individuals' knowledge about themselves and others as cognitive processors. It helps teachers to evaluate later whether techniques worked or not, and then ponder upon the pros and cons of these techniques (Hartman, 2001). Similarly, metacognitive regulation is a process to guide, monitor, control and regularize cognition (Veenman et al., 2006) and learning experiences with the help of suitable activities to control learning. Metacognitive experiences are 'feelings, estimates, or judgments related to the features of a task, the cognitive processing and evaluation of the task (Efklides, 2014). Mostly, these tasks are labelled to students, and teachers take for granted that they use metacognitive steps to teach students.

Every class is different in a variety of ways. The same method or technique will not work in all situations, nor perhaps should one expect to (Hiver, 2018). So, the teacher is expected to deal with a mammoth task to make students understand what is expected from them in the classroom. It cannot be routinized due to multiple factors. So, 'doing the right thing in the right way and in the right direction in response to problems posed by particular people in particular places on a particular occasion' (Hiver, 2018). In the same line, 'effective facilitation encourages students to engage in self-evaluation and planning, which are essential for developing writing skills (Yumarnamto, 2024). Likewise, (Kan et al., 2024), emphasize that integrating metacognitive strategies into regular instruction can yield significant benefits. There may be some similarities in the style of the teachers in encouraging the students, but one cannot claim that the first class and second class of the day are similar in a variety of ways.

Research Method

The best method to collect data for the present research depends on the research questions, which are related to the teachers' beliefs and practices about metacognition and the use of metacognitive strategies of regulation in the classroom. Exploring teachers' practices and metacognition can guide us to understand the link between teachers' inner lives and students' learning and teaching as well (Hiver, 2018).

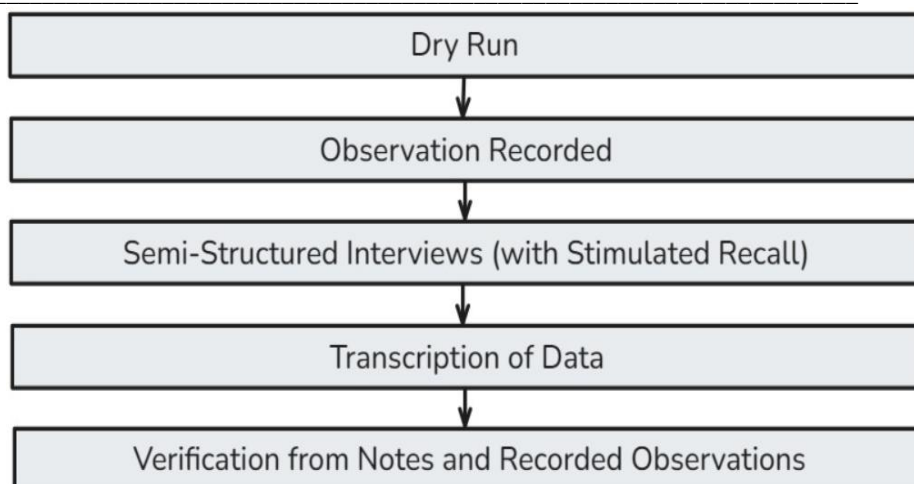


Figure 2. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher utilised three instruments: video-recorded classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and stimulated recall interviews. Later, audio-taped the interviews and transcribed those interviews to verify with the classroom observation to ensure the consistency and validity of the results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). The triangulation is not used as a confirmation or validation tools. Rather, it is used to examine discrepancies between teachers' sayings and practices in EFL classrooms, which is well documented in teachers' cognition research (Borg, 2015). Thus, inclusion of multiple data sources was for analytic needs to explore the emerging category effectively which is aligned with Glaser's insistence that grounded theorists go where the data leads rather than adhere to rigid methodological rules (Glaser, 1978, 1998). Scholars such as Charmaz (2014) and Urquhart (2013) note that grounded theorists often draw on diverse data forms when these contribute to theoretical saturation and conceptual depth. By applying triangulation in this emergent, theory-driven manner, the study does not compromise the core tenets of Glaserian methodology but it supports the conceptual richness of the developing theory.

Participants

To know the inner lives of EFL teachers, the first step includes securing permission (Appendix A) from the relevant authorities of an English-language institution to conduct the qualitative research. Following this, purposive sampling is used to select three EFL teachers due to the criteria-willingness of the EFL teachers (Appendix B) to participate, common

workplace and the teaching experience- ensuring that the participants are relevant to the focus of the study and have rich information. The choice of cases through which to collect data as well as refine the concepts, is known as ‘theoretical sampling’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin, 2008), which is called purposive sampling as well. Purposive Sampling was employed to determine knowledge of EFL practitioners whose experiences were likely to highlight arising categories, thereby advocating the development of a GT grounded in the local EFL classroom.

Instruments

Then came the stage of acclimation to make teachers and students comfortable with a dry run without note-taking to minimize observer effect. Followed by detailed recorded observation with descriptive note-taking of the classroom activities. Then, arranged the interview(audio-taped) immediately after the recorded observation and applied the grounded theory side-by-side by transcribing the data (Appendix C), which is the primary source of data. Semi-structured interviews allow teachers to express their beliefs and experiences in detail by asking them open-ended questions and follow-up prompts to gain a deeper understanding. Brinkmann and Kvale, (2018) suggest that during open-ended interviews, some interpretation and analysis appear by providing in-depth thoughts and insights of the EFL teachers. Analysis of the data by comparing and checking the data with field notes and recorded observations identifies emerging themes and concepts. Researchers frequently employ multiple data collection methods to strengthen validity (Abdillah & Fithriani, 2023; Siregar et al., 2020) . For example, the application of Methodological Triangulation, viz, Classroom observations paired with Semi-structured interviews in the presence of stimulated recall interviews and then verification of the responses with the recording of the EFL observation, provides a solid basis to improve the validity and reliability of the data collected from the real EFL classrooms.

Procedures

These notes informed the open coding process which was in line with the Glaserian GT procedure. This process continues until theoretical saturation is reached. It means no new themes are emerging from the data. The goal is to build a theory from the data, not just describe it.

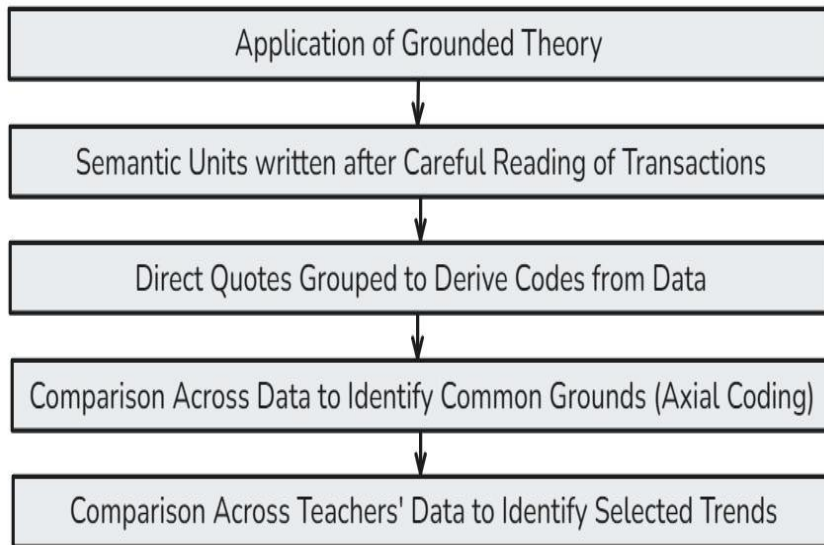


Figure 3. Step-by-Step Application of Grounded Theory

The above figure demonstrates the step-by-step Application of GT with set procedures to follow at each level of analysis. The coding process is at the heart of GT. Breakdown of data, analysis, comparison, and categorization of data come under open coding. Tciihe interview transcripts, observation field notes and stimulated recall data were read through to identify concepts and initial categories. It is observed that where researchers pay attention to the procedures for GT, which in turn may provide a basis to launch a new theory. The disaggregation of data is called open coding, recognizing the relationships between categories is axial coding, and the integration of these categories, which pave the way to produce a theory, comes under selective coding in GT (Corbin, 2008). In this procedure, sensitive or critical cases are selected to improve the development of concepts and categories, which ultimately lead to developing a relationship between these to evolve a theory. To reinforce, the process of constantly comparing the data helps to emerge as a new theory, which is grounded in the data. This process of theoretical sampling will reach theoretical saturation when the cases reveal the same categories from the data gathered before (Corbin, 2008). Three teachers consented to participate in this research work (Appendix B).

Moreover, the present framework incorporated the GT principles when carrying out the qualitative case study analysis. This enhanced the analytical comprehensiveness of the research and aligned the results with the research

data sources (Bryant, 2017; Carter et al., 2019). Using the constant comparative method as a main method of GT allowed the researcher to look for similarities and differences, and thus emerge with the substantive theory related only to the context of the studied domain (Bryant & Charmaz, 2019). Therefore, the application of the theoretical sampling is another strategy embedded in GT objectives that assists in the streamlining of data gathering mechanisms based on emergent abstractions, concepts and categories. This process of data collection and data analysis of the current research study made it possible to facilitate a theoretical understanding of EFL teachers within the context of the Saudi case study. Therefore, it can be concluded that employing the qualitative case study approach with the application of the GT offered a solid context for the investigation of EFL teachers' understanding of and approach towards metacognition in a particular non-native EFL context.

Results

The researcher saved the transcribed data on a laptop (Appendix C) for further reading. Data cleaning was also done to avoid repetition and catch phrases. While examining the interviews, notes were written, ideas which were common were noticed, and certain vocabulary items were identified as well. GT was applied to the data because the collected data is related to human behaviour. GT is the methodology to 'make a knowledge claim about how humans understand the data (Suddaby, 2006). GT was applied to break down the data into meaningful units, and semantic units were formed, which led to further analysis to find out the coding. At this stage, mostly direct quotes or amended quotes are written to prove the idea of assigning the open codes (Appendix C). Later, codes were compared and combined those codes which were directly related. For example, '*I apply TBL and communicative approaches to teach EFL classes. I apply eclectic approach to teach EFL classes. I can teach with a certain approach or approaches to teach. I believe in communicative and task-based learning methods or a combination of both.*' All of these are related to the approaches of teachers. By analyzing and comparing the quotes, a code was assigned due to the relationship that was an approach to teaching in EFL classes. The researcher being an educationist used his experience to assign code for such quotes as Teacher's Approaches. Similarly, the other codes were also analyzed and compared thoughtfully before assigning them. Then the flip-flop technique was applied to look at the extreme range of a concept to explain its significance or dimensions. Moreover, the researcher considered the language used by the participant teachers to

identify any codes. Sometimes, participants use a word or sentence(s) which can be considered as codes (Charmaz, 2014; Cullen & Brennen, 2021). Then, the researcher looked at the time clauses (after, before, since, if) to see whether there was any behaviour change. The researcher applied the questioning technique. The primary semantic units (direct quotes) are presented in Appendix C, which were yielded out of the transcription.

The similar concepts that cropped out of the collections of informants' statements are called nodes (Widharma, 2024). Initially, 61 direct quotes were taken from the transcribed interviews. With the help of the categorization process and meticulous analysis, it was designed to figure out potential relationships or associations. The similar concepts or nodes were reduced from 61 (Appendix C) to 31. Then, the reassembling of broken-down concepts was done, which was named as hierarchical code (Tracy, 2024; Tracy, 2010). This stage regroups these nodes under an appropriate umbrella, which is called a network or a map. Here, 31 nodes were put under the hierarchical umbrella, and nine codes were yielded, which were an axial coding. Then, these nodes were compared further to create selective codes which are relevant to the concepts and past theories. Consider the following Table 1, which contains the Axial codes and Selective codes.

Table 1. Selective Codes with sub-themes (Axial codes)

Selective Coding Themes	Sub-themes (Axial)
EFL Teachers' education and pedagogical practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Academic Qualification of EFL Teachers: ➤ EFL Teachers' Approaches and Methodology
Selective Coding Themes	Sub-themes (Axial)
Enhancing autonomous learning: a holistic approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student's learning in class ➤ Independent learning of EFL students ➤ Scaffolding in class ➤ Classroom challenge and solution
Selective Coding Themes	Sub-themes (Axial)
EFL classroom Management and pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planning and execution of lesson ➤ Classroom practices ➤ Teacher's practices and evaluation in EFL classroom

Themes

To discuss the themes cropped out of the discussion with participant teachers, it is a good idea to use Nvivo coding, which is a quite popular qualitative coding method in which participants are given respect by adding their words into the data record (Miles et al., 2014). Whatever data is collected in the form of interviews is discussed individually below. In this research Atlas.ti9 is used for coding. These five questions with probes were asked from three teachers: 1. Tell me about yourself. Probe: I mean, tell me about your backgrounds. 2. What teaching styles (Method, approaches, strategies) do you believe in? Probe: Do you have any specific approach during your teaching? 3. What planning do you apply in terms of learning of your students? 4. How do you and your students monitor their learning? Probe: What approaches do you apply in the class for the learning of the students? 5. What do you do for your lesson preparation? Probe: Do you do any planning?

Academic Qualification of EFL Teachers (Appendix C)

To address the first question, all three participants discussed their backgrounds and qualifications, which led to the emergence of this theme. Qualification-wise, one participant teacher is an MA, a PhD and a BA, with significant experience in teaching English internationally. The theme that emerged from this is the education of EFL teachers. This can be verified from the demographic details given in Table 1 and Appendix C. Refer to the answers given by Bob, Jim, and Tom (pseudonyms) in response to question 1. Consider the verbatim quotes of participant teachers.

“I did my Master's in English linguistics and literature with CELTA and DELTA.” (Bob)

“PhD. in CLT from Washington.” (Jim)

“BA from Tunisia with a lot of experience to teach EFL internationally.” (Tom)

The above verbatim quotes can be verified from Appendix (C). This question was related to beliefs, which is actually what works for language learning. That is called metacognitive knowledge, which is in line with the research question 1.

Teachers' approaches and methodology (Appendix C)

Question 2 was related to teaching styles (Methods, approaches, strategies, techniques), which was consistent with research question 2. The responses from the participants implied the theme of teaching approaches and techniques, which included sub-themes: task-based learning, communicative language teaching, top-down and bottom-up approaches, direct method and eclectic approaches (Appendix C). Examples of verbatim quotes from the transcriptions of the participants (Appendix C) are hereunder for reference: Excerpt related to the teaching methods as: *“I enjoy teaching by picking up strategies and ideas from different approaches. As they say, it is a kind of eclectic approach.....”* (Bob)

Likewise, consider the following excerpt,

“...I believe basically on learners’ centered approach where students should be given maximum opportunity to participate in the classes. And based on CLT which was my research project as well, communicative language teaching.” (Jim)

Here is another example which is stated by another participant as: “Picking your teaching strategies cannot be your own only...” “sometimes you teach in a country which has its own approach of teaching.”... (Tom)

All the aforementioned sub-themes pave the way to reach the implied theme ‘teaching methods, approaches and strategies.’ (Appendix C) This theme was also verified when the researcher observed and witnessed that teachers were trying their best approaches to engage students. The students as a whole were participating during the instruction time. The teachers checked the understanding of the learners with the help of information check questions (ICQs). One of the Teachers (Bob) made pairs and asked the students to collaborate about the vocabulary items like afraid, terrified, and he also showed pictures and videos to engage the students. This theme is correlated with metacognitive regulation strategies used by the EFL teachers in the classroom, which is consistent with the research questions 1 and 2.

Planning and execution of the lesson

All the participants favoured the idea of preparation and planning which is in line with both research questions. In their views, planning makes the teaching fruitful and some constructive work is achieved in the form of learning of the pupils. These informants pointed out subthemes as under (Appendix C).

The first sub-theme is to plan beforehand, and the evidence is vividly mentioned below:

“...So, obviously, as a teacher, I know I have a pacing guide and blue script of my lesson in my mind. It is always there.” (Bob)

Similarly, sub-theme is application of MSR with students’ need, capability and capacity. For instance:

“Well, as I mentioned that when I plan my lessons, I usually think about my students’ capability and capacity. Then, I design my lessons based on metacognitive approach but what which is the most recent and research shows that this is the effective way of teaching and effective way of learning...” (Jim)

Two participant teachers gave the same idea of planning with/according to the needs of the students. The excerpts of Tom verify the idea:

“Usually, I have to look at the teacher’s book, and I understand the goals behind that lesson. Then, I add from my self, like interaction with the students, like looking at the setting where I am teaching, if ration is provided, if electricity is provided, if books are there...”

One of the participants mentioned planning to guide students, how to learn learning which is quite interesting to know. This helps students to become independent learners. The evidence is self-explanatory.

The videos and stimulated recall interviews confirmed that teachers were fully prepared for their lesson, and they knew what class objective to achieve on that particular day, which proves that teachers use MSR inside the classes as well as before the classes to plan their lessons. which proves the research questions 1 and 2.

Teacher practice and evaluation in the EFL classroom. (Appendix C)

This theme was related to the teachers as well as the students. Mr. Bob talked about teachers' monitoring at length and viewed that teachers monitor their learning by discussing their thoughts with the rest of their colleagues to know their learning positions. Similarly, the learning of the students is also mentioned, which is another subtheme. Use of ICQs, concept check questions and techniques of elicitation are also quite useful to know about the monitoring

and learning of the students. The excerpts from the interviews (Appendix C) are below.

“let me first of all say about monitoring my own development, own improvement, my qualification. My colleagues they are mirror to me....” (Bob)

“We put to use some instruction check questions ICQ and when it comes to teaching skills or eliciting things, we use different elicitation techniques like we use voice modulation ok we use fingers what do we say, (Interviewer gave the work finger count) yes, probably finger count ok.” (Bob)

The second subtheme of students’ learning is peer correction and self-correction, which is in the form of a portfolio. However, this teacher did not mention his own monitoring and learning in class.

“Students’ usually, they monitor their learning through their portfolio which we introduce in our classes and through portfolios, through their group work, through their group discussions and teachers usually, they monitor their whatever their feedback, students’ feedback....” (Jim)

One of the participant teachers gave the idea of subtheme as students centred approach to monitor and evaluate students. Look at the excerpt from this participant’s interview carefully.

“the approach would be really students’ based or students’ related. Of course, you follow the curriculum, and you cannot really obey what the students want...” (Tom)

This idea was rarely available in the class. The teacher elicited from the students different vocabulary items and corrected them; however, peer correction was not witnessed during the observation sessions of Jim and Tom. But, Bob made pairs and gave them chances to peer correct. This question was relevant to MSR, and hence, the above-mentioned excerpts prove the practices of teachers to monitor their students, which verified research questions 1 and 2.

Classroom Practices

Participant teachers talked about their practices in class, and this theme emerged from the transcription (Appendix C). For example,

“We talk about students’ interests ok, or I allow the class to talk about among themselves.”(Bob)

“Sometimes they don’t want to learn. But you try to show them what they are doing is beneficial in the future.”(Tom)

“As far as learning is concerned or first step is that I mean collaborative learning.”(Jim)

The same situation was observed in the observations; all the teachers were trying to provide a suitable environment in the class. For example, One participant was busy talking to one of the students in the corner, and another student asked a question but he did not respond in the first place because the teacher was busy talking to someone. As soon as he finished his talk, he referred back to that student to ask the question again, which proves that the teacher was mindful of the questions posed by the students; however, he did not interrupt the conversation with the student discussing his idea with him. That proved the idea that the teacher had an equal opportunity in the class. This question was directly linked with the practices of the teachers, which was research question two, and it is proven from the above verbatim quotes that EFL teachers use MSR in classes.

Students’ learning in class (Appendix C)

This theme and Theme 03 are closely intertwined; however, there is a difference in timing and venue or situation. This is before class, and sub-theme 3 is to plan and then attend the class. Excerpts are stated below as a reference to verify the claim of the main theme and subthemes.

In the EFL classroom, metacognitive strategies facilitate the process of critical thinking by applying MSR (plan, monitor, evaluate) in classes to build mental discipline (Raj et al. 2022), which is the basis of critical thinking (analyzing, evaluating, creating). Consider this excerpt,

“.... according to my teaching philosophy, I have to have a blueprint of a lesson. What is that?... it doesn’t matter much, bottom up or top down approach if you know what is required and how to proceed...”(Bob)

Similarly, consider the following:

“...Well, I just mentioned earlier when I plan, I keep the abilities of my students in my mind and I just put them in different groups....”(Jim)

“...So, going to the class without preparation is really jumping in the water and you do not know how to swim....”(Bob)

The subtheme which emerged here is that teachers' preparation is a must before going to class.

The implied main theme that emerged out of this is that planning before execution is a must, and consider the following Figure 1: Lesson Preparation, for further explanation.

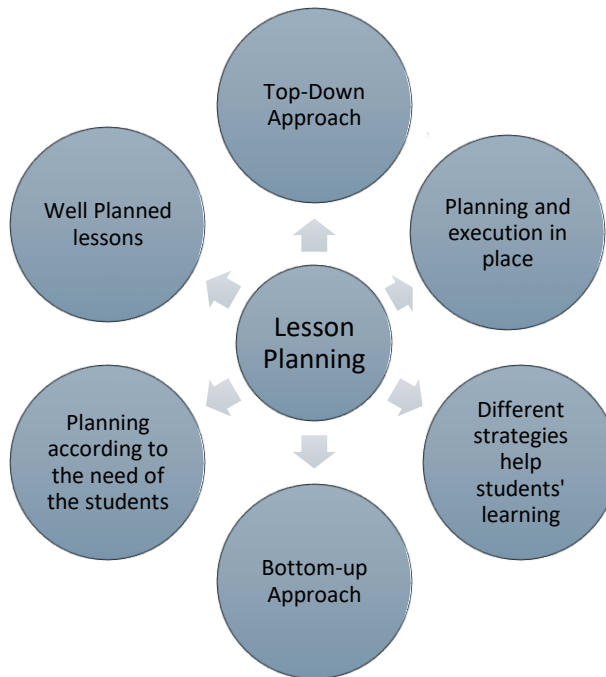


Figure 4: Lesson Preparation

Students were responding to the questions posed by teachers in the class, and this was verified from the video observation. The above instances of evidence are aligned with research question 2.

Discussion

In the Arabian Gulf, whatever studies are done so far are not related to this field of research (Bailey & Damerow, 2014), In the world, whatever studies are available are conducted in a native teaching environment. According to this theory, the integration of specialised EFL teacher education with strategic pedagogical practices directly influences the development of autonomous learning skills in EFL learners. This process is influenced by two major factors: effective classroom management and an adaptable pedagogical approach. This study is congruent with (Althewini, 2025) work, who posits

that there is a strong preference for the metacognitive strategy approach in reading classes in the Saudi context. The difference between Althewini's work with the present study is that the present study focuses on EFL teachers with a qualitative research methodology through triangulation, which is a strong approach to reach the classroom environment. Althewini conducted research using a quantitative research methodology, in which he administered surveys in quantitative form to answer specific questions by the teachers. Consider the work of (Baghoussi, 2021), which is done in the context of Algeria, where she talked about the critical thinking of secondary EFL students. The present research is in the context of EFL Saudi university where the focus was teachers' practices and use of metacognitive regulation strategies in the EFL classroom. Similarly, the work of (Alghamdi, 2021) is congruent with the present study. For example, the present research and the work of Alghamdi is in the context of a Saudi university, and both researchers targeted the EFL teachers. Nevertheless, Alghamdi used a mixed method to know EFL teachers' approaches to communicative language teaching, but the present research focuses on EFL teachers' beliefs about metacognition and practices of metacognitive regulation strategies in EFL classes with a qualitative method. This makes the present work unique, and it requires investigation to explore EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in EFL classes. Similarly, the findings of Dehham et al. (2025) prove that improving students' writing performance requires metacognitive awareness of university students in language learning. The stated research work is relevant to the present research in multiple ways, as it is related to the EFL context, and the researched context is a university in Iraq. This work is related to students' writing performance, which can be improved with the metacognitive awareness of language learning. Nevertheless, the present research is related to the metacognitive awareness of EFL teachers and how they apply this awareness in the EFL classroom. This proves the novelty of the present research; therefore, it requires investigation to explore the MSR of EFL teachers.

On the basis of the above discussions, it is evident that the present research distinguishes itself from the past studies. It offers a unique exploration of metacognitive regulation strategies used by the EFL teachers and makes a novel contribution to the existing literature. For this study, only three teachers were included, which does not permit generalization of the theory. This implication may be improved by increasing the number of teachers. Applying GT on the data directly gathered from the EFL classroom allows researchers to generate context-specific, evidence-based theory that

reflects actual EFL teaching practices and cultural realities rather than enforcing external infrastructure. It helps to identify that teachers prefer metacognition in their classes; however, they are not familiar with the terms of metacognition, for example, metacognitive knowledge, experience and regulations. This may be improved by providing professional development programmes in which these terms are used to make them familiar.

Conclusion

The theory that emerged from the data is: An Infrastructure for Fostering Autonomous EFL Learning in the EFL Classroom. If applied with careful precautions, it may nurture the environment for learning. As a result, students will learn autonomously. The present study was conducted in an EFL institute where only male teachers were available, which implies that generalizability is in question. As a future perspective, it will be quite useful if the present research is improved by taking female teachers on board to improve generalizability.

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Participant Consent: The authors confirm that Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was duly maintained.

Data Fabrication/Falsification Statement: The author(s) declare that no data have been fabricated, falsified, or manipulated in this study.

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Appendix A: Formal Permission for Data Collection




The Vice Dean
English Language Institute
University of Jeddah
Saudi Arabia
Subject: Application for the permission to collect data for PhD

Respected Sir


I request your permission to collect data for a research study at ELI UJ. I am a research student at the University of Malaysia Sarawak and currently working on my final thesis. I want to conduct a study titled: "EFL Teachers Beliefs and Practices With the Help of Metacognitive Strategies of Application".

I anticipate ELI UJ administration will allow me to collect data from teachers. The data will be conducted with the help of in-class videos which will be followed by interviews. The whole process will be anonymous. There will be no cost for this process and in return the results out of this research may be used for the development of the teachers.

I shall be grateful if you put your signature and stamp below for the grant of formal approval.

Yours faithfully,

Ejaz Ahmed Meer Mohammad
English Language Teacher

Approved by:

Signature: 

Appendix B: Consent Form

Study Title: Metacognitive Reflections from EFL Classrooms: A Glaserian Grounded Theory in a Saudi University Perspective

Investigator: Ejaz Ahmed

Purpose of the Study: How metacognitive regulation strategies are recognized, interpreted and implemented by EFL practitioners in an EFL institute.

Procedures: A Qualitative approach will be used to collect data through triangulation: peer observation, semi-structured interviews in the presence of stimulated recall interviews, and verification of the data

Risks and Benefits: Participants may feel inhibited, and they might feel the data collected in this research will be used against them. For that purpose, pseudonyms will be used to hide their information. Moreover, participants will be updated about the risk-free research process. The information gathered will be used only for academic purposes and will not be shared with any third party to avoid risks.

Confidentiality: The data collected will be password-protected on my laptop and will be used only for this research.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this research is purely voluntary, and one can withdraw from this procedure at any time during data collection without penalty.

Data Use: This data will be used for academic purposes only.

Contact Information: Name: Ejaz Ahmed | E-mail: u2ejaz@gmail.com | 16010164@siswa.unimas.my

Consent: I have read and understood the information provided above. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw from the study at any time. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant Signature Date: _____

Investigator Signature Date: _____

Ejaz Ahmed

Appendix C: Application of Grounded Theory on Data Transcription and Emergence of Axial Codes with Sub-themes(codes)

Axial Coding Themes	Sub-themes
Academic Qualifications of EFL Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Master's in English linguistics and literature with CELTA and DELTA○ MPhil in Applied Linguistics from Delhi.

<p>EFL Teachers' Approaches and Methodology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PhD. in CLT from Washington ○ I apply TBL and communicative approaches to teach EFL classes. ○ I apply an eclectic approach to teach EFL classes. ○ I believe in communicative and task-based learning methods or a combination of both. ○ I have the ability to adapt according to the situation (learner-based approach/ communicative language teaching (CLT)). ○ I follow result-oriented teaching. ○ I believe that the teacher's role should be a moderator in the class. ○ I do not have any specific teaching style or design.
<p>Planning and Execution of Lessons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I plan the lesson to address the needs of the students. ○ I can approach my teaching with the help of teaching tools for example, grammar, listening, languages and system, vocabulary. ○ I have the capacity to plan according to the needs, capacity and capability of learners to apply MSR. ○ I divide them into groups, and I use different patterns. ○ I believe in a lesson plan or an approach like test-teach-test. ○ I do not want to consider myself fixed on a wall that I am a language teacher.
<p>Classroom Pedagogical Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I follow a communicative approach. ○ In fact, there is no method or technique, I mean, I can't say that I apply this technique or that technique, it depends on the level of students. ○ I can go for a certain level of training or for students. ○ I plan and free teaching state is always based on a schema. ○ I follow to extract the previous knowledge ○ I follow the technique of repetition, then to reproduce and finally, reproduce.
<p>Teachers' practice and evaluation in the EFL Classroom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I monitor and check instructions with instruction check questions ICQ ○ I apply teaching skills or elicit things with the help of voice modulation. ○ I do corrections in portfolio work. ○ I apply an eclectic approach with (sub-theme) peer correction, learning, and discussion with the student about what to study to consolidate the idea.
<p>Students' Learning in class</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I follow the approach that would be student-based or related.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Practice is a must. Practice makes the man perfect.○ Correction is a collaborative work○ Specific Group formation and peer correction under the teacher's supervision to make ss independent learners.○ So there is a particular strategy in grouping them.
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