

English Language Teachers' Cognitions and Practices of Social Constructivist Pedagogic Principles: Grade 12 Preparatory Schools English Classes in Focus

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to investigate EFL teachers' cognitions' and practices of social constructivist principles for students' better English language achievement. To do so, 13 secondary schools from East Wollega Zone and Nekemte administrative town were selected randomly. Descriptive research design with mixed method research was used as the study contained both quantitative and qualitative data. Questionnaire, observation and focus group discussion were used to collect data. Quantitative data were analyzed by using SPSS version 20, and qualitative data were analyzed qualitatively in which narrations of the findings were applied. The findings depicted that teachers had awareness about the social constructivist principles and viewed the importance of the principles. However, their practice of the principles was relatively low indicating that teachers had favorable cognition to the principles and could not practice the principles as per the contents curriculum because of many factors. Some among other core problems respondent teachers listed were: limited background knowledge of the students, the complex nature of contents to comprehend, students brought up to upper grade levels without developing the habit of naturalizing English language construction practices, lack of habit of doing in group aimed at cooperation rather than waiting for teachers' presentation, bulky contents of the textbook, and many more reasons were listed. Regarding cognition differences in teaching experience, there were mean differences among teachers in their cognition of SCP, but the differences were not statistically significant. Based on these findings, it was inferred that the curriculum was designed without feasibility investigation and hence it could not be implemented as intended to bear effect on students' English language achievement. Therefore, concerned bodies should revisit the curriculum.

Key words: Constructivism; Teacher cognition; practice; social constructivist principles; teaching experience; classroom context

INTRODUCTION

English language teaching (ELT) has gone through lots of changes and evolutionary developments for students' better English language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). These changes in EFL are predominantly characterized by changes in methods of teaching and learning based up on assumptions of language teaching and learning. This is because it is a sound teaching method corresponding to the existing assumptions and beliefs that can result in better language achievement (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Until about 1960s, grammar translation method (in which the belief of language learning is largely an intellectual process of studying and memorizing bilingual vocabulary lists and explicit grammar rules), and audio-lingual method (which drew from behaviorist theory of learning whereby the emphasis has been forming habit through repeated practices followed by reward) were dominant in foreign language pedagogy (Candlin & Mercer, 2001; Johnson, 2004).

Later after 1960s, Candlin and Mercer (2001) stated that studies were conducted in different comers of the world on effective method of teaching comparing different methods and came up with almost insignificant difference. And again studies, constituted teachers themselves, conducted on localized and natural way of learning (involving learners in tasks based on the societal situation and contents vivid to their culture, modifying the curriculum and method according to the learners' interest and ability) than global method of teaching. The study result showed better achievement (Candlin & Mercer, 2001). Consequently, curriculum that bases the social and cultural realities supported by appropriate method of teaching in which active involvement of students could be reflected is called for.

In connection to this, Castro (2013) states the need foreffective strategies of teaching EFL/ESL stressing that English is foreign to both learners and teachers. Teaching EFL requires a curriculum contents that invite students' active involvement of language use, and a principle that constituted varieties of techniques and procedures which in turn accommodate learning needs and styles of students than just confined to method concept advocacy (Borg, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). One means that suit this variety is constructivist pedagogic principles

that are attentive to social, cognitive and psychological variables more comprehensibly than the narrower pedagogy like behaviorism relatively.

Prabhu (1990), in support of this concept, also strengthens the balanced view of eclectic approach to one method preference since the late 1990s for it accommodates many styles of learning. Eclectic approach allows teachers to assemble the effective elements from many methods that really work in the classroom. For example, a little total physical response is a great warm-up activity; a little prose translation is often a welcome relief from guided conversation in the target language; a five-minute session of target-language only can give students a sense of true accomplishment (Castro, 2013, p.100). EFL teaching is successful if teachers make use of the general principles of social constructivist pedagogy whereby students of varied learning styles and language backgrounds can work together and develop mutual practice (Prabhu, 1990). The Ethiopian education curriculum and teaching has a shortfall of such kind as shared vision, debates, interaction and language construction skills based on the social and cultural reality of the students, and hence recommended social re-construction to be developed.

Following this, a social constructivist principle to teaching and learning English is recently advocated. Social constructivism is one of the strands of constructivist theory that focuses on the assumption that learning is a social process (McMahon, 1997). It dictates the significance of something, the understanding about it and the meaning one attached to it which are developed in accordance with other human beings (the society in which one lives). Two common elements reflect social constructivism: i) the assumption that human beings rationalize their experience by creating the model of the social world and the way it functions; ii) the belief in language as the most essential system through which humans construct reality (Amineh, & Asl, 2015).

Kim (2001) also puts three basic assumptions of social constructivist theory. The first assumption dictates that reality does not exist in advance rather it is constructed through human activity. The second assumption is source of knowledge. In this perspective, knowledge is socially and culturally constructed. Individuals create meaning when they interact with each

other about the culture and the environment in which they live (Kim, 2001; Prat & Folder, 1994). And the third one is meaning attached to learning. In this assumption, learning is a social process. Meaningful learning occurs when pupils engage in social activities like interaction, debate, negotiation and collaboration.

When summarized, proponents of social constructivist pedagogy acknowledge the use of teaching methods imbedded in different principles. Some among other methods, which Nunan (2003); Richards and Rodgers (2001) called methods, derived from the social constructivist perspective are content based, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and task based. Furthermore, brainstorming, dialogue, explaining, challenging, learning-to-learn strategies through problem solving, guiding students to generate questions, summaries and analogies in reading and listening skills, predictions, real life tasks, and holistic content presentation are powerful SC learning techniques (Brown, 1994; Brown & Campione, 1994; Christie, 2005). Hence effective learning is linked to interaction with knowledgeable others and background knowledge about the culture of the world where teachers are given the role of facilitator (McMahon, 1997).

In countries like Ethiopia where English is foreign, ample opportunities should be given to students in the classroom as classroom is almost the only option to converse be it in classroom talk or extended discourse regardless of the pressure of their mother tongue (Allhyar & Nazari, 2012). Once the science behind the role of SCP for students' better English language learning is advocated by proponents, the next thing to be considered is teachers' cognition (knowledge and view) and their extent of practice.

What teachers implement/practice in the actual classroom depends on their cognition. That is why teacher cognition research has becoming the dominant focus of research in teacher education since 1980s (Borg, 2003; Hermagustiana, 2017). That is, teachers are highly influenced by their cognition which reflects their ideas, their views of the world, and their values and conceptions of their environment. It is fact that teachers bring the cognition they have about the nature of teaching and learning to the actual classroom teaching, and these cognitions directly interact with the content and the pedagogy of teaching which, in turn,

influences what and how they teach (Borg, 2006). How teachers have seen and understood and experienced the teaching learning process is an important problem in teaching and learning processes as their cognition affects the subsequent action (Borg, 2003). Hence EFL teacher cognition to the contents, tasks, activities and methods of teaching the curriculum composed of determines their practice. That is, teachers' knowledge and views to SCP on which the Ethiopian English language curriculum is based determines the fate the educational quality.

It is common that curriculum is designed by curriculum designers, and teachers are not directly involving in the design, but they should know the designed curriculum well (Nation & Macalister, 2010). "Teachers need to develop an awareness of the parts of the curriculum design process, the range of options that are available, and the principles that can guide the application of the process and the choice of options" (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 197). The curriculum is usually designed at center, which is true in Ethiopian as well. To do so, situational analysis should be taken into account. On condition that curriculum needs adjustment for the learners, teachers should be aware of and capable of shaping the course book content and teach accordingly. As to Nation and Macalister (2010), experienced teachers have no difficulty of analyzing this situation except that they may be reluctant to try new things or may not consider trying new things. Teachers are, therefore, expected to have the knowledge of the curriculum components, contents and procedures as that of the designers since the design without the implementation by the baseline practitioners is useless.

This shows that teachers shoulder great responsibility in provision of quality education. They are expected to be resourceful in their language command, pedagogic skill and curriculum practice. In support of this concept, MOE (2015, p.57) asserts that, "The largest barrier to effective implementation of the revised curriculum is lack of pedagogical skills amongst teachers". In this study therefore, the extent to which teachers teach by matching the curriculum of the target grade level and methods of teaching the textbook deserves to apply will be given due attention. Therefore, since the social constructivist principles largely account for teachers' level of understanding and practices and students' active involvement in language construction, it could be sound to see the current status of the existing EFL teachers' cognition and practices in the lens of social constructivist pedagogic principles. However, the definition

of cognition is beyond the scope of the study the study. Borg (2003, 2006) uses the term teacher cognition to refer to what teachers think, know, perceive, and the beliefs they have to theories, assumptions and conceptions for decision-making towards their actual performances and practices in a specific context. Therefore, EFL teachers' cognition in this study was delimited to teachers' knowledge and the view they have to the SCP

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. Descriptive survey research design is a common design in educational research because it describes the attitudes, opinions, practices, behaviors and characteristics of the sample population or the entire population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2012). It is also mainly selected since descriptive survey research design is used to determine the individual's views and practice about policy issues.

Descriptive research design is concerned with specific predictions with narration of facts and characteristics describing a particular individual or a group or a situation (Kothari, 2004; Cohen, et al., 2007). According to this source, descriptive research design is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist; practices that prevail; beliefs, points of views, or attitudes that are held; processes that are going on; effects that are being felt, or trends that are developing. This description suits the study objectives. Hence, the study investigated teachers' cognition in terms of knowledge they have, the way they view SCP principles, and the extent to which they practice as per the methods of teaching supposed to use in grade 12 English textbook. Therefore, descriptive survey design was chosen.

Mixed method research that incorporates quantitative and qualitative methods was utilized. The data collected from both quantitative and qualitative sources have better amenability than single type in that it plays the triangulation role. "The basic assumption is that, the uses of both quantitative and qualitative methods, in combination, provide a better understanding of the research problems and questions than either method by itself" (Creswell, 2012, p. 535). It also helps to reach audience that would not be sympathetic to one method (either quantitative or

qualitative) if applied alone; it has the role of verifying one set of finding against the other, and it enables comprehensive understanding of complex matters looking at it from different angles (Dornyei, 2007, p,164).

The study participants were grade 12 English language teachers of 13 secondary schools from the total of 22 schools. The schools were Gatama, Arjo, GiddaAyana, Limmu, HaroLimmu, Hinde, Gute, Moxe, Jare, Diga, Balo, Kiramu and Nekemte secondary schools of East Wollega Zone andNekemte Administrative Town, Oromiya, Ethiopia.Random sampling technique was used to select these schools. This selection went through a series of steps. First the print copy of lists of schools having grade 12 were taken from the Zone and the Town education offices. Next, grade 12 teachers currently teaching English and who taught grade 12 in the nearest three years to the time of data collection were selected from schools directors through phone call and data collectors and involved in the study.

As it has been stated above, quantitative data survey needs large data with a minimum of 31 participants (Field, 2009. To this end, 13(59.09%) schools were selected randomly (lottery method) and participated in the study. Survey study needs probability sampling. However, since the number of teachers who teach English grade 12 one school in a study area is commonly few, available teachers (if not all) were included (Kothari, 2004). That is, availability sampling was used to select teachers in sample schools.

Three instruments (questionnaire, focus group discussion and observation) were used to collect data. Questionnaires, though do not have write or wrong answers like aptitude tests or classroom tests, elicit information about respondents' knowledge, opinion and practice in a non-evaluative manner regardless of any set criteria (Dornyei, 2007). Hence likert scale type questions that trigger relevant concepts about teachers' cognition and self-perceived practices about the social constructivist pedagogy were designed by the researcher reviewing related literature based on Doukas (1996) model.

Doukas (1996) discussed that studies on teachers' attitude, cognition, perception etc.are used to explore frequently noted discrepancies between theoretical understanding of second/foreign

language acquisition and classroom practice. And the source used observation for classroom practice and likert scale types of questionnaire to see the implementation of communicative language teaching principles. Elaborated to mean, council of Europe advocated CLT and developed EFL/ESL curriculum focusing on developing students' linguistic repertoire, sociolinguistic skills, and interactive strategies, as well as the promotion of students' intellectual and social development through the process of foreign language learning and evaluated its practice (Doukas, 1996, p.189). To do so they developed attitude scale likert type questionnaires for which respondents express their agreement and disagreement. According to this source then, the total score of the respondents are summated and place the respondents on a continuum ranging from least favorable to most favorable.

Teachers' cognition to SCP used five scale likert questionnaire arranged into nine subscales holding five to 13 items each. Categorizing the responses in themes and bring similar themes in one position may reduce the analysis difficulty (Dawson, 2007). The grand mean of subscales was computed. Number of items in each subscale differs because while working on the reliability, validity and practicality of the items, some of them were deleted based on item analysis. The differences among teachers' cognition to SCP also used the nine subscale stated above having five scale likert. However, as teachers were divided into six groups based on the Ethiopian ministry of educations' experience ladder, one way-ANOVA was used to compare if there existed significant differences among them in their cognition to SCP. Here there were no teachers in the group of beginner teacher ladder who teach grade 12 and hence be study participant. Consequently only five groups of teachers were compared.

Questionnaire was yet used for the second research question dealing with teachers' practice. Teachers' practice to SCP was investigated using teachers' self-reported classroom practices' questions and observation. Accordingly eight subscales of questions were used to investigate the classroom practice with five scale likert. The questionnaires contained both positively and negatively worded questions. The negative questions were reversed during data organization. The open-ended items served substantiating purpose for greater descriptions of the closed items to elicit in-depth ideas from the respondents. Creswell (2012) claims that open questions are ideal when the researcher does not know the response possibilities and wants to explore the

option. Generally 10 open questions were designed and served to substantiate the close-ended ones to obtain relevant data.

FGD was the other data gathering instrument used. As the nature of the study itself required description from teachers, it was believed to serve detailed opinions of teachers about their cognition and practice in the actual classroom for which the objective questions deprive the respondents to explain in detail. It has power to generate wide range of responses than individual interview (Cohen, et al., 2007). Arksey and Knight (1999) as cited in Cohen, et al. (2007, p. 373) claim the advantage of using group interview saying, “Having more than one interviewee present can provide two versions of events – a crosscheck – and one can complement the other with additional points, leading to a more complete and reliable record”. Therefore, interview guide was designed and administered to teachers. It was not main data source; rather it served the supporting role to closed questionnaire. Three of the 13 schools teachers wererandomly selected and participated in the FGD. Five teachers from each school took part in the FGD. That means three independent FGD were conducted. The audio of the participants were recorded and latter transcribed for interpretation of the result.

Classroom observation was the other data gathering instrument used for SCP practice. Cohen, et al. (2007) claims that observation in educational research has many advantages over others. For one thing, it offers an investigator an opportunity to gather a ‘live’ data from the naturally occurring social situations so that the researcher can look at what is taking place than waiting for second hand information (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 396).They yet stressed the difference between what people do and what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check for such discrepancies. That is, taking only what one says about his/her practice through self-reported practice has no strong ground in reality as compared to that aided by live activities. To this end, classroom observation was used to see teachers’ implementation of SCP.

Data analysis was conducted according to the sequence of the research questions. And for research questions demanded qualitative and quantitative data, the quantitative ones were analyzed first followed by qualitative data aimed at strengthening the main data. The third objective sought differences among teachers in cognition of SCP demand purely inferential

statistics. Teaching experience is one of the major contributing factors in applying classroom pedagogies supposed to be practiced (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Accordingly, the five teaching experience categories were used to see if there were differences of teaching experience in cognition to the SCP.

The instruments' reliability of the items was checked by Cronbach's alpha coefficient. As Field (2009) claims, the standard Cronbach's alpha coefficient of greater or equal to 0.7 is set to see the reliability of the items planned for the quantitative data. Hence, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the entire quantitative items was computed based on the objective of the research. Accordingly reliability of cognition items was .916 and teachers' self-reported practice item was .937 which indicates strong reliability. The validity was also checked by distributing it to co-workers, researchers in the field for more comment and modification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Result of EFL Teachers' Cognitions to Social Constructivist Principles

In this subsection, the results of teacher cognition to SCP are presented using the grand mean of items within the thematic categories.

Table 1. The mean values of the items in their thematic groups

	Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Devian	Variance
Problem solving items	62	7.00	25.00	19.35	3.259	10.626
Brainstorming items	62	18.00	50.00	40.63	5.755	33.122
Cooperative learning items	62	16.00	35.00	28.65	4.588	21.052
Task based items	62	14.00	30.00	20.98	3.355	11.262
Dialogue related items	62	13.00	30.00	20.15	4.605	21.208
Process based items	62	15.00	35.00	26.34	4.594	21.113
Teachers' views to their roles	62	16.00	40.00	31.40	4.488	20.146
Teachers' views to students' roles	62	23.00	49.00	35.26	5.250	27.572
Teachers' views to textbook	62	20.00	54.00	35.27	8.327	69.350

Problem solving activities are among social constructivist learning principles designed in the syllabus as it allows students to solve problems related to their social and cultural situations

through critical thinking. Accordingly, teachers were asked five questions if they view these kinds of activities better help students practice English. According to Doukas (1996) attitude scale measure, the highest mean score for five items is 25 and the lowest score is five. Though it is difficult to exactly determine the neutral point (and hence the midpoint) of the extremes because of many respondents' uncertainty about some items, or holding inconsistent ideas about the items, the midpoint of the five items used for presenting the results was 15. Consequently, the grand mean of problem solving related items was computed 19.35. This score revealed that teachers had favorable cognition to encouraging nature of providing students with everyday problems to let them construct language based on reality they exercise.

The other guiding principles of SC pedagogy respondents were asked to reflect their views was brainstorming activities designed in the textbook. To elicit the cognition teachers have about the role of brainstorming, 10 questions were asked. The response indicated the mean score of 40.63 that fall in the range of teachers' favorable cognition to the importance of brainstorming activities for better students' learning as the grand mean is above midpoint (30).

Cooperative learning techniques are among major means through which helping one another is reflected. The grand mean of the items showed 28.65 (nearly agree) that revealed favorable cognition while the average (mildly favorable) cognition to the 7 items with 5 likert scale types is 21. To substantiate the quantitative data, one closed item was asked to let respondents describe explicitly to forward their views on the extent to which students prefer doing together along with their justifications. The responses were categorized into groups based on the degree of their belief of whether or not students like to work in group as per the SCP to have greater opportunity to discuss and practice. Accordingly, from the total of 62 respondents, 27(43.54) said few, very few, only few; 9(14.52%) said low, very low, limited number, very small and rare; 7(11.29%) said none, not at all, almost zero, impossible to involve in doing together, and 7(11.29%) said some, not many and often, and the remaining 12(19.35%) could not estimate. The data, though described in different expressions, disclosed that majority of students have no interest of doing together in group. Some of their justifications were: students have no background experience to do together; most students hesitate to interact with their classmates; even if teachers group students almost they talk about unrelated agenda; the way they are

accustomed is teacher centered in which all the activities are dominated by teachers; they prefer listening; they have low English proficiency to discuss in group; they cannot understand the language itself; topics are new; they believe doing in collaboration is waste of time; they are bored with excessive language activities and tasks; habituated to receive information than generating their own views in group; most of them think they don't know and etc.

The other group of questions teachers were asked their cognitions in English language construction derived from SCP was task-based activity. This subtheme of SCP contained six items of having same underlying construct. The result showed the grand mean of 20.98, which shows favorable cognition to the importance of task-based activities for learners' English language achievement through task doings.

Regarding dialogue, 6 items were posed. The result showed the mean score of 20.15 (nearer to the average mean 18). This score is relatively lower than other subgroups and depicted mildly favorable cognition. This subtheme was also supported by open question to let teachers reflect their views about the dialogues of the textbook in enhancing English language achievement of the students. Hence respondents reacted to the benefits and the drawbacks of the dialogic approach of the course. None of respondents listed a belief in the benefit of dialogue. Almost all respondents listed that they don't teach dialogue together with the reasons prohibited them from doing so widely.

Teachers were also made to reflect their views about process based way of learning as compared to structure based grammar learning. This group of questions was designed aimed at eliciting information whether or not teachers prefer to teach language for knowledge to language for use. When teachers provide students with procedures to execute tasks, solve social problems, discuss in cooperation and construct their own language, they learn to use language using the wider opportunity of discussion incidentally as compared to grammar and vocabulary oriented lecture method of teaching. Accordingly seven items were asked. The mean score of the items counted 26.34 which is about average level of cognition nearly close to agree.

Teachers' views to their own roles were the other principles posed to respondent. The result revealed the grand mean of 31.40 for eight items that falls in the range between neutral (mean 24) and agree (mean score 32). Similarly, teachers' views to students' roles were computed 35.26 for 11 items with same theme. The score indicated above average level of perception in the five scale measures for 11 items.

Finally, teachers were required to show their level of agreement to cognition they have on contents of grade 12 English textbook. In order to elicit information on the way teachers view the relevance of the contents of the textbook to SCP and the knowledge they have about the contents, 12 questions were asked. The response showed the grand mean of 35.27. This mean score falls between neutral (mean 36) and disagree (mean 24) but nearer to midpoint. Hence, majority of the respondents showed unfavorable cognition on the relevance of textbook contents to students. Teachers reflected least cognition on some points from among items designed. For instance, let alone students, teacher respondents admitted as textbook contents need deeper understanding and longer retention of teachers in teaching; students couldn't manage the tasks and exercises of the textbook, and the contents of the textbook are beyond students' level of comprehending. On the contrary, they claimed as the textbook is full of predicting, self-reflection activities throughout units to make students reflect their views and understanding about contents in each chapter on condition that students could be able to manage. In general teachers had unfavorable cognition to more than average number of items dealing with grade 12 English textbook contents.

Likewise, one open question was asked to rate the extent to which the contents of the textbook are relevant social and cultural reality of the students. In response to this question, 29 of the 62(46.7%) used terms like: 'to some extent relevant, not this much relevant, partly relevant, somewhat relevant, almost not relevant, and rarely relevant' to show that they perceived contents are almost not relevant; 17 of 62(27.412%) respondents viewed contents are completely irrelevant to students' social and cultural realities so that the students suffer both from learning the language and the contents. On the contrary, 4(6.45%) of them said moderately relevant, 5(8.1%) of them said, there is no problem with the design of the course curriculum to relate it with our students, and the remaining 7(11.29%) of them gave valueless

responses and left the question unanswered. The result revealed that, though there were differing views, majority of them claimed that contents are not related to students' social and cultural situations. Yet, teachers were made to discuss (FGD) conceptions they hold about the relevance of the textbook contents to the social and cultural situations of the students and the result indicated irrelevant.

Teachers' Practice of the Social Constructivist Pedagogy Underlying Principles

Sixty two items with eight subgroups according to the core principle of social constructivist pedagogy were used to see teachers' practice. Basically more in number of items in every subgroup were prepared, but some items were deleted and reduced to the current number based on the reliability test. Similar to the questionnaire for cognition, the frequency of teachers' practice of the items were coded with five scale likert indicating how often they did the things as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 to represent Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely and Not at all respectively. Grand mean (mean of the thematic group) was used for analysis of the result. The observation checklists were also similar in item and theme with the questionnaire.

Table 2. The grand mean of respondents' self-reported classroom practices

	N	No of items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Practice to problem solving	62	7	13.00	31.00	21.61	4.038	16.307
Practice to brainstorming	62	6	11.00	28.00	20.42	3.762	14.149
Practice to cooperative learning	62	7	11.00	30.00	24.02	3.944	15.557
Practice to task based	62	6	13.00	27.00	18.45	3.202	10.252
Practice to dialogues	62	7	13.00	30.00	20.02	3.856	14.869
Practice to process based	62	6	10.00	25.00	18.63	3.320	11.024
Practice to teachers' own role	62	13	28.00	60.00	43.21	6.917	47.841
Practice to students' role	62	10	14.00	41.00	25.74	5.595	31.309

Problem solving activities are among core activities through which SCP is practiced by making students solve real problems based on the social and cultural contexts they are in. Accordingly, 7 items on how often they implement problem solving instructional techniques were asked. In response to these questions teachers with grand mean of 21.61 said they used problems to let students solve problems which in turn resulted in English language practice. Of the seven items, teacher respondents practice relatively lower in leaving students to left information to

complete, create everyday problems that student discuss with peers and solve, and exposing students to problems to be solved through their own effort so that students deal with solving real problems and practice English language construction. The result of the entire subgroup revealed that respondents sometimes use problem solving activities in their actual classroom teaching, but in the observed sessions, rare teachers tried to create problems from themselves or from textbook itself and make students solve problems.

Brainstorming, prediction or prior experience provoking tasks and activities are the other groups of items the researcher made respondents to react. The response indicated the grand mean of 20.42 for the six items that fall above average mean score (18) though almost nearer to the midpoint. Least item mean score was recorded among others in teachers' selection of brainstorming activities. It is clear that teachers are expected to cover every activity in the textbook as it has its own objectives to achieve at the end of the lesson, but teachers were selective in involving students in all brainstorming activities of the textbook. In observed sessions as well similar practice occurred. 28.57% of sessions observed make students brainstorm on activities and tasks presented in the textbook. Others began teaching by doing activities and explain the details followed by giving them brief notes.

In addition, teachers discussed in FGD if they give attention to prior knowledge initiating activities before introducing the day's lesson to promote students' prior experience. In response to the discussion, one respondent said:

“...Teachers talk more and students listen more because students are saying that we are preparing for entrance examination and we will not be an English teacher. For this reason you have to give emphasis for the grammar. I can say that we most teachers are grammarians. For this reason the attention is not that to the student to develop their everything, but the teachers are simply feeding their students than students themselves create different things. This is my point”.
(FS₂T₅)

Teachers were also required to respond to the extent of using cooperative learning techniques as per the learning through ZPD. The grand mean of the theme that incorporated 7 items was 24.02. The midpoint and/or neutral point for the 7 items was commonly 21. Hence teachers' responses to their own classroom practice to the implementation of cooperative learning fall in the range of 'usually'. In the contrary, teachers simply tell students to be in pair or group and

order them to do tasks in group, but students were sitting idle than helping one another. That is to mean it is possible to say there is no cooperative learning principle took place in the actual classroom as observation result indicated.

Yet to triangulate the practice of cooperative learning techniques from the students' side, one open question was posed. The responses were grouped into three (some, few and none) and the figures were put in simple frequency and percentage followed by elaborations of their justification.

Table3. Summary of open question on students' participation on group works

Who reacted to the question (79.02%)			Not reacted
Some/Often/Not many	Few/Rare/Low/Less	None/Zero/All unwilling	
4/49(8.16%)	38/49(77.55%)	7/49(14.28%)	13/62(20.96)

As can be seen on table above, 49 of 62(79.02%) of them said they rarely apply cooperative learning together. They commonly justified that students are not willing to engage in cooperative group activities for better language practice.

According to the advocators of SCP, foreign language is better learned if the contents of classroom instruction are real tasks that students execute. While doing so, students deal only with linguistic structures because about what they discuss is originated from students' social and cultural trends. And their concern is meaning they convey through doing together. Forms are then secondary to meaning. Accordingly respondents were asked whether or not they actually apply this principle with list of six items having same underlying construct. The response showed the grand mean of 18.45 which is the midpoint (sometimes) for the six items.

Regarding teachers' use of dialogues, debates and conversation activities to involve students in language construction, teachers' self-response depicted the grand mean of 20.02 for seven items. Unfortunately, none of teachers in the observation date taught dialogues, so it was impossible to see the practice of dialogues except the interaction existed in the process of teaching and learning. In response to process oriented instruction, 6 items were asked. The response showed the grand mean of 18.63 indicating that they sometimes use process based approach to teaching.

Teachers' practices to their own roles were also administered to respondents. Teachers' roles as per the SCP are playing the facilitative roles by creating natural language use pedagogically. Accordingly, teachers were required to react to 13 questions. The response indicated the grand mean of 43.21. The midpoint for 13 items is 39, so the figure of this subtheme is above average mean indicating that teachers usually play facilitating roles. However, responses to students' role indicated rarely with mean score of 25.74 for 10 items while the average score is 30.

So as to substantiate teachers' self-perceived practice report in closed questions, they discussed on two general questions to explicitly explain their practice in FGD. The first discussion point was the extent of students' motivation to tasks and activities of the textbook contents. The discussion result indicated that students were not motivated when teachers teach them. They stated basic points that prohibited students' motivation. Of these, students' language background, irrelevance of textbook contents to students' social and cultural realities, large class size to involve students in doing together and invite students in the tasks and activities, almost unmotivated teachers were teaching English in lower grade levels as they were from non-English fields because of self-contained class ideology which resulted in students' demotivation and many more reasons discussed can be mentioned.

The second discussion point was if teachers teach all chapters, exercises and tasks without skipping on contents. They agreed that they were selective. One of the commonly agreed up on reason they raised to be selective was the difficulty to cover all the contents. It could not be possible to teach all tasks and activities dealing with all macro and micro skills because the textbook is bulky. The time allocated to complete the textbook and the contents do not match. If one tries to deal with every task and practice activities, it is difficult to halve the book so that main points might not be arrived at.

The other reason was the nature of topics and ability of students. For example, teachers said they often skip over listening and writing parts because it is no use except waste of time to try making them write a sentence or a paragraph for a student who could not write his/her name after staying in schools with English for many years at school. The textbook also contained many speaking and discussion practice activities, but students are not active in different speaking and discussion activities as only few of them are active participant.

The third reason was students' interest to get ready for entrance examination. As discussants agreed, the book is full of major skills, but entrance examination is full of grammar, vocabulary and supportive skills. They often invite complaints from active students and school management bodies on nature of topics to be taught and learnt because they never consider contents in the textbook important. They accuse teachers that they teach unimportant points saying, "Why you teach us the not important facts?" (FS₁T₃). That is students viewed not all contents are necessary. Hence, teachers are usually influenced by students' preference.

The last reason is teachers' beliefs. They (teachers) skip over some topics believing that the contents are not important. They believe contents were designed by scholars who worked for incentive. The contents should be prepared fulfilling the linear and cyclic procedure, but teachers could not say contents are linear or cyclic. As a result they believe curriculum designers simply copy and paste most tasks and activities with same theme on a single exercise. This in turn makes the textbook unmanageable and forced them to be selective. For instance one respondent said, "... In my experience when I do different exercises, a single exercise can have more than 10 questions, so I should be selective and do some of the exercises or the questions because I can't cover the portion" (FS₂T₃). In addition teacher by themselves skip over some topics that they believed were vague for both teachers and students (FS₃T₃). If teachers try to make students deal with such vague and difficult activities, classroom situation will be disrupted which in turn cause lack of motivation to learn other contents.

Differences among Teachers in Teaching Experience

In Ethiopia, teachers are structurally arranged into six ladders as beginner teacher, junior teacher, teacher, higher teacher, associate teacher and lead teacher. The method of teaching teachers implement is affected by their cognition about the method, and the nature of teaching methods they employ can vary across their experience (Borg, 2003). Hence, teachers' response to their cognition is analyzed to determine if there were differences among teachers in terms of their teaching experience. As it has been already stated method section, five of the six experience groups were of the six groups of teachers in their experience ladder since there were no beginner teachers during the times of data collection.

Table 4. Distribution of the respondent teachers in their experience/career ladder

	Frequency	Percent
Junior Teacher	7	11.3
Teacher	5	8.1
Higher Teacher	12	19.4
Associate Teacher	17	27.4
Lead Teacher	21	33.9
Total	62	100.0

The mean score of teachers was computed based on subthemes arranged by using one-way ANOVA separately. In order to conduct this test, assumptions of parametric test statistics were computed and met.

Table 5. ANOVA test result of items related to Problem solving theme

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	76.314	4	19.078	1.902	.123
Within Groups	571.880	57	10.033		
Total	648.194	61			

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore if there was significant difference between teachers on cognition of SCP in English language learning focusing on grade 12. Accordingly, there is no statistically significant difference between teachers in their experience for problem solving related items $F(4, 61) = 1.902, p > .05$.

Table 6. ANOVA test result of brainstorming questions

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	66.144	4	16.536	.482	.749
Within Groups	1954.324	57	34.286		
Total	2020.468	61			

The result of the above table depicted that there is no statistically significant difference between the groups of teachers in brainstorming activity related thematic group questions reflecting SCP in English language teaching and learning as the significance value is greater than .05. Statistically put, $F(4, 61) = .482, p > .05$.

Table 7. Teachers' responses to items related to Cooperative learning

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	117.081	4	29.270	1.430	.236
Within Groups	1167.113	57	20.476		

Total	1284.194	61
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As the above table showed, there is no statistically significant difference between the teachers in their experience in cooperative learning related items, $F(4, 61) = 1.430, p > .05$.

Table 8. ANOVA test result of **task-based** related items

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	74.615	4	18.654	1.736	.155
Within Groups	612.369	57	10.743		
Total	686.984	61			

Similar to the other thematic groups, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups of teacher respondents in task-based activity related questions as the significance value is greater than .05. Statistically put: $F(4, 61) = 1.736, p > .05$.

Table 9. ANOVA test result of items related to **dialogue**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	121.512	4	30.378	1.477	.221
Within Groups	1172.182	57	20.565		
Total	1293.694	61			

The one-way between-groups analysis of variance was computed on teachers' cognition of dialogue related items as shown on the table above. The result of the ANOVA test depicted that there was no statistically significant difference between teachers in their experience at $F(4, 61) = 1.4776, p > .05$.

Table 10. ANOVA test result of items related to **Process-based** questions

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	63.839	4	15.960	.743	.567
Within Groups	1224.048	57	21.475		
Total	1287.887	61			

Similarly, one-way ANOVA was computed on teachers' cognition to processes based questions indicating that there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers in their experience in their cognition to the appropriateness of instructional strategies that utilize process as opposed to product oriented instructional technique: $F(4, 61) = .743, p > .05$.

Table 11. ANOVA test result of items related to **teachers' views to their own role**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	22.878	4	5.720	.270	.896
Within Groups	1206.041	57	21.159		

Total	1228.919	61
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Yet, one-way ANOVA was computed to see if there was significant difference among groups of teachers on their cognition to teachers' views to their own role. The result showed that there is no statistically significant difference between teachers in experience in their cognition about teachers' view to their own role perspective: $F(4, 57) = .896, p > .05$.

Table 12. ANOVA test result of items related to **teachers' views to students' roles**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	38.217	4	9.554	.331	.856
Within Groups	1643.654	57	28.836		
Total	1681.871	61			

In similar way to other thematic groups of SCP, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups of teacher respondents in cognition to students' roles as the significance value is greater than .05. Statistically put, $F(4, 61) = .331, p > .05$.

Table 13. ANOVA test result of **teachers' views to textbook contents**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	796.723	4	199.181	3.307	.017
Within Groups	3433.616	57	60.239		
Total	4230.339	61			

Finally, one-way between-groups analysis of variance was computed on teachers' views to the role of textbook contents as core principle of social constructivist pedagogy. The result showed that there is statistically significant difference among teachers in their experience at $F(4, 61) = 3.307$, *Sig* value is = .017 which is less than .05. Teachers' views to contents of grade 12 English textbook contents was the only item group teachers reflected significant cognition differences among teachers in their experience. Therefore, post-hoc test was conducted to identify where the difference lies.

Post Hoc Tests

Table 14. Post-hoc test results of teachers' views to textbook contents

Multiple Comparisons						
LSD	Dependent Variable: Teachers' views to textbook contents					
(I) Experience in career ladder	(J) Experience in career ladder	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	Intr.
					Lower B	Upper B
Junior Teacher	Teacher	1.34286	4.54459	.769	-7.7575	10.4432
	Higher Teacher	-8.10714*	3.69127	.032	-15.4988	-.7155

	Associate Teacher	-3.03361	3.48554	.388	-10.0133	3.9461
	Lead Teacher	-8.38095*	3.38734	.016	-15.1640	-1.5979
Teacher	Junior Teacher	-1.34286	4.54459	.769	-10.4432	7.7575
	Higher Teacher	-9.45000*	4.13131	.026	-17.7228	-1.1772
	Associate Teacher	-4.37647	3.94857	.272	-12.2834	3.5304
	Lead Teacher	-9.72381*	3.86216	.015	-17.4577	-1.9900
Associate Teacher	Junior Teacher	3.03361	3.48554	.388	-3.9461	10.0133
	Teacher	4.37647	3.94857	.272	-3.5304	12.2834
	Higher Teacher	-5.07353	2.92632	.088	-10.9334	.7863
	Lead Teacher	-5.34734*	2.53219	.039	-10.4180	-.2767

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Hence to identify where mean differences observed among the five groups compared, column with 'Mean Difference' having asterisks (*) was used as per the convention of ANOVA. Accordingly, junior teachers with higher teacher and lead teacher; teacher with higher teacher and lead teacher, and associate teacher with lead teacher are significantly different in their cognition to the relevance of grade 12 English textbook contents to respective grade level students. In sum, though there were mean differences among teacher in their cognition to SCP, the differences were not significant except on contents of the textbook.

DISCUSSION

Problem solving is one of the SCP through which language construction skills is exercised. Two major assumptions to adopt problem-based approach to teach EFL: meaningful interaction through provision of authentic task in authentic language situations and a belief in learning happens through shared ideas and knowledge construction in collaborative problem solving group (Doghonadze, & Gorgiladze, 2008; Hussien, 2012). The science of providing students with socially and culturally known problems opens free discussion opportunities aimed at solving problems by helping one another. Accordingly, teachers also reflected favorable cognition to the problem-based learning for further language practice. However, the practice is not as they react they know and view the importance of SCP.

Brainstorming activities are among core principles of social constructivism whereby students are presented with predicting activities students do to remember first individually and then in group ahead of dealing in the whole class. This is because it encourages critical thinking, make students express their opinions freely, engage in learning than waiting for the teacher, and

inspires interest of getting ready at home before going to class and others (Brown, 1994; Brown & Campione, 1994). The result of the study also revealed that teachers favor the importance of brainstorming, predicating and prior knowledge provoking contents to involve students in the learning process though the extent they apply the principles and invite students in brainstorming on their prior experience could not be as per their cognition.

Cooperation/collaboration is the other core SCP. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups for students to work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1994); a group learning activity organized between learners in groups in which each learner is held accountable for his/her own learning (Cohen, Brody & Shevin, 2004); sociologically based techniques that help students work together through free discussion (Oxford, 1997); encourages mutual respect and learning among students with varying talents and fills in gaps in each other's overall understanding (Cohen, Brody & Shevin, 2004). The finding is also in line with these principles. Teachers believe in the importance of techniques underlying cooperative learning that enhances students learning in collaboration/cooperation than relying on teachers, and hence teachers believe learners learn while doing together discussing on the real living conditions of their own, and teachers relatively attempt to group students and involve them in language construction opportunities.

Task-based activities are of classroom techniques used to involve students in doing real classroom tasks for students' better English language learning through interpersonal communication with peers, teachers and knowledgeable others (Nunan, 2003). In line with this argument, it is possible to infer from the result of the study that teachers had favorable cognition to the importance of task based activities for students' greater practice on their way to do tasks, and English is learned incidentally. On the other hand teachers are mainly selective, they teach grammar parts and skip over tasks that make students execute tasks.

Social constructivist pedagogy advocates construction of language based on the social and cultural realities of the students so that students do not suffer from agenda to talk on if it is about their real life situation because SC view bases itself on working with a more capable person is pertinent not only to language practice but also personal development (Vygotsky, 1978). This in turn demands active interaction among students, with teacher or any

knowledgeable others. To do so, dialogic interaction opens opportunity to interact as it incorporate both learners' internal reality (cognitive growth) and the external reality (social, cultural, institutional realities) (Johnson, 2004). Gibbons (2006) also claims dialogue facilitate student-student and teacher-student interaction opportunities. Likewise, collectively constructed dialogues based on the socially and culturally accessible topics provide not only the opportunity for input exchange among learners but also the opportunity to expand the learners' own knowledge (Johnson, 2004). The matter here is, do our textbook contained socially and culturally constructed dialogues that are comprehensible to our students? Are there sufficient dialogues in the textbook that students can discuss on? Do our students are able to practice dialogues and debates? Keeping the importance of dialogues in inviting students practice opportunities, the reality on the ground was another. Teachers by themselves claimed they could not comprehend dialogues.

SCP vests greater role to students and teachers' duty is facilitating process oriented language construction. Teachers should make students reflect group attempt, involve students in the activities to take responsibilities of self and group achievement, fostering acquisition and retrieval of prior knowledge, make them construct English while doing to solve problems, provide tasks and activities that encourage different responses after discussion in group so that students current level of language ability can be investigated through doing together, and helping students on their difficulties (Johnson, 2004; Oxford, 1997). This is because, SCP claims that effective learning should be linked to interaction with the knowledgeable others, and background knowledge about the culture of the world where teachers are given the role of facilitator (McMahon, 1997). The result of the study also reflect this fact as teacher showed their level of agreement of their own roles with the mean score 31.40 and the roles of the students with the mean score 35.26.

Teaching material alone does not guarantee effective teaching; it needs effective teachers as well to actually implement in the classroom. Effective teaching begins with the knowledge teachers have to contents and the way they view the contents and the methods of teaching adopted in the material (Borg, 2003; Broughton et al., 2003). In connection to this concept, teachers reflected the cognition they developed to contents of grade 12 English textbook. The



result indicated less than average mean. The FGD result also indicated that they use the textbook contents they don't view to the level of students. That is, teachers do what they do not believe which is against what review claims.

Dealing with differences among teachers in SCP cognition, the result showed that there were differences in cognition among teachers' experience groups; however, the differences were not significant as the statistical output disclosed. The method of teaching teachers implement and the focus given to the contents of the teaching material is affected by their cognition and experiences of teaching teachers have (Borg, 2003). Furthermore, Phipps and Borg (2007) claimed that teachers' cognition is powerfully influenced by their experience as learner, how they learnt during teacher education, their experience of how to filter and interpret information, and resistance to educational curriculum change. Accordingly, though students' better English language achievement is not only determined by teachers' teaching experiences as career ladder, it is one variable to determine the cognition they have to actually implement in the classroom. The result showed difference in cognition to SCP, and the differences were not statistically significant as the result from post-hoc test statistics disclosed except cognitions they hold on contents of the textbook. Therefore, students' reduction of English language achievement has not been mainly as a result of teachers' experience difference.

CONCLUSIONS

EFL teachers' cognitions of social constructivist principles in English language teaching and differences among teachers on cognitions they have about the principles in terms of teaching experience were investigated. The result showed that teachers had knowledge of the social constructivist pedagogic principles, and they viewed the principles important in improving the students' English language learning except that the result from items dealing with the textbook content relevance to the students' social, cultural and language background knowledge showed relatively less than average level of cognition. In their FGD result as well they claimed as the contents are out of students' interest and beyond the students' language knowledge background. Hence, it was concluded that teachers believed in the appropriateness of social constructivist learning principles. Regarding differences among teachers, they could not show significant differences on their cognition to the social constructivist principles. The result from

one-way between-group ANOVA showed mean differences among the five groups of teachers in their experience on the relevance of the textbook contents to the students as the result from post-hoc test revealed. Therefore, it was concluded that teachers had favorable cognition to social constructivist principles. Furthermore, though there were mean differences in their cognition to the SCP among teachers in experience group, the differences were not statistically significant as ANOVA result revealed.

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