



Thai EFL Teachers' Beliefs on Teaching Reading through Text-Based and Competency-Based Reading Approaches in an International University

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ABSTRACT

This study explored Thai EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching EFL reading regarding text-based and competency-based reading approaches and examined whether the teachers' demographic factors had an impact on their beliefs. The participants were 24 Thai EFL teachers from the Business English department in an international university in Thailand. The adapted teachers' orientation to reading instruction (TORI) questionnaire was employed to explore teachers' beliefs about the text-based and competency-based methods of teaching reading. A series of Independent Samples T-Tests and a One-Way ANOVA were conducted for analyzing whether the teachers' demographic factors had an impact on their beliefs. The results showed that these teachers strongly believe in the concepts of competency-based and text-based teaching, instead of applying "teacher-directed instruction."

	<p>Furthermore, differences existed among teachers' demographic factors which indicated that the teachers' gender, educational background, and years of teaching experience impacted their beliefs. These findings reinforced the importance of exploring beyond teachers' beliefs. Teachers should not only be self-reflective and self-aware of their beliefs, but also of the impacts of their demographic factors. This awareness could lead to improvement in their teaching practices in EFL reading, and subsequently students' learning. The findings suggest that further research is necessary regarding the text-based reading approach as well as comparing teaching practices to teachers' beliefs.</p> <p>Keywords: teachers' beliefs, text-based reading approach, competency-based reading approach, EFL reading</p>
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Introduction

English teaching and learning have been given prominence in all learning stages and areas in English as a foreign language (EFL) due to the influence of globalization. It has been widely perceived as the prime international language to communicate with the outside world for economic, political, academic and cultural contact (Inkaew, 2020) as well as being used as a medium of communication in EFL/ESL teaching and learning context (Hariharasudan & Kot, 2018).

In Thailand, the role of English as an international language has caused education reform in 1999 by the Commission of Higher Education (Inkaew, 2020). In higher education, English has become a compulsory foreign language subject. Each university needs to create their own policy to raise their students' English proficiency for academic, professional knowledge and communication and adapt their curricula, resources and environment for language learning to encourage students' autonomous English language learning based on the Higher Education Commission in 2016 (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). University students are required to finish 12 credits and take at least four English courses, including two foundation courses and two courses of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Khaokaew, 2012).

The national English language policy is determined to improve the English language skills of students with an emphasis on students' communicative competence. At university level, the reform focused on developing students' English competence to be compatible with the requirement of the global market (Inkaew, 2020) by implementing a student-centered approach that allows students to learn at their own pace in accord

with their abilities (Tandamrong & Parr, 2022). Thai teachers are also required to promote communicative skills for the use of English for real communicative purposes in society (Payaprom, 2012). To keep up with the trend of globalization, students have been encouraged to strengthen “Business English” in order to prepare them for the business world and international communication (Nakkaew, 2021).

Despite the reform, Education First (EF) in 2021 reported that English proficiency of Thai students has been very low for the past 5 years. Thailand is ranked 100th out of 112 countries in the world and 22nd (out of 24 countries in Asia) with an EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) score of 419 (Education First, 2022). Moreover, there are a great number of graduates with inadequate English proficiency needed by marketplaces (Inkaew, 2020). Thus, English language education and curriculum of Thailand has failed to produce students and graduates with English competency; for this reason, the reform should be reconsidered (Inkaew, 2020).

Thai EFL students have encountered English reading difficulties although they have been exposed to formal English language learning in fundamental education for many years. Phieanchang and Yimwilai (2020) reported that undergraduate students at Maejo University in Thailand had below average English reading abilities, as they have difficulties comprehending content in English texts. Likewise, Rawengwan and Yawiloeng (2020) supported that Thai EFL students at Nakhorn Sawan Rajabhat University have reading comprehension difficulties due to inadequate reading strategies; they hardly use English reading strategies when practicing reading comprehension in English class.

One of the causes of their low reading competence can possibly be attributed to EFL teachers. Pedagogical skills of Thai EFL teachers affect not only teaching and learning of English (Inkaew, 2020), but also students’ reading comprehension (Anderson, 1999). Noom-ura (2013) affirmed that low English competence of Thai EFL students might come from inappropriate pedagogies that EFL teachers chose for these students. For example, Oeamoum and Sriwichai (2020) and Phieanchang and Yimwilai (2020) found that Thai EFL teachers purposelessly used a teacher-centered method focusing on rote-memorization. However, the overuse of a teacher-centered teaching method could lead to a lack of varieties in teaching methodology with limited teaching practices (Payaprom, 2012), and student demotivation (Hayikaleng et al., 2016), resulting in an unsatisfactory outcome of students’ reading competency. Also, Thai EFL teachers tended to rely on practicing “bottom-up” reading strategies, such as reading aloud and translating, in the EFL reading class (Sek et al., 2021). Boonteerarak (2014) also expanded on this point, pointing out that a bottom-up teaching approach

to reading skill development has been blindly implemented without considering appropriateness in the EFL university context.

It is apparent that Thai teachers could not transform their teaching practices as expected by the government to implement the student-centered approach. The possible reason behind their unsuccessful transformation might be that Thai teachers were acquainted with the tradition teaching method that has been rooted in Thai education for a long time. Thus, Thai EFL teachers could not transform their instruction as determined by the policy. Before the reform, reading instruction in Thailand was behaviorist-oriented, grounded by a grammar-translation method (Khaokaew, 2012). The teacher-centered approach has been used with rote memorization (read aloud and word translation strategies) (Suratruangchait et al., 2006). Rawengwan and Yawiloeng (2020) exemplified that Thai EFL teachers at Nakhorn Sawan Rajabhat University employed the teacher-centered approach and mainly included bottom-up reading strategies in their reading instruction. Moreover, the student-centered approach represents western-oriented classroom style and culture that indicate an equal position between teachers and students, whereas Thai-oriented classroom culture, rooted by teacher-centeredness, is hierarchical in status (Tandamrong & Parr, 2022). Thus, personal knowledge, experience, and beliefs of the Thai EFL teachers have direct impact on their teaching practices in classrooms (Liyanage et al., 2021).

Considering Thai EFL students' reading difficulties, studies in Thai EFL contexts have focused on effectiveness of teaching reading methodologies, such as the genre-based approach (Daniarti et al., 2020), explicit reading strategies instruction (Khaokaew, 2012), metacognitive reading strategy instruction (Thongwichit & Buripakdi, 2021), and the reciprocal teaching reading method (Rawengwan & Yawiloeng, 2020) at university level to increase English reading proficiency of Thai EFL students.

There are a growing number of universities in Thailand that offer international programs with English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in order to prepare Thai EFL students for competition nationwide (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). An implementation of the EMI program has been expected to foster Thai EFL students with more exposure to the English language and a more western-oriented learning system with the promotion of student-centered activities and students' self-learning abilities (Wilkinson, 2013). However, students' English competence in the EMI context varies (Galloway et al., 2020). Most EFL students attending international universities with EFL background find it challenging to cope with expected learning outcomes of students in Thai university contexts, especially their reading competence. English reading skills are considered necessary for EFL students in international universities in order to acquire academic English as well as improve academic achievement.

Accordingly, teachers' have a direct impact on their students' reading and academic achievement. This study focuses on teachers' beliefs about teaching EFL reading skills in an international university context where western styles of learning (student-centered and self-learning) are promoted. Teachers' beliefs are important indicators influencing teachers' teaching practices, promoting change, adopting new teaching approaches, and educational innovations (Borg, 2001; Pajares, 1992). Not only do teachers' beliefs guide their classroom decision-making, but they also can directly facilitate success or lead to failure in teaching and students' learning achievement (Fang, 1996). For these reasons, the exploration of teachers' beliefs would enable the improvement of teachers' teaching practices and could possibly assist in improving EFL students' reading competence.

Significance of the Study

In recent decades, there has been an increasing interest in studies on teachers' beliefs in various ESL contexts (Li, 2013). However, there has been scant attention in undertaking studies on teachers' beliefs towards teaching EFL reading skills in international university settings. Thus, this present study attempts to explore Thai EFL teachers' beliefs concerning teaching reading in an international university. The main focus is on whether demographic factors influence teachers' beliefs.

The results of this study contribute interesting ideas to teachers and educators in international universities context. This study assists these teachers in understanding and reflecting on their own beliefs about teaching reading. Reflection on teachers' beliefs have a greater impact than teacher' knowledge on their decisions about teaching practices, lesson planning their lessons, and behavior towards their students (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). More importantly, when teachers engage in critical reflection about their beliefs and discussion of how their experiences have shaped beliefs that may differ from others, they can better understand what they are encountering and how their beliefs affect student learning, and counter inappropriate practices in classrooms. In addition, this study raises awareness of the teachers towards the impact of demographic factors on their beliefs. The teachers' awareness of their beliefs leads to the understanding of how they can improve their teaching practices (Nespor, 1987). The appropriate implementation of teaching practices, methods and strategies in the classroom heightens the accountability of teachers to meet standards.

For administrative officers and educators in this area, understanding Thai EFL teachers' beliefs provides useful information for curriculum makers in this context for making a better pedagogical plan. It could prompt administrative officers to support teachers' ongoing and professional

development concerning reading pedagogy. As the exploration of teachers' beliefs is essential for comprehending teachers' thought processes, teaching methods, and learning to teach (Santos & Miguel, 2019), teachers will be able to plan on the program details that are relevant for these teachers' thoughts, perceptions, principles and attitudes. These teachers' beliefs could serve as useful information for possible changes in English language teaching in this context in the future.

This study aims at answering the following two research questions:

- (1) What are Thai EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching reading regarding text-based and competency-based reading approaches in an international university?
- (2) Do variables such as gender, education background, and years of teaching experience impact teachers' beliefs about teaching English reading regarding text-based and competency-based reading approaches in the international university?

Literature Review

Teachers' Beliefs

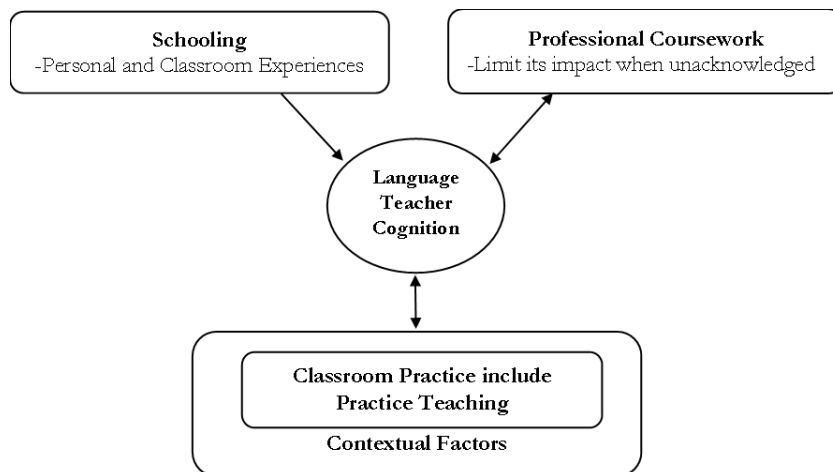
Beliefs have been described as the most valuable psychological construct of knowledge for examining teacher education (Pajares, 1992). Teachers' beliefs are teachers' convictions based on their reasons and experiences that influence teaching practices. Clark and Peterson (1986) highlighted that teachers' beliefs are the heart of teachers' thoughts that determine their perceptions and judgements or evaluations on themselves, and about others. Pajares (1992) added that teachers' beliefs are beyond they control or knowledge, regardless of the situation. Their beliefs are not the ideal truth, but rather what they are committed to. Specifically, Borg (2001) noted that teachers' beliefs guide decision making on their instruction and how they reflect on their teaching practices in the classroom. That is, teachers' beliefs have a great impact on classroom teaching practices and students' learning. As a result, research on teachers' beliefs is significant for understanding teachers' classroom decisions about teaching practices and improving students' learning.

Relationships among Teachers' Beliefs and other Factors

Figure 1 shows the model of teacher cognition for language teachers and frames the analysis of factors influencing teachers' beliefs driving their classroom teaching practices. Language teacher cognition is regarded as teachers' beliefs in language teaching contexts.

Figure 1

Relationships among Language Teacher Cognition, Schooling, Professional Education and Classroom Practice



Note. Adapted from “Beliefs and classroom assessment practices of English teachers in primary schools in Thailand,” by Narathakoon et al., 2020, *International Journal of Instruction*, 13, pp. 137-156.

Figure 1 illustrates relationships among teachers’ beliefs and other factors in two dimensions. First, it demonstrates a one-way direction relationship that schooling, accumulated from personal and classroom experience, determines teachers’ beliefs. Second, it displays the interrelated relationships between teachers’ beliefs and professional coursework with the control of their acknowledgement, and teachers’ beliefs and classroom practice with the control of contextual factors.

Three internal factors affecting teachers’ beliefs are teaching experience, gender, and educational background. Pettit’s study (2011) affirmed that years of teaching experience influence mainstream teachers’ beliefs towards ELLs (English language students whom their first language is not English) in schools in the United States. Focusing on educational background, Richards et al. (2001) and Narathakoon et al. (2020) found that teachers’ beliefs are grounded by teachers’ schooling background and experience. Another factor is teachers’ gender. Li’s study (1996) reported that to some extent gender differences have an effect on teachers’ beliefs in teaching mathematics. In this study, not only are teachers’ beliefs explored, but it also looks into whether the demographic factors (i.e., gender,

educational background, and years of teaching experience) have an effect on teachers' beliefs.

Teachers' Beliefs on Teaching Reading Skills

Three reading approaches reflecting on EFL reading instruction, are bottom-up, top-down and interactive (Aebersold & Field, 1997). First, the bottom-up approach, grounded by a grammar-translation method and a behavioral approach to language learning, indicates sequential and lower-level processes where meaning is constructed through process joining smallest linguistic parts into the meaning of the whole text (Nunan, 1999). The teachers with this belief will introduce the language structures as a set of rules in isolation and translate the texts, and then the students will be given grammatical exercises to practice through repetition (Carrell, 1989; Grabe, 2009). Second, the top-down approach refers to higher-level reading processes that focus on prior knowledge that aids general understanding of the text (Grabe, 2009). The teachers with this belief assist students in constructing their understanding of the text as a whole, and then the individual elements of the text (Nuttall 1996; Suraprajit, 2019). Lastly, the interactive approach integrates features of top-down and bottom-up teaching and gives an equal importance to both to achieve reading comprehension from cooperative processing (Aebersold & Field, 1997).

Examples of teaching reading approach found in various studies (e.g., Karimi et al., 2016; Lau, 2007; etc.) on teachers' beliefs are text-based and competency-based. The text-based approach hinges on the belief that different forms of text are used for various situations (Arimbawa, 2012) and concentrates on the process of making meaningful meaning out of the text (Mickan, 2011). Teachers with this belief take control of the classroom, and use direct and explicit instruction about features of language via a teacher-centered method (Ochoa & Pérez, 2017).

A competency-based reading approach reading concerns students' actual performance and their needs until reaching their learning goals (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Competency describes each student's ability to apply essential English skills required for effective performance in real-world situations (O'Sullivan & Bruce, 2014). The teachers, who use this approach, focus on teaching skills and behaviors needed to perform competencies developed from students' needs and prior learning based on specific rubrics for measuring each competency (Nkwetisama, 2012) along with the use of the student-centered approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

In this study, teachers' beliefs are identified as measurable teaching practices that are clearly distinguished between text-based and competency-based approaches in the questionnaire statements. Teaching practices refer to

teachers' specific behaviors, methods, and strategies according to a teaching approach or a theory used for teaching and learning purposes in the

Table 1

The Adapted Categorization Scheme of Text-Based and Competency-Based Approaches

	Text-Based	Competency-Based
Classroom Instruction		
Teacher's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers fully explain words, sentences and paragraphs of each text in detail. -Teachers include all knowledge in a prescribed text in the learning objectives of reading instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers teach students how to use reading strategies. -Teachers help students to apply the strategies for comprehending a new text.
Control of Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers implement teacher-directed instruction. -Teachers focus on knowledge transmission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers implement student-directed instruction. -Teachers perform as facilitators not information-givers. -Teachers focus on the development of students' self-learning abilities.
Classroom Assessment		
Classroom Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers assess whether students can fully understand the content and rhetorical usage of each prescribed text. -Teachers focus on assessing students' understanding of the text's content and rhetorical usage. -Teachers have clear and standard answers to ensure the objectivity of marking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers assess students' ability of application instead of memory of knowledge. -Teachers grade the answers based on the students' level of comprehension ability. -Teachers set up clear learning objectives based on different levels of reading ability and then use the objectives to select and organize the texts.
Teacher Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers mainly ask questions about the texts and expect students' correct answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers create questions that allow students' multiple answers.

Note. Adapted from "English as a foreign language teachers' self-efficacy as a determinant of correspondence between their professed orientations toward reading and their reading instructional practices," by Karimi et al., 2016, *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 10(3), pp. 155-170.

classroom (Cishe et al., 2015). Based on Karimi et al. (2016), the adapted categorization scheme in Table 1 is created for distinguishing teaching practices of the text-based and competency-based reading approaches used in this study.

This scheme comprises classroom instruction and assessment. The classroom instruction consists of the teacher's role and control of the process. The control of the process includes teacher-directed and student-directed instructional methods. For teacher-directed instruction, teachers are the primary deliverer of instruction, who perform the knowledge transmission process, control how information is given in the classroom (Duke & Pearson, 2009), and expect students' correct answers (Emaliana, 2017). On the other hand, in student-directed instruction, teachers, perform as facilitators, model what they want the students to do, encourage self-learning abilities and use reading strategies (Duke & Pearson, 2009).

The classroom assessment consists of classroom evaluation and teacher questions. The classroom evaluation of the text-based approach tends to focus on the understanding of the text, while the competency-based approach is more likely to focus on the application of the reading skills. Teacher questioning reflects the teachers value from their teaching objectives. Teacher questions are divided into convergent (close-ended) questions applied to the text-based approach and divergent (open-ended) questions applied to the competency-based approach. Teachers who heavily use convergent questions allow single or very limited students' correct answers, while teachers who employ divergent questions create multiple answer questions and allow different responses from students for developing students' critical thinking (Garrett, 2008). All in all, the teaching practices demonstrated in Table 1 are employed for creating the adapted TORI questionnaire used in this study.

Nevertheless, the aspect of teachers' beliefs has been underexplored among Thai EFL teachers who teach reading in international universities. Specifically, there has been inadequate studies on Thai teachers' beliefs about teaching EFL reading with the text-based and competency-based approaches within an international university. Thus, this study concentrated on EFL reading about the genre-based (text-based) and competency-based approaches. The university in this current study has offered a reading course, "Reading for Journalism", which emphasizes newspaper articles and elements of text types. Basically, teachers might have different beliefs, and so do teachers in this context and others. For the competency-based approach, it can be seen from the syllabus of the reading courses from this university that the reading courses are based on the competency-based curriculum. Considering the syllabi of reading courses taught in the context of this study, it is apparent that the courses are based on competency-based curriculum,

resulting in teachers applying a competency-based approach in English reading courses.

Methodology

The study is quantitative-based in nature with the aim to understand beliefs and practices of the Thai EFL teachers teaching English reading. The adapted questionnaire of Teacher Orientation of Reading Instruction (TORI) was employed to obtain the data of teachers' beliefs about text-based and competency-based approaches to teaching English reading in an international university in Thailand where English is used as a medium of instruction (EMI). Participants of the study were chosen using a purposive sampling method. The participants were twenty-four Thai EFL teachers teaching in the Business English Department in this international university. They are male (20.8%) and female (79.2%) teachers with a range of teaching experience from less than 8 years (20.8%), 8 to 14 years (45.8%), to more than 14 years (33.3%). Ten teachers (41.7%) hold Master's degrees and 14 (58.3%) hold Doctoral degrees.

Data Collection Method

A questionnaire survey of teachers' beliefs about teaching EFL reading was adapted from Lau's (2007) Teachers' Orientation to Reading Instruction Questionnaire (TORI) and the adapted categorization scheme of text-based and competency-based reading approaches. The questionnaire consisted of 20 statements of questions with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 indicating "totally disagree" to 5 indicating "totally agree".

The questionnaire has two parts: questionnaire statements with a 5-point rating scale and demographic questions. The questionnaire includes 20 statements concerning classroom instruction (teacher's roles and control of the process) and assessment. Statements concerning the text-based approach highlight the aim of instruction, enhancing students' understanding and interpretation of particular texts, providing explicit teaching language features in the texts and knowledge about the texts, assessing students' understanding of the text content. Statements concerning the competency-based approach include the aim of instruction empowering students to actively be responsible for their learning and mastery of language skills and knowledge through implementing student-centered instruction and teachers' performing as facilitators and assessing students' performance on specific learning tasks. The demographic part was designed to obtain the teacher participants' personal details. Research validity and reliability of the research instrument

were tested; as a result, the research could obtain relevant information in a reliable and valid manner.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

After the teacher participants returned the questionnaire, the total score of all questionnaire statements in each variable were calculated using descriptive statistics on the Mean and the Standard Deviation scores. The mean scores from 1 to 1.80 represents “Strongly Disagree”, 1.81 to 2.60 represents “Disagree”, 2.61 to 3.40 represents “Neither Agree or Disagree”, 3.41 to 4.20 represents “Agree”, and 4.21 to 5.00 represents “Strongly Agree”. Then, the data were analyzed using SPSS version 25 for Windows, Independent-Samples T-Tests and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Findings

This study was carried out for the purposes of investigating beliefs of Thai EFL teachers’ beliefs, in an international university about teaching EFL reading skills with text-based and competency-based reading approaches. The following tables show the mean scores of the teachers’ responses on question statements about text-based and competency-based reading approaches.

Table 2

Teachers’ Beliefs towards Text-Based Approach Statements

Question Statements	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Statement 1: The main purpose of the teaching of reading is to help students fully understand the words and content of each prescribed text and develop language competence.	4	5	4.29	.464
Statement 16: The ultimate goal of teaching reading is to enable students to understand and interpret different texts.	3	5	4.29	.550
Statement 4: Reading instruction should be teacher-directed; the teacher should directly give all the knowledge via explicit teaching to his/her students.	2	4	2.37	.576
Sum	3	4	3.95	.287

From Table 2, the teacher participants agreed with the beliefs on the text-based approach ($M=3.95$, $SD=.287$) which means that they believed in the concepts of this approach. The highest means are on statement 1 ($M=4.29$, $SD=.464$) and statement 16 ($M=4.29$, $SD=.550$). Apparently, the teacher participants strongly believe that “the main purpose of the teaching of reading is to help students to fully understand words and content of each prescribed text and develop language competence” as well as “the ultimate goal of teaching reading is to enable students to understand and interpret different texts.” The lowest mean is on statement 4 ($M=2.37$, $SD=.576$). This implies that the teacher participants do not believe in the importance of teaching English reading through a teacher-directed approach. Rather, teachers should directly give all the knowledge to students via explicit teaching to his/her students.”

Table 3

Teachers' Beliefs towards Competency-Based Approach Statements

Question Statements	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Statement 7: Teachers should not be an information-giver, but a facilitator who facilitates students by clearly explaining information, providing resources, and encouraging their students to learn by themselves.	3	5	4.71	.550
Statement 13: Teachers should focus on students' products of reading skills rather than the teaching process.	3	5	3.96	.550
Sum	3	5	4.38	.312

This table shows that the participants strongly believed in concepts of the competency-based approach ($M=4.38$, $SD=.312$). The highest mean score was on statement 7 ($M=4.71$, $SD=.550$) which means that participants strongly believed teachers should be a facilitator who assists students by clearly explaining information, providing resources, and encouraging their students to learn on their own.” Conversely, the lowest mean was on statement 13 ($M=3.96$, $SD=.550$). The teacher participants believe that they had better focus on students' reading abilities rather than the teaching process.”

Based on the mean scores of the teachers' responses to the statements, all 20 statements were grouped into 10 themes in the text-based and competency-based approaches. Table 4 demonstrates the means of the 10 themes.

Table 4*Themes of Text-Based and Competency-Based Reading Approaches*

	Mean	SD
Text-Based Reading Construction		
Theme 1: Detailed Explanation of Language Elements (Statements 1, 3, 11, 15, and 16)	4.17	.614
Theme 2: Teacher-Directed Instruction (Statement 4)	2.33	.565
Theme 3: Knowledge Transmission (Statement 12)	4.00	.659
Theme 4: Students' Correct Answers (Statement 5)	4.21	.509
Theme 5: Assessing Text Understanding (Statement 8)	4.02	.57
Competency-Based Reading Construction		
Theme 1: Reading Strategy Instruction (Statements 6, 9, and 14)	4.40	.569
Theme 2: Student-Directed Instruction (Statements 7 and 10)	4.48	.644
Theme 3: Students' Self-Learning Abilities (Statements 2 and 13)	4.21	.604
Theme 4: Students' Multiple Answers (Statement 18)	4.42	.504
Theme 5: Assessing Reading Competencies (Statements 17 and 20)	4.40	.616

For the text-based approach, as shown above in Table 4, the teacher participants do not believe in applying “teacher-directed instruction (Theme 2: M=2.33, SD=.565).” In contrast, the teacher participants strongly believe in focusing on “students’ correct answers (Theme 4: M= 4.21, SD=.604).” For the competency-based approach, the teacher participants strongly believe in implementing “reading strategy instruction (Theme 1: M=4.40, SD=.569)”, “student-directed instruction (Theme 2: M=4.48, SD=.644)”, “students’ self-learning abilities (Theme 3: M=4.21, SD=.604)”, “students’ multiple answers (Theme 4: M=4.42, SD=.504)”, and “assessing reading competencies (Theme

5: $M=4.40$, $SD=.616$.)” To conclude, the participants strongly believed in both competency-based and text-based reading approaches; they do not believe in implementing “teacher-directed instruction” in the text-based reading approach.

Apart from the descriptive calculation for the results of teachers’ beliefs, Independent Samples T-Tests and One-Way ANOVA were run for claiming the existence of a significant difference between teachers’ demographic factors (gender, educational background, and years of teaching experiences) and the means of the questionnaire statements.

The Impact of Gender on Teachers’ Beliefs

The results of the Independent Samples T-Tests run on the impact of teacher participants’ gender and educational background on their beliefs about the two approaches are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of Independent Samples T-Test on the Impact of Gender on Teachers’ Beliefs

Question Statements	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Statement 7: Teachers should not be an information-giver, but a facilitator who facilitates students by clearly explaining information, providing resources, and encouraging their students to learn by themselves.	6.298	.020	-2.596	22	.016
Statement 13: Teachers should focus on students’ products of reading skills rather than the teaching process.	1.463	.239	-2.946	22	.007
Statement 15: Teachers should explain important words, sentences and paragraphs of each prescribed text in detail.	.076	.785	2.152	22	.043

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

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Responses in Questionnaire Statements and the Means of their Gender

Question Statements	N=24	Mean	SD
Statement 7: In a reading class, teachers should not be an information-giver, but a facilitator who facilitates students by clearly explaining information, providing resources, and encouraging their students to learn by themselves.	M5 F19	4.20 4.84	.837 .375
Statement 13: Reading teachers should focus on students' products of reading skills rather than the teaching process.	M5 F19	3.40 4.11	.548 .459
Statement 15: Reading teachers should explain important words, sentences and paragraphs of each prescribed text in detail.	M5 F19	4.60 3.79	.894 .713

As shown in Table 5 and 6, there is a significant difference between the means of participants' gender (Male: $M=4.20$, $SD=.837$, Female: $M=4.84$, $SD=.375$) and their responses towards question statement 7 ($t(22) = -2.596$, $p = .016$). The result implies that the teacher participants' gender influences their beliefs on the second theme concerning, "student-directed instruction" (Theme 2) in the competency-based approach.

In addition, a significant difference exists between the means of participants' gender (Male: $M=3.40$, $SD=.548$, Female: $M=4.11$, $SD=.459$) and their responses to question statement 13 ($t(22) = -2.946$, $p = .007$). The result indicates that teacher participants' gender influences their beliefs about enhancing "students' self-learning abilities" (Theme 3) in the competency-based approach.

Moreover, there is a significant difference between the means of participants' gender (Male: $M=4.60$, $SD=.894$, Female: $M=3.79$, $SD=.713$) and their beliefs towards question statement 15 ($t(22) = 2.152$, $p = .043$). Therefore, it can be implied that teacher participants' gender affects their belief about "detailed explanation of language elements" (Theme 1) in the text-based approach. Therefore, teachers' gender has an impact on teachers' beliefs on "detailed explanation of language elements", "student-directed instruction", and "students' self-learning abilities."

The Impact of Educational Background on Teachers' Beliefs

The following Tables 7 and 8 display the results of Independent Samples T-Test run on the impact of teachers' educational background on their beliefs towards the two approaches.

Table 7

Results of Independent Samples T-Test on the Impact of Educational Background on Teachers' Beliefs

Question Statement	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Statement 3: When teaching reading, teachers should focus on an in depth and comprehensive analysis of each prescribed text.	5.661	.026	-2.686	22	.013

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

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics Participants' Responses in Questionnaire Statements and the Means of their Educational Background

Question Statement	Respondent's Educational Background	N=24	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement 3: When teaching reading, teachers should focus on an in depth and comprehensive analysis of each prescribed text.	MA	10	3.80	.422
	PhD	14	4.36	.745

As seen in Tables 7 and 8, there is a significant difference between participants' educational background (MA: M=3.80, SD=.422; PhD: M=4.36, SD=.745) and their responses to their beliefs on statement 3 ($t(22) = -2.686, p = .013$). This indicates that the teacher participants' educational background influences their belief regarding "detailed explanation of language elements (Theme 1)" in the text-based approach.

The Impact of Teaching Experience on Teachers' Beliefs

One-way ANOVAs were conducted for examining significant differences between the mean of the questionnaire statements and three ranges of participants' years of teaching experience in this international university. The ranges are less than 8 years, 8-14 years, and more than 14 years.

Table 9

Results of One-Way ANOVA on the impact of Years of Teaching Experience on Teachers' Beliefs

Question Statements		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Statement 12: Reading instruction should focus on knowledge transmission from teacher to student.	Between Groups	2.780	2	1.390	4.042	.033
	Within Groups	7.220	21	.344		
	Total	10.000	23			
Statement 16: The ultimate goal of teaching reading is to enable students to understand and interpret different texts.	Between Groups	1.758	2	.879	3.550	.047
	Within Groups	5.200	21	.248		
	Total	6.958	23			
Statement 18: Reading assessment should allow multiple answers.	Between Groups	1.497	2	.748	3.625	.044
	Within Groups	4.336	21	.206		
	Total	5.833	23			

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

Table 9 shows that there is a statistically significant difference in mean scores of questionnaire statement 12 ($F(2, 21) = [4.042], p = .033$), statement 16 ($F(2, 21) = [3.550], p = .047$), and statement 18 ($F(2, 21) = [3.625], p = .044$) among the three groups of less than 8 years' teaching experience, 8-14 years' teaching experience, and more than 14 years' teaching experience.

With the use of the Scheffe Test for multiple comparisons among these three groups (less than 8 years, 8-14 years, and more than 14 years), Table 10 shows that the mean value of question statement 12 is significantly different between two experience groups, which are 8-14 years and more than 14 years ($p = .043$, 95% C.I. = [-1.46, -.02]). There is a difference between 8-14 years and more than 14 years regarding beliefs on the text-based approach, focusing on "knowledge transmission." Also, the means of question statement 18 is significantly different between 8-14 years' experience and more than 14 years' experience ($p = .045$, 95% C.I. = [-1.12, -.01]). This result reveals that there is a difference between 8-14 years' experience and more than 14 years' experience regarding beliefs on the competency-based approach, focusing on "students' multiple answers".

Overall, teachers' gender, educational background and teaching experiences are demographic factors that affect beliefs of the teacher participants. With regard to the teachers' beliefs on text-based approach themes, teachers' gender, teaching experiences and educational background have an impact on teachers' beliefs on applying "detailed explanation of language elements" and "knowledge transmission." For beliefs towards the competency-based approach, gender influences teachers' beliefs in employing "student-directed instruction" and "students' self-learning abilities." Within the competency-based approach, teaching experiences affect teachers' beliefs on applying "students' multiple answers."

Table 10*Multiple Comparisons*

Dependent Variable	(I) Respondent's Teaching Experience in this University	(J) Respondent's Teaching Experience in this University	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Statement 12	Less than 8 years	8-14 years	.564	.316	.228	-.27	1.40	
		More than 14 years	-.175	.334	.873	-1.06	.71	
	8-14 years	Less than 8 years	-.564	.316	.228	-1.40	.27	
		More than 14 years	-.739	.272	.043	-1.46	-.02	
	More than 14 years	Less than 8 years	.175	.334	.873	-.71	1.06	
		8-14 years	.739	.272	.043	.02	1.46	
	Statement 18	Less than 8 years	8-14 years	.218	.245	.678	-.43	.86
			More than 14 years	-.350	.259	.417	-1.03	.33
8-14 years		Less than 8 years	-.218	.245	.678	-.86	.43	
		More than 14 years	-.568*	.211	.045	-1.12	-.01	
More than 14 years		Less than 8 years	.350	.259	.417	-.33	1.03	
		8-14 years	.568*	.211	.045	.01	1.12	

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

Discussion and Conclusion

This study explores teachers' beliefs on EFL reading instruction in an international university in Thailand and whether demographic factors had an impact on their beliefs. The study is significant for several reasons. First, as there is a paucity of research that explores teacher beliefs in EFL settings, the results of the present study give prominence to studies on teachers' belief in EFL contexts. In addition, it adds to the literature on exploring teachers' beliefs about teaching EFL reading in a special setting such as international universities. Second, it attests to the importance of exploring teachers' beliefs as well as self-reflection and self-awareness of their own beliefs which may lead to better teaching practices and increased student learning. In their professional everyday practice, teachers are not commonly aware of the beliefs they hold about their instruction and subsequently the influence their beliefs have on students' learning. Lastly, the results of the study support the literature concerning the impacts of demographic factors, namely teaching experience (Pettit, 2011), educational background (Narathakoon et al., 2020; Richards et al., 2001), and gender (Li, 1996) on teachers' beliefs.

Future research may provide insight into EFL teachers' beliefs regarding "teacher-directed instruction" and explore more on teachers' teaching practices in comparison with their beliefs. Not only will it provide meaningful information on their beliefs, but it will also help educators to determine how these beliefs affect actual classroom situations. In addition, it would be beneficial for educators to plan professional development training on reading construction themes in order to help these teachers have common understanding of these themes while teaching reading instruction in this context.

Limitations

There are limitations of this study. First, the number of participants was small and the data were collected in only one faculty in an international university, so the findings of this study cannot be used to conclusively generalize about all Thai EFL teachers in all international universities. As this study relied on only quantitative statistical calculations, it was difficult to find significant relationships from the data from the small sample size. Second, this study was restricted to only two types of reading constructions beliefs: text-based and competency-based. Third, this study is purely quantitative, which conducted data collection merely through questionnaires. It may have resulted in superficial and restricted responses from the statement items and restricted scale of the questionnaire.

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