EFL Teachers' Evaluation of the Supervision Process: An Interpretive-Constructivist Perspective

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the supervisory process from the standpoint of EFL at different school levels in Egypt. More specifically this study aimed to ascertain EFL teachers' perceptions of the supervision process in terms of how far the supervision process is objective; modes of supervision; the role of supervision in their professional development; how they see the three phases of the supervisory visit; and their evaluation of their supervisors. The study was directed by the interpretive-constructivist mode of inquiry which made use of the mixed-method research by combining quantitative and qualitative data. Data collection made use of a questionnaire which was administered to a sample of 174 EFL teachers and semi-structured interviews conducted with a subsample of 17 EFL teachers drawn from the questionnaire sample. Results indicate that the current EFL teacher supervision process falls short to satisfy EFL teachers' expectations in many aspects. More specifically, results of data analysis showed that EFL teachers considered supervision unnecessary, merely paperwork, far from being objective and unhelpful in solving their problems. Concerning the mode of supervision, it was seen as authoritarian and far from being democratic. Moreover, teachers did not see a pedagogical or professional value for supervision in their professional development. They complained of their supervisors' lacking of guidance skills, Information Communication Skills (ICT) skills and knowledge of English. Findings of the study carried a set of implications and posed a set of recommendations for EFL teacher supervision. Further research was also suggested.

Keywords: EFL teachers, supervision process, interpretive-constructivist research stance

Introduction

Teacher education plays an important role in promoting the learning and professional growth of teachers. Supervision is one of the functions of education that offers opportunities for schools to be effective and for increasing the professional development of teachers as a means of effectively managing the teaching-learning process (Kutsyuruba, 2003; and Arong & Ogbadu, 2010). Supervision has existed in all countries for many decades and occupies a pivotal position in the management of education, which can be understood as an expert technical service most importantly concerned with scientific study and improvement of the conditions that surround learning and pupil growth (Alemayehu, 2008). According to Vashist (2004), supervision is leadership and development of leadership within groups, which cooperatively assess educational product in light of accepted educational objectives, studying the teaching-

learning situation to determine the antecedents of satisfactory and unsatisfactory pupil growth and achievement, and improving the teaching learning process.

The concept of instructional supervision differs from school inspection in the sense that the former focuses on guidance, support, and continuous assessment provided to teachers for their professional development and improvement in the teaching-learning process, whereas the latter gives emphasis on controlling and evaluating the improvement of schools based on stated standards set by external agents outside the school system (Tyagi, 2010 and Arong & Ogbadu, 2010). Instructional supervision is mainly concerned with improving schools by helping teachers to reflect their practices, to learn more about what they do and why, and to develop professionally. Various authors stated that instructional supervision has clear connection with professional development (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007 and Zepeda, 2007)

The need for and importance of educational supervision have been emphasized by many authors (e.g. Sullivan & Glanz, 2000; Oliva & Pawlas, 2001; Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2005; Zepeda, 2007; and Beycioglu & Donmez 2009). Supervision of teachers is an important part of both pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. As Gebhard (1990) once commented, *"it is likely that most teachers have experienced teacher supervision, at one time or another, either as a supervisor, as a teacher being supervised, or as an outside observer"* (p. 501). Writing in the context of general education, Daresh (2001) defines supervision as *"a process of overseeing the ability of people to meet the goals of the organization in which they work"* (p. 25). In language teacher education, supervision has been defined as *"an ongoing process of teacher education in which the supervisor observes what goes on in the teacher's classroom with an eye toward the goal of improved instruction"* (Gebhard, 1990, p. 1). However, few language teacher education studies investigated the supervision process, where *"the social and the individual planes of human psychological activity are interwoven"* (Donato, 2000, p.45).

Background and statement of the problem

In Egypt instructional supervision in some form goes back to mid-fifties of the last century when the concept was first introduced with the responsibility for inspecting schools and guiding teachers under the name of inspection. The late 1980s witnessed the official introduction of the terms-supervision and supervisor. However, the position, duties and responsibilities of supervisors were clearly defined in the official

documents. The officially stated goals are: to (a) obtain information about the teacher's performance (b) define positive attitudes, (c) lead to do the job in the best way, (d) guide and assist the teacher, (e) improve the methods and techniques teachers use, (f) provide educational materials and assist in their usages, (g) introduce scientific methods to measure students' success (h) guide teachers in problem-solving, (i) improve and direct the teacher to help students who need especial education, (j) determine the educational leadership of the teacher inside and outside of the classroom.

Supervision in Egypt's EFL context seems to be a one dimensional practice that needs improvements in both theoretical foundation and classroom practice. Supervision, which is part of the policy of the MOE officially stated policy, is restricted to a paperwork job rather than a tool for teaching and hence learning improvement. In most cases supervision is based on traditional theories of supervision in which the teacher has no role and his/her creativity and independence are mostly ignored. Feedback from supervisors, as Sheal (1989) notes, is usually unsystematic, subjective, and impressionist. Also, the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisees can be tense; the supervisors are evaluative, while the supervisees tend to be defensive and in most cases submissive.

The official documents simply specify the general purposes but fail to provide any means or a system to ensure whether the adopted goals are met in schools or how this can be realized. What are outlined in the documents as goals and tasks are far too ideal to achieve for a supervisor. It is also equally important to know what happens in classroom as a result of a supervisory visit from the teacher's point of view. The teacher's attitudes and experience about the supervision can be regarded as an indicator for the degree of professional development. Stoller (1996) points out the challenging issue, as follows:

> *"Whatever approach we endorse, ...one of the greatest challenges we face is how to turn negative attitudes towards supervision around so that teachers (and our programs) can reap the rewards and benefits-in the form of professional development and improved instruction" (pp.1-2)*

Traditionally a supervisor is allocated a group of EFL teachers at different school levels (primary, preparatory or secondary) to supervise. The supervisor allocates/distributes teachers to different school at the beginning of the school year. He/She sets a plan in the school district for

his/her school visits over a week. Then, he/she pays visits to teachers at their schools to make sure that teachers are on the right track in covering the syllabus and committing to the school policy. He/She submits an annual report on every supervisee teacher at the end of the school year to the school principal and to the school district. Based on this report it can be decided if the teacher should stay in his/her school or transfer to another school, or if he should be upgraded or lowered to another school level. Based on this authoritative image of the supervisor, the teacher makes all efforts to satisfy the expectations of the supervisor, which might be different from the expectations of the syllabus, lest he/she should be punished in some way or another. This relationship has always been characterized by hypocrisy and fear.

Despite the fact that the duties of the supervisor are clearly and idealistically emancipated in the MOE official documents, it is the picture on the ground that tells us how much or to what extent the supervision is to be of pedagogical, professional value and positive impact on teacher performance no matter how eloquently the official document state the goal of supervision. Based on the long tradition and the inherited images of the supervisor, the EFL teacher-supervisor relationship in Egypt has always been associated with suspicion and manipulation. Examining the practice of supervision has been the concern of many educators all over the world for several decades. One important aspect of this examination was exploring the perceptions of teachers and/or supervisors, as essential parts in this process (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000; Daresh, 2001, and Bailey, 2006). Having information about teachers' perceptions of the desired practices is essential for improving supervision. Since teachers are the ones most affected by the manner in which these supervisory practices are implemented, they should be involved in decisions about them (Pavan, 1997).

Pajak (1986) suggests that the first step in influential supervision is to have a sincere attempt to understand the teacher's point of view. Teachers' perceptions of instructional supervision can positively or negatively affect the quality of education. Teachers differ in their preferences and choices of supervisory approaches (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000). Though there are some teachers who would like to work alone without additional support, there are other teachers who would appreciate comments about their teaching from their colleagues, supervisors, or school administrators (Augustyn, 2001). A survey of previous EFL supervision literature indicates that no study has been conducted in the

Egyptian context to investigate EFL teachers' constructs or evaluations of this process or the actualities of the supervisory school visits. Hence, this study's main interest is to understand the current EFL supervision process from the perspectives of the actual practitioners (i.e. EFL teachers).

Research questions

This research study aims to find answers to the following main research question:

What are EFL teachers' perceptions of the current EFL supervision process?

Possible answers to the above main question can be attained through answering the following subsidiary research questions:

1. To what extent is the current supervision process useful as perceived by EFL teachers?
2. To what extent is the current supervision process objective as perceived by EFL teachers?
3. How do EFL teachers evaluate the current mode of supervision they are exposed to?
4. How do EFL teachers perceive the contributions of the current supervision process to their professional development?
5. How do EFL teachers see the current supervision process prior to, during and after classroom observation?
6. How do EFL teachers evaluate their current supervisors?

Aims of the study

The aim of this research was to assess the effectiveness of EFL supervisory process from the perspectives of EFL teachers. More specifically this study aims to ascertain EFL teachers' perspectives on (1) the usefulness of the supervision process; (2) the objectivity of supervision; (3) the mode of current supervision; (4) contribution of the supervision process to EFL teacher professional development; (5) the practices of supervision before, during and after classroom observation; and (6) their current supervisors.

Significance of the study

Investigating Egyptian EFL teachers' constructs of the supervision process is significant for EFL teachers, EFL teacher supervisors, and EFL teaching policy makers. This is delineated in some detail below.

1. Since teachers are the main target of supervisors' work, their views of what is being done for them and their reactions to them are very

important in planning and implementing successful supervisory activities by instructional supervisors.

2. The information about the existing EFL supervision and what EFL teachers think it is will help EFL supervisors to assess themselves, and reconsider their ways of implementing supervision and how they approach their supervisees.

3. Providing the supervision planners in the Egyptian Ministry of Education with sufficient information about existing supervisory practices helps them predict the areas of potential conflict or tension, and the areas that need careful and further consideration in supervision future plans.

4. Research has revealed that very little information is available about the opinions of Egyptian EFL teachers about what supervisory practice and the way they feel it should be like. If we are willing to move towards greater empowerment for EFL teachers, it seems reasonable to study and consider their insights and views of the present and desired practices of supervision.

5. Since teachers are the main target of supervisors' work, assessing EFL teachers' constructs of what is being done for them and their reactions to them is very important in planning and implementing successful supervisory activities.

6. Having information about EFL teachers' perceptions of the desired practices is essential for improving the quality of EFL teacher supervision. This information helps orientate decision makers to provide supervisory practices that help promote teacher development.

7. Identifying the prevailing perceptions of teachers by undertaking a survey and coming up with sound recommendations can have its own role to play in improving the practical supervisory processes and quality of education at large.

8. The research findings would help provide some insight into teachers' perceptions of supervisory practices and thus determine whether teachers were satisfied with such practices and their influence on professional development.

9. Enabling those involved in EFL supervisory practices to identify the underlying negative perceptions of instructional supervision would

motivate them to apply more appropriate supervisory approaches based on teachers' preferences and choices.

10. The present study will initiate other researchers to undertake detailed research on the effectiveness of instructional supervision at different aspects of the schooling process. In addition, its results may add to the international practices of instructional supervision.

Delimitations of the study

Data for the main study were collected from 174 EFL teachers working at the three levels of governmental schools (primary, preparatory and secondary). Thus, it will be unrealistic to generalize the findings to the wide population of EFL teachers working in governmental schools.

Review of literature

Supervisory practices in any context reflect the predominant views about the nature of teaching, the roles of teachers and how they learn to teach. Decades ago teaching was viewed basically as transmission of predetermined knowledge to students. Teachers were charged with the responsibility of transmitting this knowledge in as uncontaminated a form as possible, through scientifically tested procedures thought to be immutable and universally applicable. Supervisors were employed as objective evaluators to check if teachers were indeed using the prescribed methods in their classrooms and to take corrective measures, if needed.

Defining supervision is quite a daunting task as some definitions seem to be incompatible with one another. In language education, supervision has been defined as *"an ongoing process of teacher education in which the supervisor observes what goes on in the teacher's classroom with an eye toward the goal of improved instruction"* (Gebhard 1990: 1). A supervisor is *"anyone who has ... the duty of monitoring and improving the quality of teaching done by other colleagues in an educational situation"* (Wallace 1991:107).

Goldsberry (1988) comes up with three models of educational supervision outlined as (a) nominal (b) correcting and (c) reflective model. The primary goal of nominal supervision is to maintain status quo. This type of supervision is preferred when time is limited and when the supervisor is attempting to comply with standard legal requirements. The prescriptive model is geared toward diagnosing the problem and subsequently treating it. For this reason the supervisor is expected to possess diagnostic skills and considerably higher knowledge than the teacher being supervised, in order to maximize benefits of expertise. The

final model of reflective supervision leads teachers to think about their teaching as much as their actual teaching behavior. The reflective model *"is based upon using and developing the expertise of the teacher to examine ideal purposes and procedures for teaching, and to refine present performance accordingly"* (Goldsberry, 1988, p. 7). Clark's (1990) model is based on six different roles a supervisor may have. Specifically the roles are judgmental, non-judgmental, clerical, cooperative, responsive and clinical supervision. The current literature also suggests other supervisor-based categories of supervision such as mentor, consultant, counselor, coach, cooperating teacher, inspector, and supervision as leadership. Freeman (1982) suggests three approaches to teacher supervision depending on the role of the supervisor. Gebhard (1990) appears to have expanded on Freeman's model and comes up with five models of supervision: 1) directive, 2) alternative, 3) collaborative, 4) non-directive, and 5) creative.

Overview of supervisory approaches

According to Blasé and Blasé (1998), although many supervisory approaches are collaborative in nature, for long time, supervisory of instruction has been viewed exclusively as an inspection issue. Sergiovanni (1992) described supervision as a *"ritual they [supervisors and teachers] participate according to well established scripts without much consequence"* (p. 203). He explained that though functioned for a considerable span of time, this type of supervision caused negative stereotypes among teachers, where they viewed as subordinates whose professional performance was controlled. Supporting this idea, Anderson and Snyder (1993) stated, *"because of this, teachers are unaccustomed to the sort of mutual dialogue for which terms like mentoring, peer coaching collegial assistance are coming in to use"* (p.1).

It should be noted that traditional supervisory approaches should not be discarded completely because supervisory authority and control are essential for professional development. Mitchell and Sackney (2000) explained this as *"much of past practice is educationally sound and should not be discarded"* (p. 37). In this respect, it is important to distinguish between instructional supervision from evaluation. The former was described as a formative approach and the latter as a summative approach (Zepeda, 2007). For Poole (1994) *"instructional supervision is a formative process that emphasizes collegial examination*

of teaching and learning" (p. 305). In this regard, participants in the supervision process plan and implement a range of professional growth opportunities designed to meet teachers' professional growth and educational goals and objectives at different levels. Teacher evaluation, on the other hand, is *"a summative process that focus on assessing the competence of teachers, which involves a formal, written appraisal or judgment of an individual's professional competence at specific time"* (Poole, 1994, p. 305). The supervisory (formative) and evaluative (summative) processes should go hand in hand (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). While supervision is essential for teachers' professional growth, evaluation is essential to determine this growth and teacher effectiveness (Kutsyuruba, 2003).

Research indicated that the widely used approaches to evaluation are administrative monitoring, report writing, checklists, and self-assessment. On the other hand, approaches to supervision are categorized by researchers (e.g. Renihan, 2002; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007; and Zepeda, 2007) as clinical supervision, peer coaching, cognitive coaching, mentoring, self-reflection, professional growth plans and portfolios Implementing different supervisory approaches is essential not only to give choices to teachers; it is also important to provide choices to the administrators and schools (Kutsyuruba, 2003).

Roles and types of supervision

Teacher supervisors may play several roles. According to Bailey (2009), some supervisors are senior staff with responsibility of guiding junior colleagues. Others may hold positions as program directors, coordinators, or consultants, and do not have concurrent teaching responsibilities. Supervision may also take various forms. Freeman (1982) and Gebhard (1990) outline a number of approaches to language teacher supervision. These approaches depict a variety of roles that the supervisors adopt when they undertake the supervision process. These roles are best envisaged in the form of a continuum, at the first end of lie the more traditional role models while at the other end the more progressive ones lie. For example, Freeman (1982) introduced three approaches to teacher supervision: 1) the *supervisory approach* (with the supervisor as the authority figure), 2) the *alternatives approach* (with the supervisor as a provider of alternative perspectives), and 3) the *non-directive approach* (with the supervisor as "understander"). Gebhard (1990) expands upon Freeman's ideas and introduces five models:

1) *directive supervision* (with a supervisor who directs and evaluates teaching), 2) *alternative supervision* (with a supervisor and supervisee who share the responsibility for generating alternatives), 3) *collaborative supervision*(with a supervisor who works with but does not direct supervisees), 4) *non-directive supervision* (with a non-judgmental supervisor who listens to and restates supervisees' ideas), and 5) *creative supervision* (with a supervisor who makes use of a combination of approaches).

In language teacher education, Wallace (1991) established two different categories, *general supervision*, which is concerned with administrative aspects, and *clinical supervision*, which regards formative issues. The latter can be separated into a *prescriptive approach* and *collaborative approach*. According to the author's descriptions, clinical supervision focuses on teaching and other classroom aspects, and *"it implies a rejection of the applied science model and an acceptance of the reflective model of professional development"* (Wallace, 1991, p. 108). He understands clinical supervision as an interactive session between a supervisor and a teacher with the purpose of discussing and analyzing previously observed classroom teaching in order to promote professional development. It is relevant to mention that clinical supervision might be implemented in a variety of ways and that it is understood differently by some authors; this will be discussed later in this section.

Bailey (2006) argues that language teacher supervision is not only concerned with positive aspects, such as helping language teachers achieve their professional development, but it also includes less positive results such as providing negative feedback, ensuring that teachers adhere to program policies, and even firing them. Some of the supervisors' responsibilities might involve *"visiting and evaluating other teachers, discussing their lesson with them, and making recommendations to them about what to continue and what to change"* (Bailey, 2006, p. 3). However, these are not the only activities for which supervisors are responsible; their duties also include teaching courses and dealing with administrative tasks in teacher education programs.

According to Wallace (1991), a supervisor is *"anyone who has . . . the duty of monitoring and improving the quality of teaching"* (p. 107) teachers in a given educational context. In addition, Gebhard (1990) states that supervisors are responsible for directing teachers' teaching, offering suggestions, modeling teaching, advising teachers, and evaluating teachers' teaching. Sewall (2009) adds that supervisors also have to address another challenge because they play a dual role; they serve as mentors, guiding teachers, and as evaluators, assessing their teaching practice. Furthermore, the term 'supervisor' has a hierarchical connotation because it carries the meaning of expert- novice relationship. To comprehend this supervisor and supervisee relationship as a hierarchical one can be threatening or even negative and it might not be beneficial to teacher development (Kayaoglu, 2012).

Each model typifies a distinct approach to supervision, with different supervisor/supervisee expectations, relationships, and anticipated outcomes. Whatever approach we endorse, supervision is always challenging. One of the greatest challenges we face is how to turn negative attitudes towards supervision around so that teachers can reap the rewards and benefits in the form of professional development and improved instruction. In many English language teaching settings, we can counter the negative attitudes that teachers have towards supervision by adopting an approach which is more interactive than directive, more democratic than authoritarian, more teacher-centered than supervisor-centered, more concrete than vague, more objective than subjective, and more focused than unsystematic. Although each one of our teaching settings is distinct, we need a model of supervision that lends itself towards more productive supervisor/ supervisee interactions and outcomes. Approaches that are characterized by honest dialogue and constructive feedback will lead to professional growth and result in positive supervisor/supervisee experiences and outcomes.

The hierarchical relationship between teachers and supervisors has even been called a *"private cold war"* (Blumberg, 1980, p.i) because of the fact that supervision in some sense refers to "unpleasant responsibilities such as providing negative feedback, ensuring that teachers adhere to program policy, and even firing employees if the need arises" (Bailey, 2006, p.5), indicating a certain level of tension in the relationship between the two parties. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to explore the process from the teachers' points of view, on their genuine experience, if supervision is to be an integral part of teacher education for

the professional development of in particular, young teachers rather than a bureaucratic administrative school-based routine practice.

Previous research on language teacher supervision

Research has recently been conducted on the supervisory process from the standpoint of supervised English language teachers (e.g. Ong'ondo & Borg, 2011; Kayaoglu, 2012; Fasasi, 2011; Rahmany, Hasani, & Parhoodeh, 2014; Moradia, Sepehrifarb and Khadive, 2014; Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu, 2010; and Sharma, et al. 2012). For example, Fasasi (2011) conducted a study to ascertain teachers' perceptions of supervisory roles in primary schools in Osun State of Nigeria. It about was teachers' perceptions of the supervisory process influenced by contextual factors including years of teaching experience and work place. The study recommended regular conferences, seminar and workshops be organized for teachers and supervisors in order to encourage positive perception and foster good relationship between the two parties. In Iran a study by Rahmany, Hasani, & Parhoodeh (2014) explored Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes towards supervision and its influence on their classroom decision making. The findings revealed that the supervision program obviously failed to function for those teachers and that the program seemed to be only a paperwork job. Also, a study by Moradia, Sepehrifarb and Khadive (2014), which aimed to explore EFL teachers' perceptions concerning being observed during teaching by a supervisor, showed that EFL teachers while being observed tried to please their supervisors and ensure supervisors that they adhere to the program policy because they were worried about the consequences of getting the 'unsatisfactory' rating by supervisors and even being fired. Teachers believe many observers almost automatically look for things to criticize and also bad practices in observing cause them great problems and damage their confidence.

In Turkey Kayaoglu's study (2012) attempted to explore the supervisory process from the standpoint of supervised English language teachers in terms of whether the supervision process helped in improving their teaching and finding solutions to their work-related problems as part of in-service training. Results indicated that most surveyed EFL teachers viewed the current supervision as of no pedagogical or professional value and having no positive impact on teacher performance. On the contrary, Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2010) investigated English language teachers' perspectives of educational supervision in relation to their professional development in the Northern Cyprus. Results showed that

the educational supervisor highlights the strengths of the English language teachers' performance and encourages them to reflect upon their weaknesses and finds some resolutions to overcome them. Ong'ondo and Borg (2011) investigated the process of supervision by teacher educators and its influence on English language student teachers during practicum in Kenya. The analysis suggests that supervision was brief and un-coordinated and that the feedback student teachers received was mainly evaluative, directive and focused on general, rather than subject-specific pedagogy. A study by Sharma and Kannan (2012) explored the nature of instructional supervision carried out in schools in Malaysia. The findings of the study reflected that supervision served as a weapon for punishment rather than a tool for improvement. The findings also advocated for the need of instructional supervision to be conducted in more systematic manner by involving teachers, principals, subject teachers and subject specialists.

The above review of literature on supervision yielded essential insight into the nature of EFL teacher supervision in general and how to illuminate the status quo of EFL teacher supervision in Egypt in particular. More insight has been gained for contextualizing the expected findings of this study and locating them within the worldwide literature on EFL teacher supervision.

Definition of terms
EFL teachers
EFL teachers in the present study are those teachers whose current job is to teach EFL as a school subject, and not as a service subject, in the Egyptian governmental schools.

Supervision process
Supervision is a concept, originating from the Middle-age Latin and means *"examining and reviewing a text in terms of coherence with the original or the existing deviations or mistakes"* (Sullivan & Glanz, 2000:67). Nolan and Hoover (2004) defined teacher supervision as "…an *organizational function concerned with promoting teacher growth, which in turn leads to improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning"* (p. 26). EFL teacher supervision is a process aimed at providing guidance, support, and continuous assessment to EFL teachers for their professional development and improvement in the teaching-learning process, which relies on a system built on trust and collegial culture (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000). For the purpose of this study EFL supervision is defined as an ongoing process of EFL teacher education in

which the EFL supervisor observes what goes on in the EFL teacher's classroom with an eye towards improved instruction and greater student learning.

Interpretive-constructivist research stance

As anti-positivistic research stance, the interpretive-constructivist research stance emerged with the view that the social world was not possible to understood and examine through the research procedure that the natural scientists employ (Snadberg, 2005 & Rahman, 2015). In contrast, interpretive researchers reject this positivistic belief of reality, and they subscribe to the view that reality is socially constructed by humans and can be changed and understood subjectively (Corbetta, 2003; Marcon & Gopal, 2005; and Kroeze, 2012). In the interpretive research stance knowledge is obtained from the meaning of events (Richardson, 2012) and the meaning and understanding of social phenomena are uncovered (Young, 2009 & Kroeze, 2012).

In the present study, the interpretive-constructivist research stance refers to the view that social reality - in this study EFL teachers' perspectives on the supervision process- and lived experiences of EFL teachers can be understood subjectively through EFL teachers' expositions of their constructs rather than through the procedures used for generating knowledge within positivistic research.

Method
Research design

This study adopted the interpretive-constructivist research stance. In view of the exploratory nature of this study, the naturalistic orientation of qualitative research appeared to be an appropriate choice. The aim is to understand actualities; social realities and human perceptions that exist untainted by the unobtrusiveness of formal measurement or preconceived questions. The aim is to uncover the many idiosyncrasies and present 'slice-of-life' episodes documented through natural language to represent as closely as possible how people feel, what they know, and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions and understandings are. The study aims to come to grips with two kinds of social reality. The first is teachers' subjectively expressed evaluation of the supervision process that they live and experience, the second is the extent to which teachers' evaluations

are rooted in their context. Thus, in the context of this study, teachers are understood from the interpretive-constructivist stance or paradigm to be meaning-making organisms, theory builders who develop hypotheses, notice patterns, and construct theories of action from their lived experiences (Rahman, 2015). The interpretive-constructivist mode of inquiry has the potential to get the informants articulate their values. The social construction of reality and the ways in which social interaction reflects actors' unfolding definitions of their situations are the things which render the natural social world intelligible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). On the other hand, generalizability of findings to a wider context has never been a goal of naturalistic inquiry. Rather, the in-depth nature of the inquiry means that the findings give insightful explanations of a phenomenon, which could be useful to other people in similar situations (Barbour, 2014).

Instrumentation, sampling and data collection
1. EFL Teachers' questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed to collect data on EFL teachers' evaluation of the supervision process. The questionnaire consists of two main sections. The first collects information about EFL teachers' years of teaching experience, qualifications, and their current job positions. The issue of 'gender' was not included as it was felt that it would be of no effect. The second section is the main bulk of the questionnaire. It consists of eight sub-sections, representing eight aspects of the supervision process. A 3-point Likert scale was used with sub-sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 whereas a 5-point Likert scale was used with sub-sections 5, 6 and 7. These aspects are, as follows:

1. General evaluation of supervision by EFL teachers
2. Teachers' perceptions of objectivity of supervision
3. Teachers' perceptions of the current mode of supervision
4. Teachers' perceptions of the contributions of supervision to their professional development
5. Teachers' views about the process prior to classroom observation visit.
6. Teachers' views of the process during classroom observation visit.
7. Teachers' views about the process after classroom observation visit
8. Teachers' evaluations of their supervisors

Face validity of the questionnaire and the appropriateness and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items was assessed by ELT experts. Besides, reliability of the final version of the questionnaire was

assessed via the test-retest method by administering the questionnaire twice with 5 week-interval to a sample of 24 EFL teachers similar to those included in the sample of the main study. Both trials were crosschecked and compared and a .98 reliability coefficient (Cronbach" s alpha) was obtained. The questionnaire was then translated into Arabic and translation was validated by two professional translators. The purpose was to make sure that the target respondents would not find difficulty understanding the connotations of the terminology used. Questionnaires were then administered to a number of 209 EFL teachers drawn from a large population of EFL teachers working at different school levels (i.e. primary, preparatory and secondary). The convenient sampling model was used to select participants who were based in 8 school districts in 4 Egyptian governorates (Cairo, Giza, Sharkia and Qalubiya). Only 174 (82 male and 92 female) valid responses were returned representing a response rate of 83%. Table 1 below provides further information about participants' years of teaching experience and Table 2 provides information about their current job positions. The internal reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The resulting internal consistency coefficient was .920 indicating that the questionnaire was a reliable tool.

Table 1
EFL Teachers' Teaching Experience

Years of teaching experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	22	.126
6-10	37	.212
11-15	29	.166
16-20	41	.235
20 and above	45	.256
Total	174	100

Table 2
EFL Teachers' Job positions

Current Job Positions*	Frequency	Percentage
Assistant teacher	10	.057
Teacher	12	.069
Senior teacher	33	.189
Senior teacher plus	45	.258
Expert teacher	53	.305
Premium teacher	21	.120
Total	174	100

* This is the latest official categorization of teacher job positions nationwide according to the Ministerial decree 155.

2. The semi-structured interviews

A sub-sample of the questionnaire sample was voluntarily drawn from the questionnaire sample. At the end of the questionnaire there was a postscript asking the respondent if he/she liked to be contacted for further interview and clarifications. Only 33 respondents gave their initial consent for interviews. However, only 17 could be practically accessed (5 females and 12 males). Constraints acting against including a larger number of them included crammed and clashing teaching timetables; load of administrative school work; school festivals in some cases; etc. Moreover, the researcher was much more concerned with getting an in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon than providing a surface description of its nature. The interviews were conducted in an atmosphere void of tension and annoyance and the teachers felt comfortable with a flexible interviewing schedule adopted by the researcher. Since every respondent to the questionnaire was given a number, his/her filled questionnaire acted as a springboard (i.e. a trigger) for the interview. The researcher was keen to dig deeper into their thinking to get hold of the rationales they provide for their responses and evaluations of different aspects of supervision process. This helped to validate and authenticate the questionnaire responses and helped to make their responses more grounded into their thinking. In addition a protocol was prepared beforehand and refined during the process of interviewing the informants (Appendix 1). Thus, the interviews helped to explore teachers' constructs of their world and see reality through their lenses, a basic principle of the interpretive constructivist research design. The aim was to avoid building hunches about teachers' reality without living this reality through their glasses since they are the real practitioners.

Data analysis

Respondents were asked to take positions towards 33 statements of the second section of EFL Teachers' Questionnaire. They were explained that these positions must most closely reflect their opinions about the current classroom supervision they are exposed to. Besides, they were assured that their responses would not be seen by anyone except the researcher. For the sake of anonymity they were not asked to provide their names or the names of their schools. This helped to obtain as much reliable responses as possible. Their responses were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences)

version 22.0 for Windows. Both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were used. One-way ANOVA was applied to check whether there was a statistically significant difference between sub-samples of the questionnaire sample due to variations in qualifications, teaching experience and current job position. Interestingly enough no statistically significant difference whatsoever was recorded, something that made it easy to deal with the data as a whole lot. Thus, the descriptive data analysis was found most appropriate for this type of data.

Interviews that were semi-structured and phenomenological in fashion were tape- recorded, respondent-validated and, then transcribed and analyzed using Miles, Huberman and Saldaña's (2014) marginal coding technique. The coding process helped to categorize and sub-categorize the themes arising from the interview transcripts. These themes matched those of the main sections of the questionnaire.

Results

Presentation of results will follow the same order of the research questions posed earlier. The results of the questionnaire data analysis are presented section by section, with each section followed by exemplar pertinent interview comments. This mix between the quantitative data and teachers' live voices recorded in the interviews helps to substantiate EFL teachers' responses and make them more situated in their respective localities.

Research question (1): To what extent is the current supervision process useful as perceived by EFL teachers?

Table 3 deals with general approach of EFL teachers towards the current supervision they were exposed to. Overall analysis of the responses to the 3 items in Table 3 strongly indicates that most of the EFL teachers appear to have developed negative attitudes towards the supervision. It is noticeable to note that 62.1 % of the EFL teachers consider the task of the current supervision as clerical and administrative duty or bureaucratic business. Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising to find that most of the teachers (59.8%) found the current supervision not useful. Nevertheless, it is also equally important to note here that despite these negative feelings of EFL teachers (54 %) still believe in the necessity of supervision for professional development, indicating teachers are not against the idea of being supervised. Rather, they are against how it is being conducted.

Table 3

General Evaluation of Supervision by EFL teachers

The current supervision…	Agree		Disagree		No idea	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
1 is useful.	58	33.3	104	59.8	12	6.9
2 is necessary.	73	42.	94	54	7	4.0
3 mostly for paperwork and formalities.	108	62.1	51	29.3	15	8.6

The EFL teachers' articulated views of the usefulness of the supervision process came consistent with their responses to the questionnaire items presented above. Though they believe in the usefulness of the supervisor's role, they said that supervisors are mainly interested in paper work and formalities rather than the main core of the supervision process itself. Exemplar pertinent quotes are given below. Supervision process is just a routine work or paperwork for the supervisor due to administrative concerns.

> *"...He [...the supervisor] just comes coz he must come. It's just a plan and he is following it. Sometimes he doesn't and just phones to sign for him. I don't think I benefit from him. This is a reality that everybody knows". (T/7)*

The quality of the supervisor is also an issue that deserves attention when supervisors are recruited.

> *"...it is useful as said in books. But what can I get from her? I know English much better than her. I don't know how she became a supervisor. I think she just doesn't like to teach anymore. She has been chosen because she has mediation. I need a supervisor that represents a challenge to learn from". (T/4)*

Research question (2): To what extent is the current supervision process objective as perceived by EFL teachers?

Concerning EFL teachers' perceptions of the objectivity of supervision process, the first three items given in Table 4 below were met with mixed feelings that were basically divided in the majority between

'disagree' and 'no idea' and leaning to the latter response. This emphasizes EFL teachers' lacking of knowledge of whether supervisors use objective criteria or standardized measures in assessing their teaching performance. This indicates that teachers are not informed of how their teaching performance is evaluated or through which criteria their performance is being assessed. Teachers' response to the third item is a reasonable and quite expected result of this lack of knowledge much more than half of the teachers (58%) did not find the current supervision helpful to identify and solve the problems they face.

Table 4
EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Objectivity of Supervision

The current supervision…	Agree		Disagree		No idea	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
1 relies on scientific and objective criteria	16	9.2	58	33.3	100	57.5
2 evaluates and measures classroom activities objectively.	24	13.8	64	36.8	86	49.4
3 defines the problems and helps in their solutions.	11	6.3	102	58.6	61	35.1

The teachers expressed their views of the extent to which the supervision process is run objectively. Expressed views in this respect show that teachers do not have an idea about how their performance is being assessed

> *"The supervisor just comes in and takes notes and sometimes he doesn't. I don't know how he judges me and my students. If students are answering the questions that I or he asks, then he thinks I'm good. If not, then, I'm not"* (T/6).

The supervisor's role in solving the daily teaching problems facing teachers is almost non-existent.

"...she [the supervisor] never asks me about the problems that I have. Sometimes, I ask her help to sort out problems like large class, less time for workbook or homework correction. Once I asked her to tell me how to manage the activity on 'Critical thinking' she told me to skip it or turn it into a paragraph writing exercise" (T/10).

"If I ask his help, he wouldn't be at ease with me afterwards. That's why it's good not to ask his help. It's good to obey him all the way long without asking otherwise he'll be very angry with you." (T/11)

Other comments tended to be in the form of hopes for supervision to play its intended role. Comments focused on the collegiality that should be the focus of supervision.

"I hope that supervision should depend on a real vision of the teaching process in reality. The supervisor should attend the class not to downgrade the teacher, but for the teacher to learn from him so that pupils benefit and make use of his experience and also through teachers attending one another's classes". (T/7)

Research question (3): How do EFL teachers evaluate the current mode of supervision they are exposed to?

Responses to the items in Table 5 justify EFL teachers' negative feelings towards the current supervision process. From the teachers' viewpoint, the current supervision practices are basically carried out for the purpose of inspection and evaluation. The supervisor's main interest is to look for errors in the teacher's performance (51%) in an authoritative or non-democratic way (62.6) within an atmosphere that induces fear and excitement within the teachers (68%). In an atmosphere based on control (64%) and inspection (65%) it is hard to talk about shared responsibilities (13%). These responses indicate that the relationship between the two sides is hierarchical in nature where the supervisor dominates the whole process with no teacher involvement or collaboration in a real sense.

Table 5

EFL Teachers' Perceptions of the Mode of Supervision

The current supervision…	Agree		Disagree		No idea	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
1 is more or less "looking for errors".	89	51.1	27	15.5	58	33.3
2 is authoritative rather than democratic.	109	62.6	46	26.4	19	10.9
3 includes sharing mutual responsibilities and participation between the teacher and the supervisor.	23	13.2	94	54	57	32.8
4 is done with the aim of control, rather than improvement.	111	63.8	34	19.5	29	16.7
5 is inspection rather than a collaborative process.	113	64.9	46	26.4	15	8.6
6 creates fear and excitement in teachers.	118	67.8	11	6.3	45	25.9
7 focuses mostly on the teacher.	111	63.8	24	13.8	39	22.4

Questions posed to teachers yielded numerous responses that reflect the actual world that teachers experience from their own perspectives. An exemplar quote that expresses the authoritative mode says;

> *"I'm already under her control all the time. She sends me to the school she thinks I'm good for. She writes an annual report on my work. She holds all the threads of the game. What do you expect? I have to obey her all the way long."(T/4)*

Feelings of fear and excitement created during the supervisor's visit sometimes lead teachers to avoid coming to school in case they know the day the supervisor is coming;

> *"I sometimes avoid going to school the day I know she is coming coz I don't feel I benefit that much from her. She just checks on me and spends most of the supervisory visit reading my lesson plans to find mistakes." (T/10)*

Teachers' emphasized that the supervision process is in many aspects a kind of "*inspection and superficial outlook to the teacher and his lesson plans.*" (T/15)

Research question (4): How do EFL teachers perceive the contributions of the current supervision process to their professional development?

Teachers' perceptions of the contributions that the current supervision process may have for their professional development are presented in Table 6 below. As observed through the figures, responses to this section are reasonable results for their negative feelings cited above. A cursory look at the figures shows that the current supervision fails to assist teachers in finding solutions to their problems in classroom (71%). Supervision is far from providing leadership to teachers to be better able to improve their classroom performance. To our surprise, supervision which is supposed to be an important element of in-service training for the professional growth of teachers serves to work against teachers' motivations to increase their productivity and enhance their efficiency (61 %). Furthermore, it does not help teachers in teaching their courses (68%) and discover their shortcomings (71%).

Table 6

EFL Teachers' Views about Contributions of Supervision to their Professional Development

The current supervision…	Agree		Disagree		No idea	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1 provides me with the educational leadership skills.	10	5.7	119	68.4	45	25.9
2 increases my production and efficiency in my classroom.	16	9.2	106	60.9	52	29.9
3 guides us in problem-solving.	11	6.3	124	71.3	39	22.4
4 provides educational materials and assists in our courses.	15	8.6	119	68.4	40	23.0
5 increases my motivation and morale.	12	6.9	113	64.9	49	28.2
6 made contribution to my professional growth.	16	9.2	106	60.9	52	29.9
7 enhances my teaching skills and practice.	18	10.3	118	67.8	38	21.8
8 helps me to discover my shortcomings.	16	9.2	124	71.3	34	19.5
9 helps me to develop better ways to overcome instructional problems.	13	7.5	43	24.7	118	67.8

Regarding the significance of supervision in their professional lives, teachers displayed controversial ideas, something that reflected the diversity between what they believe in and what they actually experience. Almost all of the teachers noted that educational supervision can contribute to their professional progress, whereas the supervisory process used in the actual educational setting where they are teaching is completely different from the way it should be. This was expressed as follows:

> *"...Until I experienced the first classroom-visit by a supervisor, I considered this process as a fruitful phenomenon but I was surprised because I wasn't provided any feedback by the supervisor after the observation." (T/9)*

> *"...Of course, educational supervision can be very beneficial for my professional growth provided that it should be used correctly". (T/2)*

The need for feedback was stressed by the teachers

> *"...When I think of supervision, I wish to see methods different from those I have ever experienced in my professional life till today. If supervision consists of merely the supervisor's coming to the classroom unexpectedly and leaving as soon as the lesson is over, I don't prefer it even if it is useful." (T/11)*

The supervisor should adopt a more humanistic approach;

> *"...I need a supervisor who can help me or guide me to start building up my professional life...Well; I hope that supervisors become friendly." (T/7)*

The need for teacher autonomy reiterated amongst informants;

> *"Sometimes I think about trying new ways with my pupils! Something I read on the Internet. When I did it, he didn't like it coz it is not familiar for him may be, or coz it's not in the textbook." (T/16)*

Supervisors were also blamed for not giving teachers guidance on how to solve their daily problems, which resulted in their feeling of frustration;

"They just ask for the lesson plan to check and see if there are language mistakes and then sign. They come all that way long just to sign their names. They don't listen to us, to see the problems we are having." (T/11)

Research question (5): How do EFL teachers see the current supervision process prior to, during and after classroom observation?

This section addresses the three phases of supervision. Table 7 presents the relationship between supervisors and teachers before the classroom visit. For the supervision to be effective and be of pedagogical value, the pre-classroom conference is of great importance. This conference should be based on the principle of mutual understanding and collaboration. On the contrary, responses to this section indicate that the pre-visit conference is almost non-existent or of no value. The stunning response is the one to the first item to show that the majority of teachers never have pre-classroom visit conference with their supervisors and so they are not given an essential opportunity to express their personal concerns, expectations and problems to their respective supervisors. Moreover, responses given to the last item in Table 7 below (i.e. "*the supervisor decides everything on his/her own.*") strongly emphasize the above response that the supervisor is just after control and far from being democratic. They also highlight teachers' perceptions that supervisors exercise their own power and authority upon teachers. This badly affects the atmosphere in which both sides work and consequently mitigates the quality of classroom instruction.

Table 7

EFL Teachers' Views about the Process Prior to Classroom Observation Visit

Before the observation visit...	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Seldom		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1 I have a meeting with the supervisor to state my personal concerns, expectations and problems.	1	.6	6	3.4	11	6.3	51	29.3	105	60.3
2 I discuss the characteristics of the classes and the lessons with the supervisor.	5	2.9	14	8.0	23	13.2	89	51.1	43	24.7
3 The supervisor decides everything on his/her own.	58	33.3	75	43.1	16	9.2	19	10.9	6	3.4

Teachers gave a variety of responses portraying the happenings of the pre-classroom visit meeting. A large number of them mentioned that these meetings are not placed in the supervisors' agenda. These meetings rarely or almost never happen in reality may be because of lack of time or facilities. A pertinent comment said;

> "Where can we sit together? There is no place to discuss, as you've seen, my expectations and problems or any difficulty in teaching the course. If I talk about problems, it will be a problem for me" (T/5).

Even in cases where these meetings occur, "most of the supervisors' directions – as some teachers said- are not applicable because they are too idealistic". An exemplar comment, which is related to the supervisor's direction of using groupwork, says;

> "My supervisor was correct when she asked me to use groupwork as the textbook says. How? There are more than 65 pupils in front of me. If she were in my place, she herself couldn't do it. So, she should solve it." (T/10)

Teachers complained of their current supervisors' lacking of knowledge of modern technology which would have been a good way of communication and alternative to face-to-face meetings. A pertinent exemplar comment says;

> "My supervisor does not have a Facebook or even email account. She doesn't even have smartphone. If she knew how to use Internet, she would be perfect. She would at least tell me she is coming beforehand. Usually, we sit at our school and she surprises us with her sudden visits." (T/10)

As for the classroom visit Table 8 below presents the responses related to teachers' perceptions of what happens during the classroom visit. As indicated by the figures, the majority of EFL teachers (77%) always and usually feel nervous and under pressure when they have someone present in the classroom observing and taking notes (almost 60%) to evaluate their performance.

Table 8

EFL Teachers' Views about the Process during Classroom Observation Visit

During the observation visit…	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Seldom		Never	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
1 I feel tense because of the existence of a person in the classroom who is observing and evaluating me.	58	33.3	76	43.7	15	8.6	19	10.9	6	3.4
2 The supervisor takes some notes.	46	26.4	59	33.9	19	10.9	38	21.8	12	6.9

The above data do not allow us to account for reasons. Nevertheless, the fact that a great number of teachers are well aware of supervisors' taking notes while observing may serve enough to alert the teachers. Some teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with the process of supervision during the classroom visit. An episode by one of them is exemplar in this context, as follows.

> *"...once she [the supervisor] was attending a class for me and while I was teaching a phonics activity, she stopped me and asked the students to repeat after her one of the words I pronounced wrongly. This actually frustrated me. She should have done it in a different way" (T/4).*

Feelings of anxiety were also reported;

> *"I feel anxious about when I'm teaching and he [the supervisor] is watching me during (classroom visit) as I am a new teacher. I get excited more than the experienced ones and I am very curious about what he is writing about me." (T/16)*

As is the case with the 'before classroom observation visit", figures in Table 9 below show that the post-observation meeting also appears to be lacking the form of a systematic well-planned session given the fact that 85% of teachers stated that they seldom (14%) or never (71%) get feedback on their performance from their respective supervisors based on objective ways of data recording. Moreover, over 85% of the teachers seldom (16%) or never (69%) get a written report on their performance from their supervisors.

Table 9

EFL Teachers' Views about the Process after Classroom Observation Visit

After the observation visit…	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Seldom		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1 The supervisor provides me with feedback using objective observational data.	2	1.1	6	3.4	18	10.3	24	13.8	124	71.3
2 I get a written report of their evaluation.	2	1.1	6	3.4	18	10.3	28	16.1	120	69.0

Some teachers complained of their supervisors' feedback after classroom observation visit being mainly focused on teachers' mistakes without showing them how to solve problems. The 'don't tell me but show me' principle was apparently dominant in their reactions;

> *"The process of supervision should be a process of teaching. I hope the supervisor teaches in front of me so that I can benefit from her and follow her steps." (T/10)*

Some teachers gave opinions that express a sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo of the supervision process. Others gave suggestions to enhance and improve the current situation, such as peer observation and conference presentations:

> *"I wish to have collaboration and friendly discussions after the observations and also I really want to observe my colleagues' classes so that I can have some insights for my own teaching." (T/14)*

> *"I would like to attend seminars and conferences but I don't feel motivated enough. Maybe, I can present a paper at one of these conferences." (T/13)*

Research question (6): How do EFL teachers evaluate their current supervisors?

Table 10 presents EFL teachers' evaluations of their immediate current supervisors. Issues evaluated include supervisors' possession of guiding skills which were, as reported by the majority of teachers (65%), their current supervisors lacked. Moreover, the majority of teachers (61%) considered their supervisors to be lacking knowledge of the target language.

On the other hand, the supervisor's acting of the roles of judge and controller was seen as a fact by a considerable number of responses (95 responses), which emphasizes and verifies the responses related to mode of supervision given above.

Table 10

EFL Teachers' Evaluation of their Supervisors

The supervisors I have met...	Agree		disagree		No idea	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1 have guiding skills	12	6.9	113	64.9	49	28.2
2 know English well	16	9.2	106	60.9	52	29.9
3 are like a judge	77	44.3	63	36.2	34	19.5
4 are like a controller	89	51.1	27	15.5	58	33.3

Teachers' articulated perceptions were moving in almost the same direction. They complained of their supervisors' lacking of guidance or supervisory skills, knowledge of English (i.e. language proficiency) and knowledge of English language pedagogy, things that pertain closely to the supervisor's qualifications. Their negative evaluations of their supervisors are exemplified in the following comments;

> *"What happens is she comes to the school without a prior notice. She sits in the headmaster's office and asks for my lesson plan to put her signature on it and that's it. She doesn't have anything to give. She should come to see me in class to see the reality of the situation." (T/5)*

> *"The supervisor does not know how to use the computer. She doesn't have an email to connect to her when I need to discuss something urgent with her. She didn't know the new methods. I think I didn't learn anything from her" (T/10).*

> *"I have a master degree in ELT and I know English and the methodology of English much better than the supervisor. I don't*

care if she comes or not because I know she is just interested in signing a visit report." (T/11)

"All through my career I cannot remember that I was visited by a supervisor two times. For the benefit yes, the supervisor is useful but this is just on paper while in reality nothing happens." (T/7)

At times the supervisor has got the knowledge of the target language but is lacking the necessary interpersonal skills;

"My supervisor is just rigid. He doesn't know how to deal with us. He just gives orders and insists to do this in front of the school headmaster. Besides, he favours some teachers by giving them low teaching loads." (T/9)

Discussion of results

Investigating EFL teacher supervision in Egypt has not been an easy task. This difficulty arises from the fact that the relationship between the teacher and the supervisor has always been based on suspicion, fear and uneasiness. That is why it has been tough to delve into this relationship and untangle its itchy dimensions.

Results of the study showed that the supervision process is more or less a matter of paper work and formalities. More specifically, results indicated that EFL teachers perceived supervision as unnecessary and mostly a paper work process. From the evidences it can be observed that supervision in Egyptian schools is not conducted effectively. This means that the benefit out of the process is not at all observed. Almost all the teachers commented that they are not at all benefited by the instructional supervision. This finding recurred in prior research in similar EFL contexts (e.g. Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu, 2010; Ong'ondo & Borg, 2011; Fasasi, 2011; Sharma & Kannan, 2012; Kayaoglu, 2012; Rahmany, Hasani, & Parhoodeh, 2014; Moradia, Sepehrifarb & Khadive, 2014). For example, Kayaoglu (2012) explored the supervisory process from the standpoint of supervised Turkish English language teachers. Results indicated that supervision appears to fail to live up to EFL teachers' expectations and is not of pedagogical or professional value and does not have a positive impact on teacher performance. Likewise, Moradia, Sepehrifarb and Khadivc (2014) explored Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions on supervision. Results showed that teachers in those observations tried to please their supervisors and that observation feedback is only superficial.

Results of the study indicated that the supervisory process they experienced is of the authoritarian mode through which the role of the supervisor is to direct and inform the teacher, model teaching behaviors, and evaluate the teacher's mastery of defined behaviors. It is also characterized by negative humanistic consequences that may arise from using a directive model of supervision, which was apparent from the interviewees' articulations of their perceptions. This mode is also prescriptive. Namely, it forces teachers to comply with what the supervisor thinks they should do. On the long run teachers become less autonomous. Within this mode inspection and control rather than collaboration and improvement dominate and the teachers is all the time doing his/her best to satisfy the supervisor's expectations and not acting in accordance with what he/she thinks as good teaching practice. This finding recurred in prior research in similar EFL contexts (e.g. Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010; Ong'ondo & Borg, 2011; Fasasi, 2011; Kayaoglu, 2012; Sharma & Kannan, 2012; Rahmany, Hasani & Parhoodeh, 2014; Moradia, Sepehrifarb & Khadive, 2014; Tesfaw & Hofman, 2014).

Results of the study showed that actual classroom visits are rarely carried in reality. It has been clear from teachers' articulated reflections that the supervisory approach is summative, administrative and purposive, the purpose being completion of paper work. Supervisors are mainly concerned with their physical visibility in school while the teacher's feelings of ownership of supervision are not seen. This finding was also reported in a study by Tesfaw and Hofman (2014) in Ethiopia which aimed to examine the existing perceptions of teachers toward instructional supervision in secondary schools in Addis Ababa. The results revealed that the selected supervisory approaches were infrequently practiced in schools. This also reiterated in a study by Usman (2015) in the Iraqi context. He found that the supervisors' main concerns were to check students' notebooks, check teachers' lesson plan/notes and inspect teachers' record keeping.

Results of the study showed that no statistically significant difference whatsoever in perception of supervisory practices amongst the sub-samples of the main study sample of EFL teacher due to differences in qualifications, teaching experience or current job positions. The impact of experience was investigated in similar research contexts (e.g. Tesfaw & Hofman, 2014; Rahmany & Hasani, 2014; etc.). For example, Tesfaw and Hofman's (2014) study reported no significant differences between beginner and experienced teachers in their attitudes and satisfaction toward supervisory processes practiced at their schools. Also, a study by Rahmany, Hasani and Parhoodeh (2014) on EFL teacher supervision,

which attempted to explore Iranian EFL teachers' attitude towards supervision and its relationship to teachers' teaching experience, showed that teachers with six to ten years of teaching experience appeared to be the most pessimists amongst others.

Results of the study showed that most of the EFL teachers took the position that the existing supervisory practices do not satisfy teachers' overall professional development needs. More specifically, they do not add to teachers' pedagogical skills, or help to enhance their morale. Moreover, as long as the focus is on errors, supervisory approaches followed do not help teachers discover their shortcomings by themselves, or develop new ways to eliminate their problems. These reactions can undermine the viability of the current supervisory practices altogether. Moreover, feelings of fear and anxiety created by supervisors' focus on errors and adoption of judgmental roles could promote demotivation and enhance teachers' negative attitudes towards supervisors and supervision. This has been clearly noticed from teachers' articulated reactions to the supervisory practices they currently experience. Teachers suffered from the traditional model of supervision characterized by authoritarian orientation and power exercised by the supervisor, who apparently did not feel any need to establish a trust-based working relationship with teachers. What makes matters worse is the case that supervisors do not have enough essential training on supervision and leadership skills, which lie at the heart of the supervision process. Even with enough training supervisors might be haunted by the traditional deeply-rooted authoritarian stereotype of the supervisor. What makes this stereotype inevitable is the teachers' holding of the same stereotype. In this respect teachers do their best to act in accordance with the expectations of their supervisors who, in turn, expect teachers to be submissive all the way long.

Teachers do not feel they benefit professionally from the supervision visits. This feeling of dissatisfaction was reported before by previous research (e.g. Kayaoglu, 2012; Rahmany, Hasani & Parhoodeh, 2014; Shukri, 2014). For example, Kayaoglu's (2012) study, which aimed to explore the supervisory process from the standpoint of supervised English language teachers, showed that the current supervision is not of pedagogical or professional value and does not have a positive impact on teacher performance. Besides, the supervisors were lacking skills of leadership and guidance side by side with language skills. The teachers criticized the qualities of the supervisors they currently have in the sense that they had no idea about current teaching techniques or methods and the ICT skills, which are essential. Also, Rahmany, Hasani and

Parhoodeh's (2014) study showed that the supervision program obviously failed to function for those teachers who had 16 years of teaching experience and more, and that the program seemed to be only a paperwork job. On the contrary, other research studies reported feelings of satisfaction amongst teachers with the supervision process they undergo. For example, in a comparative study between Canadain and Ukranian teachers' perceptions of supervision, Kutsyuruba (2003) found out that the majority of teachers in both countries were highly satisfied with the process of supervision. Moreover, he found a relationship between their level of satisfaction and their level of professional development.

Articulated perceptions of the teachers revealed that they desired more frequent supervision visits that meet their individual professional needs and not those that focus on errors and inspection. Besides, they expressed a need for more collaborative supervisory approaches and less authoritarian ones. They advocated a need supervision that promotes trust and collaboration, and that provides them with support, advice, and help, things that are necessary for professional development.

Results of the present study indicated that EFL teachers have negative attitudes towards supervision. These negative attitudes, as indicated especially by the analysis of the interviews, were an output of the amalgamation between the traditional images of the supervisor, which are based in EFL teachers' background, and their currently experienced supervisory practices. Thus, there lies the challenge of trying to transform these negative attitudes into positive ones so that teachers can reap the rewards and benefits of supervision for their professional development and for promoting their students' learning outcomes. These negative attitudes were reported by similar research studies in similar English language teaching settings (e.g. Kayaoglu, 2012; Rahmany, Hasani & Parhoodeh, 2014; Shukri, 2014; Usman, 2015). For example, in the Iraqi English language teaching context, Usman (2015) found that teachers do have negative attitudes towards supervision due to their supervisors' focus on errors and adoption of judgmental approach to supervision and not on the developmental one. Also, Kayaoglu (2012) found out similar feelings of dissatisfaction amongst Turkish EFL teachers due to the incompetent supervisory process. Also, Shukri's (2014) study on female Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions of the supervision process found out that the observations conducted by supervisors were generally evaluative rather than developmental, something that created a sense of dissatisfaction amongst EFL teachers.

The whole picture of the research phenomenon is like a jewel that has several facets. The data reported by this study represent a facet of the

truth, a portion of reality. The facet investigated by the present study is represented in the teachers' perspectives/constructs of reality as it is lived by them rather than as it should be. This is a merit of the interpretive-constructivist research stance adopted by the study. Reality is subjective and envisaged from different perspectives. Even research participants are not molded into one crate. Rather they are active co-researchers and unique individuals. They are the actual practitioners of reality. This adds a new dimension which is the improbability of generalizing the research findings. Yet, the authenticity, depth and genuineness of the data are the criterion that might help to throw credibility and empathy on the research findings.

Findings and recommendations

The findings of the present study and recommendations they pose can be placed as follows:

- Results of the study indicated that EFL teachers are not aware of the criteria in the light of which their performances are being assessed. In this respect, supervisors should make some effort towards raising teachers' awareness of criteria so that evaluation of their teaching performance can be more objective, realistic and developmental and far from being based on subjective or personal norms.

- Results of the study indicated that EFL teachers are exposed to authoritarian modes of supervision. It is, thus, recommended that EFL teacher supervisors be trained on different supervision styles, especially those that encourage collegiality and partnership between both parties.

- Results of the study referred to the impact of traditional and culturally-bound approaches to teacher evaluation (i.e. inspection) that shaped both the EFL teacher's and the EFL teacher supervisor's expectations. Thus, collaborate training can be made to target both parties' misconceptions of the supervision process.

- In the present study EFL teachers complained of their supervisors' lacking of ICT skills, (e.g. Email, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.). As a result, supervisors should be trained on these skills for two main purposes. The first is to keep up to date with the latest developments in English language pedagogy and supervision skills and the second is to make use of social media channels to build up communication networks with their supervisees. This helps to compensate the lack of

face-to-face on-site meetings and build a sense of community and collegiality between the two parties which is essential for teacher professional development.

- Teachers complained of the paucity of actual classroom visits paid by their immediate supervisors. In this respect, supervision should be conducted regularly in all schools in order to enhance interaction among teachers and supervisors. For this to be made more possible, supervisors should be freed from administrative duties, and their mission should be focused on the professional monitoring of their supervisee teachers. Moreover, supervisors should train onsite teachers on supervision and feedback-provision skills so that teachers can pay classroom visits to one another. This helps to build a sense of partnership and collegiality amongst teachers.

- Findings in the present study indicate that supervisors' main focus during classroom visits is placed on their supervisee teachers' errors, something exemplar of inspection. In this respect, supervisors should thus be trained on the developmental aspect of supervision.

- The present study indicated the absence of good EFL supervisory policy. So, the Ministry of Education should come up with a supervisory policy that encompasses clinical supervision programmes. The ministry should also encourage developmental supervision workshops, in-service courses for supervisors to equip them with clinical supervision skills in schools.

- The EFL teachers complained of the negative relationship with their supervisors. So, there should be regular meetings of supervisors and supervisees through workshops and seminars. These could foster positive relationship and better understanding of their interdependent roles.

- Results of the present study indicated that EFL teachers have negative attitudes towards the current supervisory practices they experience. In this respect efforts should be made to counter these negative attitudes that teachers have towards supervision by adopting an approach which is more interactive than directive, more democratic than authoritarian, more teacher-centered than supervisor-centered, more concrete than vague, and more objective than subjective. This can be realized through training supervisors on leadership and supervisory skills. This

training should set the example to be followed in partnership, collegiality and mutual trust so that supervisors can assimilate these values and use them afterwards with the supervisee EFL teachers.

Suggestions for further research

- Investigation in the present study contained a relatively small population of EFL teachers. It would be beneficial to investigate the perspectives of a larger population belonging to different school levels to see the variety of perceptions that teachers might have related to supervision.

- The present study targeted EFL teachers only apart from their supervisors. Further research studies are thus needed to ascertain EFL supervisors' perceptions of the supervision process and ascertain the complexity of the relationship between both parties. This helps to see the whole picture. Thus, illuminating the areas of disagreement will enable the supervisors to evaluate their work with teachers in the light of the teachers' opinions.

- Focus in the present study was only on state schools EFL teachers. Considering the various types of schools within the educational sector in Egypt, future research is necessary to ascertain the status quo of EFL teacher supervision in private schools. This would help to gain more insight into the impact of different educational contexts on different aspects of EFL teacher supervision.

- Findings of the present study indicated that teachers suffered from more authoritarian modes of supervision. Thus, further studies should try to investigate the impact of different modes of teacher supervision on EFL teachers' job satisfaction.

- The present study was conducted during a relatively short period of time. Thus, longitudinal studies are needed to investigate the supervision process over a long span of time to get deeper insight into the nature of the EFL teacher supervision process.

- The data collected in the present study were of the self-report type. Namely, EFL teachers articulated their images/constructs of the supervision process. Thus, further research is needed to investigate

both the immediate and long-term impact of supervisory meetings on teachers' classroom teaching behaviours.

- Further research is also needed to record and analyze the supervisory meetings discourse to gain more insight into the potential contributions of these meetings and direct them so that they can lead to the professional development of EFL teachers.

Conclusion

It would be unfair and naïve to blame EFL teacher supervisors for all the mistakes and the negatively-loaded EFL teacher supervision atmosphere. Taking into consideration the fact that supervisors do not receive much professional training to be a supervisor, they inherently act on the traditional old image of supervision and supervisor role which can be summarized as authoritarian. This represents a very big threat to the meaningful involvement of teachers, mutual trust, professional respect and a sense of constructive dialogue to grow between the supervisor and the supervisees. In order for the supervision to be of a pedagogic value, there should be a very strong commitment to democratic involvement when working with teachers in the sense that collaborative-decision making and professional working relationship between the two sides should be ensured. This should not be something done for or to teachers but with the teachers, necessitating a very well planned pre and post conferences to be based on objective data. Because each teaching setting is distinct, what is needed is a model of supervision that lends itself towards more productive supervisor/ supervisee interactions and outcomes. Approaches that are characterized by honest dialogue and constructive feedback will lead to professional growth and result in positive supervisor/supervisee experiences and outcomes. Clinical supervision is one of non-traditional approaches that meet the criteria specified above. Closer examination of this approach reveals that the use of clinical supervision techniques can radically change supervisor/supervisee relationships, resulting in less stress and anxiety on the part of both the supervisor and teacher and a more positive teacher response to supervision. Clinical supervision can create an atmosphere based on mutual trust and assist EFL teachers in improving their instructional performance. This is because clinical supervision is characterized by democratic and teacher-centered features. This helps to eliminate the feeling of 'cold war' between the two sides. Doing without, this war will stay unresolved until a relationship based on collaboration and collegiality guided by professional and interpersonal norms has been established between both parties.

Acknowledgment

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Appendices of the study

Appendix (1): Protocol of the semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers

Importance of supervision

- What do think about the current supervision?
- Do you think it is useful or necessary for you? Why? Why not? In what way? Give me an/some example(s) to show it is/isn't necessary?
- When the supervisor comes to your school what is most important for him/her? To record the classroom visit/school visit? Tell me about it?
- How frequent does your supervisor pays you a classroom visit? Do you like being visited? Why? Why not?
- How do you feel when having your supervisor observing you in class? tell me about it? Do you feel nervous? Or not? Why? Give me an example.

Teachers' views on objectivity of supervision

- Do you normally have an idea about what sort of criteria your supervisor is using in the assessment of your teaching performance? Why? Why not? What do you think about this? If not, how does it move then?
- While observing you, does your supervisor use a checklist or a standard observation form? Tell me how he/she records her observations? Does he/she take notes while observing you in class?
- Does he/she help you define problems and suggests solutions? How? Give me examples.

Mode(s) of supervision

- What do you think about the mode of the current supervision that you experience?
- When you supervisor visits you in the classroom, what's his/her main concern? Looking for errors in teaching performance? How? Give me an example.
- Does he/she discuss things with you? How? Can you negotiate issues with him/her? How? Is your supervisor encouraging you to discuss issues with him? In what way?

- While being observed by the supervisor, how do you feel? Why?
- Do you think that the current supervision is more or less a kind of inspection? Why? Why not? Give me an example?

Contributions of supervision to their professional development

- To what extent are the current supervision practices useful for your professional development? Guides in solving problems? Discover your shortcomings? How?
- If any, what sort of skills does it add to you? Give me an example?
- How do the supervision visits affect your teaching performance? Give examples?
- Does it help you solve problems? How? If yes, give me an example?
- Does your supervisor encourage you to develop professionally? How?

Phases of supervision

- **Before the classroom** visit do you have a meeting with your supervisor? If yes, where? What normally happens during this meeting?
- What issues do you normally discuss? Give examples.
- **During observation** how do you normally feel? Give me examples.
- What is the supervisor's main concern?
- When observing you, does he/she take notes or does he use a checklist? What do you think is better to use?
- **After the classroom observation** do you have a meeting with your supervisor? If yes, where? What normally happens?
- Does he/she give you some feedback on your teaching? What normally attracts his/her attention in your teaching performance?
- In what form do you get the feedback? Is it oral or written or both? Do you get a report on the classroom visit? How? Give some examples?

Teachers' views about supervisors in general

- Can you evaluate the supervisors you have seen so far?
- What can you benefit from them? (e. g. language skills, guiding skills, etc.)

- Talk about the way they have been dealing with you?
- How do you describe the relationship between you and your current supervisor?