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A Study of the Implicit Reading Beliefs of a Cohort of College EFL Readers and Their Responses to Narrative Text

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implicit reading beliefs (RBs) of a cohort of diverse English-as-a foreign language (EFL) undergraduate university students and their responses to a narrative text. Sixty-two ($n = 62$) students enrolled in an introductory reading education course participated in the study. The participants completed a demographic questionnaire and a modified version of the Schraw and Bruning Reader Belief Inventory (RBI). In addition, they read and responded to a narrative text. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages, mean rank order) were computed as well as theme coding analysis and a Factorial Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) test was conducted to address the study questions. Results indicate that the study participants hold dichotomous as well as less contrasting transmission and transaction RB beliefs. Likewise, they tend to read in a balanced way that reflects combination of text-based, critical evaluation, and personal reaction responses to narrative reading. Conceptual, and pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research into the formation of reading implicit beliefs and their interplay with the comprehension of texts of various types and difficulty levels are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Reading beliefs; EFL; reading comprehension; narrative text

Reading beliefs (RBs) about meaning construction have attracted the attention of literary critics and reading theorists for quite some time now.

According to Schraw and Bruning (1996), Fish (1980) maintains that readers bring to the interpretive act of reading a system of beliefs learned from their communities and results in the “interpretive strategies” readers utilize when they engage with text. Later on, Rosenblatt (1994) proposed the transactional theory of reading and theorized that readers’ “efferent” and “aesthetic” approaches to meaning construction are shaped by their cumulative histories with print, a proposition that was already endorsed by Carey and Harste (1987) who emphasized the importance of cultural and situational cues as factors affecting readers’ engagement with text.

Along similar lines, Hofer and Pintrich (1997) posited that the construct of epistemological beliefs (EBs) “comprises of the four dimensions of certainty of knowledge, simplicity of knowledge, source of knowledge, and justification for knowing” (p. 133). Hofer (2004) further explicated that the “certainty of knowledge” dimension is an aspect of personal epistemology that develops progressively on a continuum ranging from believing that absolute truths exist with certainty to believing that knowledge is rather tentative and evolving as suggested by Schommer (1990). Such a belief in the fixed, rather than fluid nature of knowledge, may lead to a lesser awareness of the limitations of knowledge and to the unrealistic view of scientific theories as true, stable, and final (Ayatollahi, Eslami Rasekh, & Tavakoli, 2012). Likewise, the “simplicity of knowledge” dimension refers to the view of knowledge as agglutination of discrete, simple, and knowable facts to a progression of considering facts as contingent, relative, and contextually interrelated concepts. A simple view of knowledge leads to lower-level processing and more surface approaches to learning. Meanwhile, the “source of knowledge” dimension refers to the locus of knowledge either as transmitted by outside authority or constructed by individuals through interaction with the environment and others. Finally, the “justification for knowing” dimension indicates whether the evaluation of knowledge claims depends on authorities and observation versus reliance on using rules of inquiry, personal evaluation, and integration of expert views.

The preceding theoretical perspectives are echoed in the paradigm shift in literary criticism from emphasis on the extraction of correct meaning from text (new criticism) to emphasis on the active construction of meaning (reader response). A basic premise behind this shift is that meaning is situated in the dynamic relationship among the text, reader, and context rather than solely in the text or with the author (Beach & Marshall, 1991; Bogdan & Straw, 1990; Hynds, 1990; Straw & Bogdan, 1993). Along similar lines, Schraw and Bruning (1996) assumed that readers invoke the “transmission” and the “transactional” reading “tacit belief system” or epistemologies that serve as “mental models” as they engage with text (p. 293). These researchers developed the Reading Belief Inventory (RBI) to

measure readers' transmission and transactional beliefs that respectively entail objective analysis of text content and structure and de-personalized responses (transmission) versus subjective responses to construct text meaning, affective responses, relating to personal knowledge and experiences, and esthetic appreciation (transactional). In addition, Schraw and Bruning (1996) proposed a classification system that comprises 13 mutually exclusive response statements to narrative text reading subsumed within the three main categories of (1) text-based inferences, (2) critical evaluations, and (3) personal reactions in order to facilitate assessment of the impact of readers' beliefs on their responses to what is read. Specifically, the text-based inferences category "included rhetorical questions about information presented in the text, restatements of text information, and inferences about text information. Critical evaluations included statements about reader engagement, the descriptiveness of information, the relevance and/or importance of information, whether the text created new understanding in the reader's mind, observations about text structure and style, and the plausibility of information. Personal reactions included explicit statements about readers' feeling and emotions, whether the text was related to one's prior knowledge or personal experience, feelings of empathy with characters in the story, and personal opinions and commentary" (p. 297).

The literature includes a number of studies that examined the interplay between RBs and readers' engagement with text (Dai & Wang, 2007; Lordan, Sole, & Beltran, 2017; Mateos et al., 2016; Schraw, 2000; Schraw & Bruning, 1999; Wineburg, 1991). Likewise, other analogous studies investigated readers' EBs and their understanding of single and multiple science and expository texts (Braten, Britt, Stromso, & Rouet, 2011; Ferguson & Braten, 2013; Kendeou, Muis, & Fulton, 2011). However, to the best of the author's knowledge, no studies have examined the interplay between the RBs of Arabic-speaking English-as-a foreign language (EFL) learners and their responses to narrative reading. Consequently, the present study set to fill this knowledge void based on the proposition that it is important to investigate the RBs of EFL learners across various socio-linguistic contexts given that these beliefs may affect their reading patterns and are shaped by their diverse learning communities, cultural world views, and instructional histories with print. Specifically, we focused our investigation on exploring the implicit RBs of a cohort of undergraduate EFL college students and the patterns of their responses to narrative reading.

RBs are conceptualized in the context of the present study as transmission and transactional beliefs in which readers passively search for meaning in the text (transmission) versus readers constructing meaning through interaction with the text (transactional). This conceptualization is

based on the proclaimed proposition that EBs on knowledge and RBs are linked and inter-related although the two constructs were initially proposed and studied separately by Schommer (1990) and Schraw and Bruning (1996), respectively. Furthermore, according to Mateos et al. (2016), the two types of beliefs share the same conceptual space and do converge theoretically as well as empirically given that “students who held a simple knowledge belief or a certain knowledge belief, displayed less agreement with transactional reading beliefs” (p. 244). Meanwhile, “students who held a certain knowledge belief displayed greater agreement with transmission reading beliefs” (p. 244). In addition, the linkage between the two constructs of EBs and RBs is in line with the claim of Simpson and Nist (2000) that both types of beliefs may act as “filter through which students decipher and interpret the tasks and the materials they read” (p. 530). This claim is also supported by Fang-Ying, Cheng-Chieh, Li-Ling, and Yi-Chun (2016) who posited that “reader beliefs are theoretically parallel to the epistemic beliefs about how we know (the nature of knowing)” (p. 1592). It should also be noted that the literature includes some emerging empirical evidence on the positive direct relationship between the two types of beliefs (Mateos et al., 2011, 2016). We also assumed that readers’ RBs, particularly in EFL contexts at the college level, merit further investigation to test theoretical hypotheses concerning the dimensionality of these beliefs and their interplay with reading patterns and outcomes. Consequently, we set in the present study to investigate the following questions.

1. What are the implicit RBs of a cohort of advanced College EFL learners?
2. What is the effect of the participants’ RBs on their text-based inferences, critical evaluations, and personal reactions to narrative reading?

Theoretical Framework

This study is framed within the reader response theory of literary criticism and models of the reading process (Bogdan & Straw, 1990; Straw & Bogdan, 1993). These theories and models underscore the assumption that meaning is situated in the dynamic relationship among the reader, the text, and the context of the reading act rather than in the text alone or solely with the author. Furthermore, the goals and purposes of reading influence readers’ engagement with text (Hynds, 1990). As such, the readers’ cultural world views that are acquired through instructional histories, prior experiences, and their socio-cultural milieu affect readers’ responses to text (Beach, 1990).

Literary critics and reading theorists propose three distinct models of text processing: the transmission, the translation, and the transactional. In the present study, we exclude the translation model that focuses only on the text characteristics and ignores the reader-related factors that may affect comprehension. The transmission model assumes that the author transmits through text meaning to be received by the reader who receives information in a passive manner. As such, the primary objective of reading is perceived as to extract meaning rather than make meaning. Meanwhile, the transactional model assumes that any text has different meanings to different readers regardless of the author's intended meaning and what the text contains. This is because readers assign meaning to text and interpret what the text contains drawing on their attitudes, background knowledge and the stance they take in reading the text in a certain context. As such, reading is considered as an inherently subjective process rather than an act of getting the authors' message or translating the text meaning in the most objective manner possible.

Literature Review

Studies on the Interplay of Reading Beliefs and Comprehension

The impetus of research into RBs, as conceptualized in the present study, and their role in the reading process may be attributed to the seminal work of Schraw and Bruning (1996). These researchers maintain that readers "hold many different kinds of beliefs that affect the way they read" (Schraw & Bruning, 1996, p. 290). Chief among these beliefs are those related to readers' ability to read effectively (Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989), text structure (Zwaan, 1994), author's credibility (Dole & Sinatra, 1994), self-concept (Athey, 1985), and personal ideologies (Wade, Thompson, & Watkins, 1994). In addition, readers may "invoke a mental model" referred to as "text epistemology" that mediates the transactional relationship among the reader, author, and text as suggested by Wineburg (1991).

Wineburg (1991) compared the reading of professional historians and high school students. This researcher reported that the reading of professional historians takes a critical perspective and actively questions and transforms text. Meanwhile, high school students take a less critical perspective and do not seriously question the legitimacy of what is read. Similarly, Wade et al. (1994) compared the responses of professional historians and those of non-historians to segments of the Public Broadcasting System's video "The Civil War." These researchers concluded that differences in the responses of both groups could be attributed to their different epistemic text beliefs. Consequently, it is concluded

that different epistemic text beliefs suggest different predispositions to read the same text.

Schraw and Bruning (1999) studied the relationship between readers' transmission and transactional beliefs and a few motivational variables pertaining to learning goals, performance goals, self-efficacy, strategy, effort, and ability attributions. These researchers reported some general moderate positive relationships between transactional beliefs and the motivation variables, but no relation between transmission beliefs and the motivational variables under study.

Schraw (2000) studied the interplay between the transmission and transactional beliefs of 247 undergraduate students enrolled in sections of an introductory educational psychology course at a large midwestern university in the USA. This researcher reported that the transactional beliefs of the study participants were found to be positively related to the type and number of readers' responses and to the sophistication level of holistic interpretations of the narrative text read by the study participants. Conversely, transmission beliefs were reported to be unrelated to all the study outcome measures under investigation. Likewise, transmission and transactional beliefs were found to be unrelated to each other.

Dai and Wang (2007) examined the effect of the epistemic text beliefs of 243 undergraduate students enrolled in a northeast U.S. university. These researchers reported that the transactional beliefs positively affect the participants' reading comprehension of both narrative and expository texts. Meanwhile, transmission beliefs had negative effects on comprehension. However, these researchers maintained that both transmission and transactional beliefs correlate positively with need for cognition (NFC) and "represent slightly different ways of carving mind, with these two constructs sharing conceptual space" (Dai & Wang, 2007, p. 344).

Mateos et al. (2016) analyzed the role of the epistemic text beliefs of 417 undergraduate students from two different universities and diverse fields of studies in Spain. The results indicated a statistically significant negative relationship between transmission beliefs and reading comprehension $r = -.10$, $p < .05$. Meanwhile, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between transactional beliefs and reading comprehension $r = .09$, $p < .05$.

More recently, Lordan et al. (2017) highlighted the paucity of empirical research into the interplay between epistemic text beliefs and comprehension. Furthermore, they underscored the need for developing and validating a new questionnaire to assess the reading beliefs of undergraduate students based on the assumption that the (RBI) developed by Schraw and Bruning (1996) is the only existing instrument and has "certain limitations that need to be addressed" (Lordan et al., 2017, p. 40).

The preceding review suggests that research into the interplay of RBs and reading comprehension, particularly in EFL contexts, is at present still emergent and developing. Furthermore, the extant research findings regarding a possible positive link between the transactional beliefs and reading comprehension should be interpreted with some caution given the large sample size and relatively small, but statistically significant correlations, in the Dai and Wang (2007) and the Mateos et al. (2016) studies. This underscores the need for further studies into RBs and their effect on readers' comprehension and responses to what is read, particularly in the context of the present study and in similar other international and learning communities of learners with diverse instructional histories and sociocultural orientations to teaching and learning.

Method

Participants

The data for this study were gathered from a cohort of EFL college students ($n = 62$) enrolled in an introductory reading methodology education course at a prestigious university in the Middle East that uses English as medium of instruction and follows the American model of liberal arts education. The participants are considered academically strong and proficient in English to the degree that they can pursue their college study in English. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 29 years with a mean of 19.95, $SD = 1.54$. There were 22 males (35.5%) and 40 females (64.5%). A total of 36 participants (58.1%) were in their junior year, 11 (17.7%) sophomore, 14 (22.6%) senior, and 1 (1.6%) post graduate student pursuing a teaching diploma. Fourteen (22.6%) were majoring in pedagogical sciences, 27 (43.5%) in engineering, 12 (19.4%) general sciences, and 9 (14.5%) in business. Forty-two (67.7%) had English as their first foreign language, 19 (30.6%) had French as the first foreign language, and 1 (1.6%) had another foreign language. Arabic was the native language of all of the study participants.

Data Collection

The researcher was the instructor of the course in which the study participants were enrolled. Consequently, a series of measures were taken in order to control for any potential conflict of interest given that the researcher had a supervisory role over the study participants. Specifically, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study, consented to participate, and were ensured anonymity and confidentiality of data collection and analysis according to approved Institutional Review Board

(IRB) regulations and ethical research standards. The participants were also informed about the potential benefits and duration of the study and were ensured the freedom to participate or withdraw from the study if they wish to do so without any repercussions whatsoever.

The study participants completed a demographic questionnaire specifically designed for the purpose of the study, following which they completed a modified version of the RBI (Schraw & Bruning, 1996) questionnaire. Specifically, the demographic questionnaire included items regarding the participants' gender, age, class, major, and first foreign language. Meanwhile, the RBI version we used in the present study included 10 statements and 5-point Likert scale in which 1 corresponded to strongly disagree and 5 corresponded to strongly agree. The 10 items were taken from the original 14-item RBI questionnaire. Six items (1, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13) constituted the sub-scale of the reading transmission belief, and 4 items (5, 9, 11, 14) constituted the transactional reading belief sub-scale. The internal consistency alpha values of both sub-scales were $\alpha = .81$ and $\alpha = .76$, respectively. These values were ensured after excluding the remaining 4 items in the original 14-item scale which loaded on a factor of less than 0.30 in a principal factor analysis with an oblique variance rotation as well as an orthogonal varimax rotation (Schraw & Bruning, 1996). This analysis resulted in two uncorrelated factors ($r = -.03$) that accounted for 69% of the sample variation. The six-item transmission sub-scale with eigenvalues = 1.35 variance explained 29% and the four-item transactional sub-scale with eigenvalues = 1.60 explained 40% of variance. Finally, it should be noted that there was no need to translate the RBI into Arabic, the native language of the study participants given that they are highly proficient in English and can easily understand the RBI items and indicate their responses.

In addition, the study participants completed a reader response booklet that included cover instructions and a story titled the "Rich Man and the Mathematician." This story was selected because it is easy to read and has a moral lesson. The story is considered easy in the sense that it does not deal with complex issues that do not have clear-cut answers in the text nor does it require synthesis and integration of information from multiple and contradictory perspectives to be comprehended. It tells about a greedy man who realized with the help of a mathematician that true wealth is in the quality of human relations and in helping others.

The study participants were instructed to take as much time as they needed to read the story, following which they were requested to write their responses to what they have read. The author and a research assistant classified the response statements into 13 mutually exclusive categories subsumed within the three broader categories of (a) text-based inferences, (b) critical evaluations, and (c) personal reactions as suggested

by Schraw and Bruning (1996). These researchers proposed these categories based on procedures of content analysis of the randomly selected protocols (Many & Wiseman, 1992; Weber, 1990). The author and the research assistant analyzed all responses from the 62 participants and reported each written response individually under the 13 sub-categories with an overall agreement of Cohen Kappa: $K=0.88$. All codes were determined a priori based on the scheme proposed by Schraw and Bruning (1996). The text-based inferences main category of responses subsumed the sub-categories of rhetorical questions about information in the text, restatements of text information, and inferences about text information. The critical evaluations category included statements about engagement, descriptiveness of information, relevance or importance of information, whether the text created a new understanding in the reader's mind, observations about text structure and style, and the plausibility of information. Finally, the personal reactions category included explicit statements about readers' feelings and emotions, background knowledge or personal experience, feelings of empathy with characters, and personal opinions and commentary. The two scorers settled disagreements in conferences. Most disagreements were related to the inferences about information having been considered as part of critical evaluation given that making inferences could be perceived as a form of higher order comprehension, particularly interpretive comprehension.

Data Analysis

First, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) of the participants' transmission and transactional beliefs were computed by summing up the scores of each participant on the sub-scale items of the RBI instrument that respectively measure transmission and transactional beliefs. The participants were then classified into the two main categories of (1) high versus low transmission readers and (2) high versus low transactional readers based on the median split scores of 18 and 15 on the transmission and the transactional measures of the RBI sub-scales, respectively. Specifically, participants with composite scores of less than 18 on the 6 items of the RBI transmission sub-scale (items 1, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13) were considered low transmission readers; whereas those with scores of above 18 on this sub-scale were considered high transmission readers. Similarly, participants with composite scores of below 15 on the transactional sub-scale (items 5, 9, 11, 14) were considered low transactional readers; whereas those with a composite score of above 15 were considered high transactional readers. Transmission readers are defined as readers who assume that the locus and source of knowledge are in the text and that the reader's goals focus on extracting meaning as transmitted by

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of reading beliefs and responses to narrative texts.

Beliefs	N	%	Text-based Inferences		Critical Evaluations		Personal Reactions	
			M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Low transmission	32	51.61	1.87	1.73	.37	.60	3.71	1.90
High transmission	30	48.38	1.76	1.65	.56	.93	3.63	2.28
Low transactional	40	64.51	1.80	1.55	.52	.81	3.10	1.65
High transactional	22	35.48	1.86	1.93	.36	.72	4.72	2.39
Low transmission – Low transactional	24	38.70	1.91	1.79	.41	.65	3.20	1.44
Low transmission – High transactional	8	12.90	1.75	1.66	.25	.46	5.25	2.37
High transmission – Low transactional	16	25.80	1.62	1.14	.68	1.01	2.93	1.94
High transmission – High transactional	14	22.58	1.92	2.12	.42	.85	4.42	2.44

the author in a passive manner. Conversely, transactional readers interact with the text to interpret it and construct meaning in a certain context.

In addition, we coded the participants' responses to the narrative text under study thematically, pigeonholed the responses under the 13-statement scheme of Schraw and Bruning (1996), computed the frequencies, conducted a mean rank order, and categorized responses under each statement by the emerging RBs of the study participants. Finally, we conducted a Factorial Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) test to address the study question regarding the effect of RBs on responses to the narrative text under study. The participants' transmissive and transactional RBs with two levels (high versus low) were used as independent variables and their text-based inferences, critical evaluations, and personal reactions responses as dependent variables.

Results

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) of the orientations of the participants' RBs.

Table 1 reveals that the participants hold a variety of RBs. Twenty four ($n = 24$) participants (38.7%) hold low transmission and low transactional (LL) beliefs, 8 (12.9%) hold low transmission and high transactional beliefs (LH) beliefs, 16 (25.8%) hold high transmission and low transactional beliefs (HL), and fourteen ($n = 14$) participants (22.58%) hold high transmission and high transactional beliefs (HH).

Table 2 reports descriptive statistics and a rank order of the mean scores of the participants' written responses.

Table 2 indicates that the participants tend to read in a balanced way through combining responses based on text-based inferences, critical evaluations, and personal reactions. Specifically, the study participants mostly expressed emotions ($\bar{x} = 1.37$, $SD = 1.16$) and personal opinions ($\bar{x} =$

Table 2. Descriptive statistics about the frequency of responses (n = 62).

Category	f	%	M	SD	Range
Emotions	45	72.6	1.37	1.16	.00 – 4.00
Personal opinion	37	59.7	1.11	1.41	.00 – 8.00
Retelling	36	58.0	.93	.97	.00 – 3.00
Elaborative inferences	29	46.8	.87	1.40	.00 – 8.00
Relate to life	33	53.2	.80	.88	.00 – 3.00
Text structure and style	10	16.1	.27	.68	.00 – 3.00
New understanding	9	12.9	.14	.39	.00 – 2.00
Rhetorical question	4	6.5	.06	.24	.00 – 1.00
Relevance of information	2	3.2	.03	.17	.00 – 1.00
Engagement	1	1.6	.01	.12	.00 – 1.00
Empathy	0	.00	.00	.00	.00 – .00
Credibility	0	.00	.00	.00	.00 – .00
Descriptiveness	0	.00	.00	.00	.00 – .00

1.11, SD = 1.41) that came on top of the list of their responses, respectively. The participants also made text-based inferences particularly retelling of information ($\bar{x} = .93$, SD = .97) and elaborated inferences ($\bar{x} = .87$, SD = 1.40). They also made critical evaluations by relating information to personal life ($\bar{x} = .80$, SD = .88), creating new understandings ($\bar{x} = .14$, SD = .39), and observations about text structure and style ($\bar{x} = .27$, SD = .68), as well as comments on the relevance of information ($\bar{x} = .03$, SD = .17), and engagement ($\bar{x} = .01$, SD = .12). However, none of the respondents touched on the empathy, credibility, and descriptiveness of the story.

Concerning the classification of responses by the RB profiles of the study participants, the following patterns of interest have emerged. First, participants from the four profiles identified in the present study (LL, LH, HL, HH) have all made responses in 7 out of the 13 sub-categories subsumed under the three main response categories of Text-based Inferences (retelling, elaborative Inferences), Critical Evaluations (text structure and style, new understandings), and Personal Reactions (emotions, opinion, relate to life). Specifically, 58% of the respondents from the four identified profiles retold details from the text (retelling) and 46% of them elaborated on those details (elaborative inferences). Examples of these responses are:

Retelling: “The greedy rich man became a whole other person at the end of the story.”

Elaborative Inferences: “It’s a reminder of what truly matters in life, and that is far away from materialistic.”

Likewise, the participants from the four RB profiles expressed the Critical Evaluations of 16.10% (text structure and style) and 12.9% (new understanding). Examples of these responses are:

Text Structure and Style: “It is beautiful how the story, by a simple anecdote, was able to teach us an important lesson that affects our lives from several aspects.”

New Understanding: “The story helped me understand the importance of human relations and the fulfilling feeling it gives and provides in one’s life.”

In addition, the participants also from the four RB profiles expressed the following Personal Reactions responses: 72% Emotions, 59.7% opinions, and 53% related the story events personal life (relate to life). Examples of these responses are:

Emotions: “At first, I did not connect with the rich man, but at the end I felt warmth towards him.”

Opinion: “The story is a very interesting story.”

Relate to Life: “It opened my eyes to an important aspect: people can change.”

Second, four respondents with HL profiles and LL profiles ($n=4$, 6.5%) expressed 4 statements related to the rhetorical questions sub-category of responses subsumed under the main category of Text-based Inferences.” An example is

Rhetorical Question: “What is the need of keeping your jewellery (Jewelry), money and possessions in a safe when you can be helping other people out.”

Likewise, two respondents with HH and HL profiles ($n=2$, 3.2%) expressed 2 statements related to relevance of information in the Critical Evaluations category of responses: An example of these statements is

Relevance of Information: “A mathematician is brought in to help in economical (economic) matters, not ethical ones.”

In addition, one participant with an HL profile ($n=1$, 1.6%) expressed 1 statement related to engagement within the Critical Evaluations sub-category:

Engagement: “It affects me how the mathematician who is so proficient in his field of study with his study focus deeply (deeply) imbedded into materialism, yet he has enough farsightedness to realize that helping others is was more beneficial than stacking money in a safe.”

Meanwhile, no statements were made with regard to empathy, credibility, and descriptiveness of the story.

Table 3 below reports the results of the Factorial MANOVA results of the effect of RB’s or responses to narrative text.

Table 3 reveals that the overall multivariate value was not significant for transmission RBs, $F(3, 56) = .80$, $p = .49$, $\eta^2 = .04$, indicating no

Table 3. Factorial MANOVA results of transmission and transactional reading beliefs and interaction with responses to narrative text.

Measured variable	Group	SSS	df	Error df	MS	F	P	η^2
Overall	Low transmission	–	3	56	–	.80	.49	.04
	High transmission							
Overall	Low transactional	–	3	56	–	4.59	.00**	.19
	High transactional							
Text-based	Low transactional	.06	1	58	.06	.02	.88	.00
	High transactional							
Critical	Low transactional	.60	1	58	.60	.96	.33	.01
	High transactional							
Personal	Low transactional	41.51	1	58	41.51	1.03	.00**	.15
	High transactional							
Text-based	High transmission x High transactional	.73	1	58	.73	.24	.62	.00
Critical	High transmission x High transactional	.02	1	58	.02	.04	.83	.00
Personal	High transmission x High transactional	1.00	1	58	1.00	.26	.61	.00
Total	Text-based inferences	379.00	62					
	Critical evaluations							
	Personal reactions							
Emotions	Low transactional	5.91	1	58	5.91	4.71	.03**	.07
	High transactional							
Relate to Life	Low transactional	1.61	1	58	1.61	2.09	.15	.03
	High transactional							
Personal	Low transactional	3.84	1	58	3.84	1.88	.17	.03
	High transactional							

* $p < .05$.** $p < .01$.

difference in responses to narrative text by level of low versus high transmission RBs. Conversely, there was an overall significant difference in the responses to narrative text between holders of low transactional RBs and their counterparts with high transactional RBs $F(3, 56) = 4.59, p = .00, \eta^2 = .19$ in favor of the latter. More specifically, univariate tests showed a significant difference between low and high transactional readers in the category of personal reactions to narrative text: $F(1, 58) = 1.03, p = .00, \eta^2 = .15$, indicating that the number of personal reaction statements ($\bar{x} = 4.72, SD = 2.39$) of the high transactional readers was higher than their low transactional counterparts ($\bar{x} = \text{mean } SD = 3.10, SD 1.65$). However, the univariate test values for the categories of text-based inferences $F(1, 58) = .24, p = .62, \eta^2 = .00$ and critical evaluations $F(1, 58) = .04, p = .83, \eta^2 = .00$ were not significant. Likewise, there were no significant interaction effects by levels of transmission and transactional beliefs and text-based inferences $F(1, 58) = .24, p = .62, \eta^2 = .00$, critical evaluations $F(1, 58) = .04, p = .61, \eta^2 = .00$, and personal reactions $F(1, 58) = .26, p = .61, \eta^2 = .00$. Finally, low transactional readers made less emotional responses than their high transactional $F(1, 58) =$

4.71, $p = .03$, $D^2 = .07$. The mean scores and SDs of the low transactional versus high transactional readers were $\bar{x} = 1.29$, $SD = 1.36$ and $\bar{x} = 1.50$, $SD = .75$, respectively. However, there were no differences between the low and high transactional groups of readers on the variables of relate to life $F(1, 58) = 2.09$, $p = .15$, $D^2 = .03$ and personal reactions $F(1, 58) = 1.88$, $p = .17$, $D^2 = .03$.

Discussion

This study set to investigate the RBs of a diverse cohort of college EFL students and their responses to narrative text. The study findings revealed that many of the participants hold dichotomous (high transmission – low transactional: HL) as well as (low transmission - high transactional beliefs: LH) RB's. Meanwhile, other participants hold lesser contrasting views on the transmission-transactional continuum of RBs (high transmission-high transactional: HH) as well as (low transmission – low transactional: LL). Furthermore, responses to the narrative text further explicated that the study participants tend to read interactively in a balanced manner given that their responses to the narrative text under study spanned a total of 7 out of the 13 sub-categories clustered into the three main categories of text-based inferences, critical evaluations, and personal reactions. Likewise, the findings indicated that while the participants' levels of transmission RBs (high versus low) did not significantly affect their responses to narrative text, participants with high transactional beliefs made more personal as well as emotional responses to the narrative text they have read more than their low transactional belief counterparts.

The preceding findings have a number of conceptual and pedagogical implications for reading research and practice. First, on the conceptual level, our findings support the view of Schraw and Bruning (1996) regarding the multidimensionality and flexibility of the RBs of undergraduate college readers whose first language is English (L1) and the RBs held by advanced EFL readers who use English as a medium of instruction at the college level. Like their native speaker counterparts in the Schraw and Bruning (1996) study, considerable percentages of the EFL participants in the present study hold multidimensional RBs they invoke to read interactively in order to comprehend details stated in the text as well as construct meaning and react to what is comprehended from text drawing on background knowledge and cultural schemata. This suggests that despite variations in learning communities, instructional histories, and socio-cultural contexts, advanced readers share a mature view of the reading process that entails text-based inferences as well as reader-related critical evaluations, and personal reactions.

Second, the reported variety of the implicit RBs of the participants and their diverse responses across 7 out of the 13 sub-categories of responses clustered into the 3 main categories of text-based inferences, critical evaluations, and personal reactions supports the dispute of a unidimensional conception of beliefs (Schommer, 1990) and backs the theorizing of Dai and Wang (2007) regarding cognitive complexity and sophistication as factors in the development of epistemic text views. Our findings are also in line with the suggestions of Buehl and Alexander (2001, 2005) regarding multidimensional configuration of the nature of EBs, particularly in the ill-structured domain of reading. These researchers contend that “issues and problems are generally solved through heuristic procedures” and as such require “greater flexibility” in one’s thinking as suggested by Spiro, Feltovich, and Coulson (1996) (Buehl & Alexander, 2001, pp. 401–402). This need for greater flexibility in the context of reading is also in harmony with the conclusion of Ferguson and Braten (2013) who reported that “personal justification may be more typical of less knowledgeable students who may have to resort to subjectivity and the confirmation of own view rather than building new knowledge by integrating textual information into their existing knowledge base” (p. 57). All of the participants in the present study have long personal histories with print given than they have studied EFL for about 13 years and are, therefore, likely to have developed flexible and dynamic text epistemic views that they may invoke depending on the reading purposes and the difficulty levels and text types of what they read. In the present study, the participants read a relatively easy narrative text. It could be that this type of text prompted the participants to express mostly emotional and personal opinions in reaction to the story although they have also expressed retelling, elaboration and inferences, and relation to life responses as well.

Third, the findings of the present study indicate that 64.51% of the study participants are classified as low transactional and 48.38% as high transmission readers. These findings suggest that the study participants tend to embrace a bottom up view of the reading process which underscore the importance of literal and text-driven comprehension. This type of comprehension entails the understanding of stated rather than implied textual details, is important by itself, and serves as a pre-requisite for higher-order comprehension which requires more synthesis, analysis, and assessment (Ghaith, 2018). Because EFL reading in the context of the present study is characterized by the primary focus on academic objectives in order to learn from text rather than entertainment and performing daily social and functional tasks, gleaning information from text and holding a transmission view of reading could be perceived as innocuous and beneficial.

Fourth, the study findings suggest a number of implications for language learners, instructors, and the selection of reading texts. Perhaps due to personal academic histories and past learning experiences, some readers may arrive at college with simple and fixed epistemic beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing and with high transmission – low transactional RBs. Such readers may experience many challenges in comprehending texts that deal with complex and controversial issues that require critical evaluations and personal reactions. Thus, it would be in order for instructors to scaffold the development of the RBs of such readers through differentiated and developmentally appropriate instruction along the transmission – transactional reading continuum. It is also recommended that instructors encourage high transmission – low transactional readers to construct meaning and justify knowing through interaction with text. Specifically, it is recommended that a top-down reading instructional approach be used to address the learning needs of learners with high transmission – low transactional RBs. Such an approach would focus on constructing the overall meaning of what is read, rather than concentrating on individual words or phrases. As such, it is important to train readers in using techniques and strategies to enable them to draw on their background knowledge and text structure awareness in comprehending what they read. Examples of these techniques and strategies include “previews, anticipation guides, semantic mapping, writing before reading, and brainstorming” as well as “reconstructing the text organizational structure, identifying logical linkages of content through discourse markers, and using graphic organizers” (Ghaith, 2018, p. 10).

Fifth, the findings of the present study call for a typological approach for the study of RBs rather than employing a dimensional one thereby attending to the variety of epistemic text views that could be held by readers. Such an approach is conceivable as suggested by Dai and Wang (2007) along similar lines to research methodologies applied in gender schema research of Markus, Crane, Bernstein, and Siladi (1982). These methodologies go beyond sorting reading responses into the two categories of transmission versus transactional and may illuminate other critical factors related to readers’ linguistic proficiency, motivations for reading, and other variables such as text difficulty levels and multiplicity.

Finally, it should be noted that there is at present a need for future research into the origins and roles of readers’ implicit RBs and their role in the literal, interpretive, critical, and creative comprehension of various text types and different difficulty levels. Of particular importance in this regard would be using mixed methods research methodologies and taking a complex systems theoretical approach in longitudinal studies in order to explicate the nature and formation of RBs in light of instructional

practices and learners' experiences with print. It is also important to study the interplay of RBs and other reader related as well as contextual variables such as language proficiency, reading abilities, reading motivation, and the purpose of reading.

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