



University of Zabol  
Faculty of Humanities and Literature  
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Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching  
English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Subject:

**The Interface between EFL Teachers' Cognitions on Teacher-  
Student Relationships and Their Cognitions on Assessment**

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## Abstract

This research is about a qualitative study of EFL in-service teachers' cognitions on teacher-student relationship (TSR) and their cognition on assessment in Iranian high school classrooms. Teacher cognition, defined by Borg (2003, p. 81) as “what teachers think, know, and believe and the relationships of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the language teaching classroom”, is a relatively fresh and under-researched area in language teaching and learning profession, especially in Middle Eastern countries such as Iran. There are few studies focusing on its link with teacher-student relationships and assessment. The present study therefore aimed to investigate how teacher-student relationships and classroom assessment can interface with teachers' cognitions. To achieve this purpose, 10 EFL in-service teachers, chosen through a purposeful sampling method, in Sistan, Iran participated in this qualitative study. The data were collected through a semi-structured interview as well as life-history narratives. A content comparative analysis was used for analyzing the collected data from semi-structured interviews and life-history narratives (Fram, 2013). The data were analyzed taking an inductive approach to data analysis to allow the emerging findings to appear. The results of the study showed that the teachers had very general cognitions on TSR ignoring the key conditions and features of constructive relationship. Besides TSR, they talked about assessment and its significance on teaching and learning but it wasn't enough. In fact, there was no congruency between their stated cognition and their practices of assessment. Furthermore, they held *assessment of learning (Aol)* conception about assessment which is summative in nature. It was also found that teachers' cognitions and their practices were not congruent with the principles of *assessment as learning (AaL)* because AaL necessitates mutual interaction, cooperation and collaboration as well as building positive and supportive relationship with their students in the learning environment. The results of the study can outline some of the theoretical and potentially methodological issues that future work in this area will need to address. Moreover, the findings of this research may have direct implications on the centrality of teacher-student relationship and classroom assessment practices for policy makers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and materials developer to be taken into account in their professional activities.

**Key words:** Teacher cognition, EFL teacher, Teacher-student relationship, Assessment