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Title : TEACHING ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SARAWAK, MALAYSIA:
ESL TEACHER COGNITION PERSPECTIVES

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The main aim of this study was to explore teacher cognition in the context of instructional practice among English teachers in secondary schools in Samarahan division, Sarawak, Malaysia. Teacher cognition by Borg's definition includes 'what they know, believe, think and do'. In Borg's schematic conceptualization of teacher cognition, it is illustrated that teacher cognition developed and is shaped by schooling and the professional education of the teacher. In the context of pedagogic practice, it is influenced and affected by contextual factors such as school environment, curricular, resources and students so much that it is not static but dynamic. Shulman outlined seven knowledge types to represent teacher cognition, but in this study only three knowledge domains/types namely, Knowledge of Students (KS), Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and General Pedagogical Knowledge (GPK) were deemed relevant to pedagogic practice. To address the main aim of the study, three research questions were posited namely, what are ESL teacher cognition perspectives?, what are the existing and new features of each knowledge domain?, and what are the similarities of KS, PCK and GPK of the four teacher participants? To answer the research questions, a mixed-method approach was employed: (i) self-constructed teacher inventory questionnaire was administered to 89 ESL teachers to gauge their beliefs

and actual practice, (ii) observations, stimulated recall protocols and semi-structured interviews were administered to four individual cases, selected from 89 teachers, to generate qualitative data on their KS, PCK and GPK. The quantitative data from teacher inventory indicated a *Very High* range between 4.1 to 4.52 mean scores for KS, PCK and GPK out of 5-point Likert scale. This shows some positive congruence between the teachers' stated beliefs and actual practice. The qualitative data captured evidence of existing categorical features of KS, PCK and GPK as outlined in the theoretical framework, and also some new emergent categorical features utilized by the four teacher participants such as taking into consideration students' proficiency level and preferred learning styles in their lesson planning, also empowering their students via more opportunities to participate, and assuming more of a facilitator-cum-motivator role. While the study had shown some evidence of teacher cognition in actual classroom practice, a longitudinal study that spans a long duration of data collection is highly recommended for future research to understand ESL teacher cognition better in Malaysia.