

Original Article

Self-Reflection vs. Group-Reflection Training: The Investigation of Iranian In-Service EFL Teachers' Performance Development

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Abstract

The current study investigates the effect of self- and group-reflection training on Iranian in-service EFL teachers' performance development. From all available participants teaching at the International College of Tehran University of Medical Sciences, 40 in-service EFL teachers were selected. An observation checklist, a semi-structured interview, and the Skype app were employed. There were two groups, i.e., a self-reflection group (N=20) and a group-reflection group (N=20; five subgroups with four members). A mixed-methods design was used in this study. Before the training phase, the pre-test (observation checklist) was administered. During the training phase, the self-reflection group members were exposed to self-reflection practice. In addition, the group-reflection participants were exposed to the group-reflection practice. The instruction was presented in 16 sessions twice a week for two months. After the training phase, the Posttest (observation checklist) was administered. Moreover, participants were given a semi-structured interview on their reactions to their teaching efficacy. The obtained data were analyzed through SPSS software version 23. The analysis of data revealed that implementing the principles of self-reflective and group-reflective instructions had statistically significant effects on Iranian in-service EFL teachers' teaching performance. Also, participants believed that reflective practice in both forms had constructive effects on their teaching performance. This study has pedagogical implications for English language teachers, EFL learners, and teacher educators who seek to find more effective teaching methodologies and help them to construct their meaning of teaching.

Keywords: Group-Reflection, In-Service EFL Teachers, Reflective Practice, Self-Reflection, Teaching Performance Development.

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1. Introduction

The sophistication of teaching necessitates that instructors challenge their methods at the service of their professional development to enhance and improve their learners' performance and skills. Reflective practice is the capability to reflect on teaching/learning events to involve in a continuous learning process. A highly acknowledged logic behind reflection is that learning is not a result of pure experience; Thus, a purposeful reflection on action is crucial for reflective practice (Mathew et al., 2017).

Reflectivity in teaching is a process that instructors go through to improve their practice in the teaching profession (Borg, 2010) and realize how to foster successful teaching by continually reflecting on their practices and beliefs within the educational setting (Farrell, 2003). If instructors can critically reflect on their teaching practice, they will probably take steps to enhance it (Watts & Lawson, 2009).

Reflective teaching pushes teachers to reconsider their functions. With the evolution of society and education, teachers' responsibilities tend to transform from the sole information transmitters to instructors with several roles. EFL instructors should assume nine various roles based on diverse teaching contexts: participant, controller, resource-provider, assessor, prompter, facilitator, organizer, guide, and researcher (Wang et al., 2006).

The Integration of reflection into teacher training programs empowered teachers to strengthen their professional abilities and build favorable attitudes toward the teaching profession. It is also feasible to develop reflection by motivating teachers to obtain information about their teaching experience and analyze it (Russell, 2005). Reflection is frequently defined as a cyclic process that assists them in becoming decision-makers who may create personal teaching techniques and strategies applicable to their educational situation (Zhu, 2011).

Iranian EFL teachers have no clear idea about the applications and values of reflection in their works (Akbari, 2007). This problem was more evident while implementing the collaborative, reflective practice among in-service EFL teachers because they think their territory and confidentiality are at risk of danger by doing such a practice (Akbari, 2008). Regarding the case of self-reflection practice, learners showed a low willingness to operate it for themselves because they believed it is useless or at least cannot provide considerable help for their teaching practice (Ansarin et al., 2015).

Some teachers believe that reflection is inherited and grounded in their personality and nature of thinking. In their point of view, reflection is not teachable or learnable. Therefore, providing reflective teaching practice, whether individually or in a group format, cannot be useful to them to become more competent and effective.

There is a gap between teachers' beliefs and their practice in their classrooms. Unfortunately, for Iranian EFL teachers, this gap makes them disappointed and unarmed about their beliefs, and they tend to put their beliefs away and focus on their actual and real practice. As a result, their beliefs are not crucial for most of them, and they try to keep their steps on their educators' tracks. They tend to be consumers of pedagogical instruction from educators rather than producers of educational practice for themselves.

The current study aims to tap language teachers' reflective teaching performance. Through practicing reflective teaching, teachers can explore their underlying beliefs. Reflective thinking is expected to lead to changes and improvements in their teaching. It is usually described as a cyclic process that helps them become decision-makers who can formulate their teaching methods and strategies appropriate to their specific educational context.

2. Literature Review

The prevailing transmission paradigm in teacher education began to become less popular due to the rise of constructivist perspectives on teacher development, leading to growing knowledge about the complexity of teacher education (Crookes, 2009, 2013). Regarding the recent views on the nature of the teacher training process, teachers are considered "active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (Borg, 2003, p. 81).

Teachers are believed to be able to form their ideology and develop their practice theories. Therefore, the purpose of teacher training is to affect teachers cognitively to develop in teachers' performance (Borg, 2010; Miri et al., 2017). The mentioned change of focus has enriched the field through the reconceptualization of teachers' cognitive, executive, attitudinal, and process-based thinking (Borg, 2003), and the professional identity of teachers (Lee & Schallert, 2016).

It is commonly agreed that teachers should be reflective practitioners, and reflection should be cultivated in teacher development programs (Beauchamp, 2015; Farrell, 2016). Also, reflective teaching is an essential element of student teachers' training courses' efficacy. Many researchers have widely admitted it as a method that could also increase teachers' professional growth and enhance teaching and learning performance (Aghaalikhani & Maftoon, 2018).

According to Akbari (2007), the process of reflective teaching can help language instructors to challenge what they have already learned throughout their teaching years and also assist them in magnifying their teaching efficacy. Yang (2009) reveals that logical reflective execution cannot occur automatically for most language instructors. It was found that reflective teaching allows teachers to carefully consider their previously constructed meaning and helps them to identify, evaluate, and remediate potential problems through a broader perspective of the teaching/learning process.

As a vital process in teacher education, reflective practice allows teachers to make more effective and qualitative decisions through logical thinking and metacognitive awareness and readiness (Goodley, 2018). For Schön (2017), it is an ongoing process whereby the student critically considers his or her own experience putting knowledge to practice while being instructed by teaching specialists. It also aids in the development of individual personalities. Likewise, Jasper (1999) linked reflective teaching practice to a continuous process that forms autonomous, qualified, and efficacious teachers.

According to Akbari (2007), reflective teaching will prompt instructors to challenge the clichés they learned throughout their formative years and aid them in building more informed teaching practice. According to Yang (2009), critical reflection does not happen quickly to most instructors; consequently, student teachers should be granted enough chances for reflection.

The uniqueness of self-reflection is the fact that in such a practice, individuals have to understand the beliefs that drive their activities, rethink their meaning, and generate alternative modes of action (Brockbank & McGill, 2007). As a recent topic of discussion in the TEFL field, reflective practice is considered a newly developed perspective on the role of teachers in the process of teaching altering from being the role model to the facilitator of teaching that requires ongoing reflection on their actions (Aghaalikhani & Maftoon, 2018).

Self-reflection is particularly encouraged for novice teachers who are likely to encounter these gaps throughout their transition from pre-service to in-service teaching phases during their first years of teaching (Farrell, 2016). Self-reflection enables instructors to recollect and combine their schemata and newly acquired knowledge into immediate reactions to teaching issues to make informed decisions and construct their present classroom instruction theory (Farrell, 2014, 2018).

Gathering constructive thoughts and enhancing the power of determination are other significant features of this practice (Bruno & Dell'Aversana, 2017). In group-reflection practice, persons' skills and abilities improve through collective skills and prepare them to deal with different teaching/learning scenarios (Collin & Karsenti, 2011).

When a person learns as a member of a reflection group, he/she has access to a wider range of skills and technical capabilities and is better equipped in the decision-making process and the suitable implementation of training (Esposito, Karterud, & Freda, 2021). Looking through the lens of group reflection allows teachers to look at a problem from different perspectives and angles to offer more effective solutions for troublesome situations in their teaching (Finlayson, 2015).

The current study investigates the effects of implementing self-reflection and group-reflection training on Iranian in-service EFL teachers' performance development. In this study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Does implementing the principles of self-reflective and group-reflective instruction have any statistically significant effect on Iranian in-service EFL teachers' teaching performance?
2. What are Iranian in-service EFL teachers' perceptions of implementing self-reflective instruction in their training program?
3. What are Iranian in-service EFL teachers' perceptions of implementing group-reflective instruction in their training program?

3. Methodology

The present study aims to explore and examine the effect of implementing self-reflection and group-reflection training on Iranian in-service EFL teachers' beliefs and performance development. This section first describes the context of the study and its participants,

followed by a discussion of the research design, the data collection procedure, and data analysis techniques.

3.1. Design and Context of the Study

This study was conducted at the International College of Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS) in Tehran, Iran. The mentioned college was chosen because of one of the researchers' established teaching careers and the ease of access to the participants. The study took place throughout 2021. A mixed-method approach was used, and the confirmatory sequential mixed-methods design was run in this study. It involved a two-phase project in which the quantitative data were collected in the first phase, the results were analyzed, and then the researchers used the results to plan the second phase, i.e., the qualitative phase. The quantitative part had a quasi-experimental design, i.e., pre-test/treatment/Posttest format without random sampling.

3.2. Participants

From all available participants teaching at the International College of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in Tehran, 40 in-service EFL teachers were selected randomly for this study. All the participants were MA holders in TEFL. As the sincere cooperation of teachers was needed for the results to be reliable and for the study to succeed, participating in the study was optional, which could help get the results that the researchers wanted to obtain. To achieve this goal, the researchers asked the available teachers without any form of force. They gave eager teachers consent forms on which information such as the name and email or phone number of the teachers were required to send them the questionnaire to fill in. They were assured about the anonymity of their elicited data. The following table shows the sample specification.

Table 1.

Sample Specification

Group Name	Number of Participants	Gender	Age	Degree
Self-Reflective	20 members	male-female	25-36	MA
Group-Reflective	20 members	male-female	26-37	MA

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1 Observation Checklist

A researcher-made observation checklist was used to evaluate teachers' performance. In this checklist, 8 components of effective and qualitative teaching practice were considered and ordered in a four-level scale of rating (weak = 1; average = 2; good = 3; excellent = 4). These components include presentation (6 items); instruction (7 items), explaining (7 items); classroom management (4 items); hints (6 items); modeling (4 items); feedback (7 items); and questioning (6 items). To measure the content validity of the questionnaire items, some experts in the field of TEFL were asked to comment on them. Based on the comments of the panel of experts, to refine the questionnaire, the items were modified and adapted.

3.3.2 Interview

Two semi-structured interviews were administered to achieve a more precise vision of teachers' beliefs about the implementation of self and group-reflection practice in their practicum in this study. These interviews were designed with 15 items about different aspects of reflective practice, including its effectiveness, convenience, and challenges. Regarding the matter of validity for this instrument, the questions of the interview were analyzed and evaluated by some experts, university professors, to be specific.

3.3.3 Skype App

Skype is an internet-based social media application specializing in messaging, file transfer, video calls, chat, and live rooms, giving users the ease and freedom to manage and host video conferences and classrooms. Users can also record the entire live session. The requirement of the pandemic lockdown led the researchers to use this app as a means of providing treatment in this study. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, this app was used as a means of providing treatment in this study. The advantages mentioned above led the researchers to choose Skype App among other available social media apps for their online classes.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

All the participants were randomly divided into two groups, i.e., the self-reflection group (N=20) and the group-reflection group (N=20; 5 sub-groups with 4 members). Before the training phase, the pre-test (observation checklist) was administered, and teachers' previous

teaching performance was evaluated and recorded by an expert supervisor (one of the researchers). Also, the teacher's belief questionnaire was used for all the participants of this study to evaluate teachers' assumptions about the efficacy of their teaching practice. As mentioned before, the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown forced the researchers to apply and execute the online format of the classroom for the instructional phase. The researchers utilized Skype to instruct the participants in an online setting. During the training phase, the self-reflection group members were exposed to self-reflection practice in which the participants were encouraged to reconsider their thought and actions, apply self-criticism, and make a balanced judgment about events or decisions discussed in the classroom. They were supposed to practice the cyclical process of reflection, including presentation, self-assessing presentation, re-thinking about the presentation, trying other possible effective ways of presentation, and repeating this cycle continuously. Meanwhile, the group-reflection participants were exposed to group-reflection practice in which they were encouraged to reflect on their practice and share them with their partners, and finally, the group-produced ideas were insightfully discussed in the group to make the sturfiest decisions about the classroom events. They were supposed to reflect collectively in a four-phase learning cycle, including acting their practice, observing their presentations, reflecting on their performances, and adopting new ways of teaching. The instruction was done in 16 sessions twice a week for two months. After the training phase, the posttest (observation checklist) was administered, and teachers' teaching performance was evaluated and recorded by an expert supervisor (one of the researchers). The results of these checklists (pre and post-tests) were used to answer the study's second and fourth research questions. Also, the teacher's belief questionnaire was used for all the participants of this study to evaluate teachers' assumptions about the efficacy of their teaching practice. In addition, after the training phase, the teachers were exposed to a semi-structured interview about their beliefs about their teaching practice satisfaction and efficacy.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The quantitative data of this study were analyzed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The descriptive statistics, the normality calculations, and the inferential statistics were presented for each related research question. To check the normality of data sets, the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was used, and the normalization

matter was presented. To check the confirmability of the null hypothesis of the study, the inferential statistics in the form of Paired Sample *t*-test were run and presented. For the two last research questions, the researchers presented the descriptive analysis based on their knowledge and inference about data obtained from semi-structured interviews.

4. Results

4.1 Checking the First Research Question

The first research question of this study was as follows:

Does implementing the principles of self-reflective and group-reflective instruction have any statistically significant effect on Iranian in-service EFL teachers' teaching performance?

To answer this question, first, the descriptive statistics for pre-test scores are presented in the following table.

Table 2.

The Descriptive Statistics for Pretest Scores

	<i>N</i>	Range	Min	Max	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Variance
Self-Reflective	20	66	38	104	78.95	18.517	342.892
Group-Reflective	20	82	44	126	82.75	22.088	487.882

As shown in Table 2, the means of pre-test scores are 78.95 and 82.75, respectively. Next, to check whether the parametric inferential test or nonparametric inferential test should be run for comparison of means, the estimation of the normality of datasets was required. Since the sample size for each dataset was less than 100 members, the researchers ran the Shapiro-Wilk Test of normality. The normality statistics for pre-test scores are presented in table 3 below.

Table 3.

The Normality Statistics for Pre-Test Scores

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Self-Reflective	.955	20	.445
Group-Reflective	.966	20	.659

As shown in Table 3, the sig values of pretest scores are 0.445 and 0.659, respectively. These sig values are more than the critical value (0.05; $0.445 > 0.05$ and $0.659 > 0.05$). It means that the scores are normally distributed. Since pre-test scores are both normally distributed, the researchers were allowed to use parametric tests, i.e., Independent Sample T-Test (because two sets of scores belonged to different groups), to present the inferential statistics. To check the homogeneity of variances, the Levene Test of homogeneity was run. The following table presents the statistics for the Levene Test.

Table 4.

The Statistics for Homogeneity of Variances of Pre-Test Scores

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.787	1	38	.380

Here, the sig value is 0.380 and it is more than the critical value, i.e., 0.05 ($0.380 > 0.05$). It means that the homogeneity of variances is assumed. Thus, the first row of the inferential statistics should be presented. The following table presents the inferential statistics for pre-test scores.

Table 5.

The Inferential Statistics for Pretest Scores

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>SED</i>	95% Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Pre-test	-.590	38	.559	-3.800	6.445	-16.847	9.247

As shown in Table 5, the sig value is 0.559, and it is more than the critical value, i.e., 0.05 ($0.559 > 0.05$). Thus, the observed mean difference is not statistically significant for pre-test scores. To continue the analysis, the Posttest scores should be analyzed. The following table presents the descriptive statistics for Posttest scores.

Table 6.

The Descriptive Statistics for Posttest Scores

	<i>N</i>	Range	Min	Max	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Variance
Self-Reflective	20	68	57	125	88.25	18.971	359.882
Group-Reflective	20	76	56	132	91.90	22.785	519.147

As shown in Table 6, the means of Posttest scores are 88.25 and 91.90, respectively. Next, to check whether the parametric inferential test or nonparametric inferential test should be run for comparison of means, the estimation of the normality of datasets was required. The researchers ran the Shapiro-Wilk Test of normality. The normality statistics for Posttest scores are presented in table 7 below.

Table 7.

The Normality Statistics for Posttest Scores

	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	Df	Sig.
Self-Reflective	.974	20	.834
Group-Reflective	.957	20	.477

As shown in Table 7, the sig values of Posttest scores are 0.834 and 0.477, respectively. These sig values are more than the critical value, that is 0.05 ($0.834 > 0.05$ and $0.477 > 0.05$). It means that the scores are normally distributed. Since Posttest scores are both normally distributed, the researchers were allowed to use parametric tests, i.e., Independent Sample T-Test (because two sets of scores belonged to different groups), to present the inferential statistics. To check the homogeneity of variances, the Levene Test of homogeneity was run. The following table presents the statistics for the Levene Test.

Table 8.

The Statistics for Homogeneity of Variances of Posttest Scores

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.780	1	38	.383

Here, the sig value is 0.383 and it is more than the critical value, i.e., 0.05 ($0.383 > 0.05$). It means that the homogeneity of variances is assumed. Thus, the first row of the inferential statistics should be presented. The following table presents the inferential statistics for pre-test scores.

Table 9.

The Inferential Statistics for Posttest Scores

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	MD	SED	95% Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Posttest	-2.108	38	.042	-19.650	9.323	-38.522	-.778

As shown in Table 9, the sig value is 0.042, and it is less than the critical value, i.e., 0.05 ($0.042 < 0.05$). Thus, the observed mean difference is statistically significant for Posttest scores. Thus, it can be said that implementing the principles of self-reflective and group-reflective instruction had a statistically significant effect on Iranian in-service EFL teachers' teaching performance. Here, the self-reflective group outperformed the group-reflective one regarding the development of teaching performance.

4.2 Checking the Second Research Question

The second research question of this study was as follows:

RQ2: What are Iranian in-service EFL teachers' perceptions about implementing self-reflective instruction in their training program?

To answer this question, a semi-structured interview was conducted among the self-reflective group participants of the study. First, the obtained answers were coded and categorized into some specific categories. Then, the frequency and percentage of each answer were recorded. The detail of the qualitative analysis is presented in Table 10 (see Appendix A).

4.3 Checking the Third Research Question

The third research question of this study was as follows:

RQ3: What are Iranian in-service EFL teachers' perceptions about implementing group-reflective instruction in their training program?

To answer this question, a semi-structured interview was conducted among the group-reflective group participants of the study. First, the obtained answers were coded and categorized into some specific categories. Then, the frequency and percentage of each answer were recorded. The detail of the qualitative analysis is presented in Table 11 (see Appendix B).

5. Discussion

The analysis of the quantitative data of this study revealed that implementing the self-reflective and group-reflective instructions had a statistically significant effect on Iranian in-service EFL teachers' teaching performance, which means that both forms of reflective instructions develop Iranian in-service EFL teachers' teaching effectiveness. Also, some qualitative findings were revealed in this study. Considering the first qualitative research question, i.e., the third research question of the study, the participants believed that self-reflection practice had a constructive effect on their following attributes: their teaching performance, classroom interactions, teaching efficacy, teaching flexibility, teaching behavior management, predictability for students' potential problems, content and pedagogical knowledge, challenge management, teaching attunement, negotiation of meaning skill, and ethical commitment. For the second qualitative research question, i.e., the fourth research question of the study, participants commented that group-reflection practice had a positive effect on their creativity, problem-solving ability, teaching effectiveness, presentation quality, interactional efficacy, feedback and comment acceptance, professional development, tolerance of ambiguity, sense of humor and flexibility, critics management, challenge management, ethical commitment, and negotiation of meaning.

Regarding the first finding of this study, it can be said that the progressive potentiality like self-reflection practice enables teachers to step beyond their current performance borders and enlarges their performance effectiveness. This view is mirrored by Malmberg et al. (2010), who believed that language teachers are required to awaken their strategic awareness, refine their teaching skills, and develop their teaching attitudes toward better professional status. This professional growth could be provided by implementing self-reflective practice. In addition, this finding is in line with Jarvis et al. (2003) definition of self-reflection, which refers to the awareness of one's capabilities and potentialities to challenge fixed clichés to establish a reformed perspective on the given topic. Thus, the uniqueness of self-reflection is that the individuals are supposed to challenge their understanding while focusing on the principles of reflective practice for their ongoing actions. This insightful self-emergent understanding helps teachers perform better and inevitably have a positive feeling and belief about their teaching performance effectiveness.

Considering the second finding of this study, when a person engages in group-reflection practice, he/she experiences a process of critical reconceptualization that enables

him/her to see the events from different angles. In the process of group reflection, individuals try the sequence of discussing, questioning, planning, and decision-making toward better personal and group-based performances. The core principle is the collective perspective on the given issue through the judgment-, criticism-, or praise-free practice that enables the participants to modify their meaning before, while, and after operating the required actions to enhance their performance. It can be tracked in Odhiambo's (2010) group reflection process. According to Odhiambo (2010), the practice of teacher group reflection provides the opportunity to be in touch, up-to-date, and aware of both their personal and collective teaching experiences to progress professionally. Also, the collaborative and group-based reflective practice emphasizes collaboration between teachers.

Regarding the third research question of this study, Farrell's (2016) point of view about self-reflection could be the case here. For Farrell (2016), it allows teachers to recall and incorporate previous learning experiences and previously learned theories into their teaching practice to make informed-decision and build teachers' theories of their current teaching practice. Also, it can provide opportunities for teachers to think systematically, independently, and collaboratively about their practice, experiences, and decision-making. Another critical factor for this finding is the dynamicity of self-reflection practice. According to Brookfield (2017), the process of reflection is a dynamic action of self-modification concentrated on what is happening in language class for teachers that allows them to judge their teaching effectiveness more moderately and interactively.

Finally, considering the fourth research question of this study, it can be said that negotiation of meaning through group work enables the participants to put their views together to make a holistic and overall understanding of the issue under discussion in group-reflection practice. This robust understanding among them provides an excellent opportunity to enhance their interactions toward better professional performance. It can bring them to abandon benefits in their teaching execution. This idea is in line with Hatton and Smith's (1995) belief about the self-reflection process, which entails sharing negotiated meaning through the critical exchange of views to achieve better performance delicacy among teachers who practice it. The reflection cycle allows teachers to reconstruct their unique context-sensitive meaning more logically and critically which is expected to equip them with the necessary qualities for successful professional development. According to Calderhead and Gates (1993), the purposeful practice of reflection allows the teacher to enhance their

ongoing performance in their immediate teaching context and even for the future wider teaching context or events. This attitude toward constructing better teaching conditions is highly facilitated when language teachers engage in the group-reflection practice.

6. Conclusion

As the determining elements of any teaching program, teachers are assumed to be fundamental role players in transmitting, facilitating, and directing required knowledge, skills, and values. Recently, the concept of reflection has been a hotspot in teacher education in different contexts worldwide. For Russell (2005), reflective practice is a strong linkage between theory and practice for teacher education, which enables the teachers to reconstruct their meaning and understanding of the teaching/learning process. Based on Zhu (2011), the process of reflection on teaching is not linear; instead, it is a highly dynamic cycle of action that requires ongoing construction of meaning among teachers.

To be more capable of making wise decisions for every teaching event, novice teachers should engage in the process of reconstruction of understanding and knowledge. Concentrating on teachers' technical and pedagogical development, reflective practice is a valuable practice that allows them to revise their decisions on the action. Farrell (2018) viewed the reflective practice as a connector of the underlying theory and practice among both pre/in-service teachers.

Through reflection, the teachers are exposed to a new understanding from the mixture of newly developed and previous meanings in their attempts to improve learners' learning quality. Self-awareness, pedagogical identification, and strategic readiness are some key by-products of practicing a reflective teaching approach for EFL teachers. Teachers who apply reflection in their teaching process are expected to be more creative in their teaching manner and show more potential to engage in the continuous and dynamic process of reconstruction of knowledge in their professional performance. Also, the practice of reflection is highly recommended for those teacher educators responsible for training effective and competent teachers for the future.

The findings of the present study have to be seen in light of some limitations. The study's context can be considered the main factor. Investigating the role of different contexts, such as EFL vs. ESL settings, can be a valuable decision. However, the limited funding and financial elements forced the researchers to investigate just the EFL setting. Also, the matter

of accessibility of the enormous sample size led the researchers to conduct the study just on easy-access members. In addition, the instructional phase duration could be considered another limitation of the study. The researchers were permitted to run the study in a short period prescribed by the managerial staff.

As for delimitations, this study was delimited in terms of its sampling method, where the researchers had to use convenience sampling for participants' selection. The subsequent delimitation of the current study was the context of the study. The researchers wanted to do this study both in scholastic and institutional contexts, but authorities of the Ministry of Education organization in Tehran did not confirm the authorization for doing such a study at the school level. Thus, the researchers were left to do the study just at the institutional level. Moreover, for ease of implementation, the researchers narrowed the research topic, focusing on in-service EFL teachers. Perhaps, investigating pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs and performance and comparing them with the in-service teachers' group obtained results to enhance the validity and comprehensiveness of this study. However, the researchers preferred to have just in-service EFL teachers as the center of attention due to practicality.

The findings of the present study have some implications that may help English language teachers. The first point is that, for pre-service teachers, experiencing reflective practice, whether self-reflective or group reflective, enables them to improve their deep-level thinking significantly, reflect on their actions and emotions before, during, and after language experiences, and distance from a surface approach to learning. Also, it enables them to construct initiatives based on their prior knowledge and teaching experience to take in new skills, techniques, and theories. Moreover, it could be helpful for their professional progress in the future.

Secondly, for in-service teachers, reflective practice in both self and group formats stimulates them to develop various skills, such as decision-making, metacognition, and logical thinking. In addition, it enables teachers to improve their professional skills and develop positive attitudes towards the profession itself. It also fosters their reflectivity by encouraging them to gather their classroom experience and analyze it. Through practicing reflective teaching, teachers can explore their underlying beliefs. As a result, the main implication of reflective practice for them is the opportunity for performance enhancement.

Furthermore, reflective practice is a fantastic help for teacher educators to find a more effective and practical method for teaching. With the continued fostering of reflective practices in education programs and throughout future in-service training for novice and in-service teachers, it is possible to research the potential effects that reflective practices might have on student learning and the professional growth of teachers.

Finally, language curriculum program policymakers and educational syllabus designers are suggested to provide sufficient and effective plans and syllabuses for language teachers' practicum and training programs. Regarding the positive and constructive effect of reflective practice, they should make necessary arrangements in curricula to use this practice in schools' curricula. Also, they are recommended to organize pre and in-service EFL teachers' training programs appropriate for the pedagogical use of the reflective practice.

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Appendix A

Table 10.

The Descriptive Statistics for the Third Research Question

Code	Answer Category	Frequency	Percentage %
1-	Do you believe it is necessary to think about what is going on in the process of learning when you interact with your learners?		
	Yes, definitely.	14	70
	Yes, but it is not a critical factor.	3	15
	I have no idea about it.	2	10
	No, it is not necessary.	1	5
2-	Before teaching, I think about what is to be done or said. Does this apply to you?		
	Yes, often, I think about my teaching practice.	15	75
	It doesn't really apply to me.	3	15
	No, I don't act like that before teaching.	2	10
3-	I believe that the personal thoughts and feelings of the learners affect the quality of the educational interaction between teachers and learners. Does that apply to you?		
	Yes, that's exactly an important factor.	9	45
	Yes, it works for me.	8	40
	No, it can't be a very significant factor.	1	5
	No, I don't think like that.	2	10
4-	Reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of a teacher's performance can play an undeniable role in improving his/her performance and quality of presentation in the classroom. Does this apply to you?		
	Yes, it applies to me completely.	13	65
	Yes, it somehow applies to me but not completely.	4	20
	No, it doesn't apply to me.	3	15
5-	When I use reflective teaching practice, some aspects and elements of my teaching that I have not known or been aware of before appear to me. Does this statement apply to you? Describe your answer.		
	Yes, it applies to me completely.	7	35
	Yes, it somehow applies to me but not completely.	9	45
	I have no idea about it.	2	10
	No, it doesn't apply to me.	2	10

6- Do you feel any significant difference between your previous and current teaching behavior after receiving reflective practice?

Yes, there is a clear difference.	16	80
No, there is no considerable difference.	1	5
No, my teaching practice has remained the same.	3	15

7- Are you interested in reading books or articles about reflective practice to improve your teaching style?

Yes, definitely.	14	70
Yes, I think it helps me to teach better than before.	4	20
No, I'm not interested to know about it.	2	10

8- Have you ever listed your classroom problems and challenges and looked for more effective ways to deal with them?

Yes, always.	5	25
Yes, I do that whenever possible.	13	65
No, I never do that.	2	10

9- If classroom filming is possible, do you agree that reviewing it after the classroom is an effective way to improve your teaching performance?

Yes, I think it is constructive practice.	18	90
No, I don't like to do that.	1	5
In my view, it can't be that much helpful.	1	5

10- Have you ever been in a circumstance where you think about how to react to one teaching situation or matter while it happens? Do you think that is necessary at all? Why?

Yes, as I experienced it, it's completely useful.	6	30
Yes, I occasionally do it.	11	55
No, it is not necessary because it's time-consuming.	3	15

11- Do you find flexibility in your teaching approach when dealing with challenging and unpredictable situations?

Yes, now my teaching style has become more flexible.	17	85
Yes, my ambiguity tolerance has improved.	2	10
No, my flexibility hasn't changed considerably.	1	5

12- Do you feel you fail to manage your classroom and deliver your intended knowledge to your students after receiving reflective practice?

No, instead, it helps me to have better interactions.	9	45
No, I can say it had a positive effect on my teaching.	10	50
I have no idea about that.	1	5

13- Do you have a better feeling about your teaching quality after learning how to reflect on your teaching practice?		
Yes, definitely.	7	35
Yes, it helps me to react better than before.	11	55
No, it hasn't improved my feelings significantly.	2	10
14- Some teachers believe their acceptance capacity for different learning styles and behavior has improved significantly after receiving reflective practice. Do you agree with them?		
Yes, I completely agree with them.	9	45
Yes, I think it can be beneficial.	8	40
No, I haven't had such an experience.	3	15
15- Some teachers believe that teaching should be the first priority of every teacher and that whatever happens in the classroom should not prevent a predetermined lesson plan. Do you agree with this opinion?		
No, I disagree with this opinion.	14	70
Yes, in my opinion, teaching practice should follow a fixed lesson plan to avoid ambiguities.	4	20
I think it depends on the teaching context; then, I have no idea about that.	2	10

Appendix B

Table 11.

The Descriptive Statistics for the Fourth Research Question

Code	Answer Category	Frequency	Percentage %
1- Receiving others' reflective views about an individual's performance will generate new insights for him/her. Do you think this statement is true or not?			
	Yes, definitely.	17	85
	I have no idea about it.	2	10
	No, I don't think it is true.	1	5
2- Do you agree that getting reflective feedback from others about your performance will significantly help you to resolve problems and failures in your performance?			
	Yes, I agree with this idea.	12	60
	Somehow, I agree with that, but I don't think it has a highly constructive effect.	6	30

No, I disagree with this idea.	2	10
3- Learners' previous beliefs influence the quality and effectiveness of the classroom interaction process. Do you agree with this statement?		
Yes, I agree with that.	18	90
No, I disagree with it.	1	5
I have no idea about it.	1	5
4- Do you like receiving feedback from colleagues to improve your teaching practice?		
Yes, definitely.	13	65
Yes, I welcome constructive ones.	6	30
No, I think every teaching context is unique, and negotiating other teachers' experiences cannot help me considerably.	1	5
5- If you face a challenging situation or issue in your teaching practice, do you ask your colleagues to consult you on how to handle or resolve it effectively?		
Yes, definitely.	10	50
Yes, if I find them more experienced than me.	9	45
No, it doesn't apply to me.	1	5
6- Do you think you need your colleagues' consultation to resolve your classroom problems and challenges?		
Yes, sure.	11	55
Yes, if they are more competent and knowledgeable than me.	8	40
No, I don't care what they think about my teaching.	1	5
7- If your colleague asks you to give your feedback on his or her teaching presentation, what are some important teaching elements for you?		
The quality of teacher presentation and interactions	13	65
The acceptable command of English and negotiation of meaning	3	15
The good competency of four skills and tolerance of ambiguity	2	10
A good sense of humor and flexibility	2	10
8- Do you agree that each classroom has its own contextual characteristics and therefore asking colleagues for feedback will not help you in your own teaching performance?		
No, I don't think like that.	15	75

Yes, it is a fact that each teaching context has its own characteristics and considerations.	3	15
Yes, because I think it cannot help the teacher improve performance.	2	10
9- Do you welcome colleagues' corrective comments to improve your teaching performance?		
Yes, definitely.	8	40
Yes, if I find them helpful and logical.	11	55
No, I don't feel interested in receiving such comments.	1	5
10- If you find an instructional problem in your colleague's teaching presentation and know a practical solution, do you share it with him/her?		
Yes, surely.	9	45
Yes, if I know that he/she has the tolerance and enthusiasm to receive it.	5	25
Yes, if I'm sure about the practicality of my solution.	6	30
11- Have you become more open to criticism and think more critically in the classroom by participating in group-reflective practice?		
Yes, clearly, it can improve my critical acceptance.	9	45
Yes, indeed, it helps my critical skill and performance.	9	45
No, I don't think so.	2	10
12- Sitting and thinking about what happens in the classroom after class, individually or as a group, wastes time. Do you agree with this opinion?		
No, definitely.	7	35
No, I think it can be helpful for teachers who conduct it in both group or self-directed ways.	7	35
No, at least the negotiation of experience can be constructive to see some specific events from different lenses.	6	30
13- I listen to colleagues' suggestions and solutions to challenging teaching situations, but I do not want to use them because I believe they have expressed their personal experiences in their own classrooms and will not work for my class. Do you agree with this opinion?		
No, I never think so. I basically think it can be beneficial for me.	17	85
I have no idea about that.	1	5
Yes, I agree with it.	2	10

14- One colleague believes that because of the insignificant income of teaching in Iran, spending time thinking about teaching and searching for more effective teaching methods or consulting to gain experience from other colleagues is not logical. Do you agree with him/her?

No, never. I think teachers should not link financial considerations in their teaching practice in this way. 14 70

No, regarding the ethical issues, it is not fair. 4 20

It depends on the teachers' personalities; thus, I have no idea. 2 10

15- Do you prefer to provide or receive feedback or solutions to challenging teaching situations? Or do you like them both? Or none of them?

I prefer both of them. 13 65

I prefer to be a receiver. 3 15

I prefer to be a provider. 4 20
