

## Relationship between Reflective Teaching and Iranian EFL Learners' Language Achievement

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### Abstract

Language learning and practice are related to teachers' reflection on skill practice and the existence of reflective professional competence. The aim of the present study was to examine the possible relationship between reflective teaching and learners' achievement. To accomplish this goal, 120 advanced EFL learners were selected through convenient sampling from two bilingual institutes in Kerman, Iran, to receive reflective instruction for five weeks. To elicit the needed data a TOEFL test was administered before and after the reflective teaching. Statistical analysis of the obtained data indicated that the participants did much better than they had done before the reflective teaching. This finding proves the relationship between reflective teaching and EFL learners' positive language achievement and has implications for language education.

**Keywords:** Language learning, learners' language achievement, reflective teaching

### INTRODUCTION

Today, education is more challenging than ever before. It is considered one of the most important factors in population growth. For that reason, teachers and their personalities are essential elements of teaching and learning. Because teachers have a significant impact on students' learning, they should play an active role in the teaching and learning process. There are many aspects of teachers sharing useful learning outcomes for students, including their knowledge, skills, knowledge, and attitudes. However, one of the most important factors contributing to student success is teacher reflectivity and teacher perceptions in practical practice in refining their students'

learning (Ashraf, Samir, & Yazdi, 2016; Goldhaber, 2002; Sanders, 2000). Kemmis (1994), quoted in Ahmad et al. (2013), argued that student achievement would not be possible if teachers were not encouraged to use their skills in the education system. This motivation may be unusual for thoughtful practice; accordingly, teachers' skills in showing empathy, design, integration, identification, and performance will be significantly improved.

Perhaps the most influential discussion of meditation can be attributed to Dewey (1933). He argues: "Everywhere you look today, the tide of protectionist sentiment is flowing. This process of getting to the point of view of what is not on the basis of what is there is speculation. What is there either leads to the idea and eventually to the acceptance of the

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other.” (p. 190). Thoughtful thinking can best be defined as “the persistence, diligence, and careful consideration of any belief or form of knowledge contemplated by the underlying causes and the further conclusions you may lean on” (Nodoushan, 2011, p. 12). It is a continuous process of thinking and in-depth examination of your thoughts and habits, as well as their roots and consequences (Stanley, 1998). Through meditation, it makes teachers see what is obvious to others but which is a mystery to them. The process of closing the gap between experience and learning is called Reflection.

Recently, however, experts have criticized the idea of Dewey’s meditation for a number of reasons. (Cinamond & Zimpher, 1990), for example, pointed out that the idea that Dewey has no sense of speed and order means reflection as if it were a mirror image of an app. They also note that his view of meditation is not a “collaborative or conversational process” because he acquires it to ensure that “a specialized teacher learns to meditate on a particular skill independently” (page 58). Practicing meditation can be considered a guide if you are a real traveler in your practice class. The metaphor of meditation as a compass gives teachers the ability to stop, look at, and decide where they are at the moment and accept where they need to go in the future professionally (Akbari, 2007). As it seems over the years, reflection and practice of meditation are very popular in the field of English language teaching which is almost mandatory in such programs. Yes, many language teachers still agree that the meditation method is a desirable practice among teachers. However, there is almost no consensus as to which thought processes and procedures reflect the realities of teacher development (Farrell, 2007). Practicing meditation is more than just a passing thought before, during, or after class. It means learning what you do at school, and why teachers do it. Practicing meditation at the same time means the principles and values of English language teaching partners to think and see if teaching is in line with those beliefs and values. In order to engage in meditation activities, teachers need to gather information

regularly and then analyze and evaluate this information and level and compare it with basics and reliability, so that they can make changes and improvements in teaching (Farrell, 2007). It may also be the practice of demonstrating outside the classroom by looking at the teaching environment, for example where teachers seek the influence of their teaching in the community or community, or how the community or community perceives teaching.

Another contribution to the discussion is provided by Mathew (2012) who stated:

The practice of reflection involves a critical examination of self-motivation and thinking. It is a move towards critical thinking to improve productivity in teaching and students’ learning. Learning involves acquiring competence through action and experience while teaching involves engaging the learners in a process of activity that is likely to result in the success of intended learning outcomes. Helping learners understand the reasons for failures and creating awareness of self-correction can improve students’ classroom performance. (p. 206)

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Reflective Teaching as Professional Development

Part of the irrefutable evidence regarding thoughtful teaching is that it contributes to the critical thinking and debate among researchers about teaching and learning that will promote appropriate transformation in syllabus and education. In ESL / EFL settings, these critical actions can definitely have an impact on what is happening in our classrooms and make changes in process, calculation, and teaching. Language teachers cannot see themselves as less active. Somehow, teachers have to be very complex in the system, and the only way to do this is to take time to think and reflect on what they are doing to encourage more real learning for their students. ESL / EFL teachers and any other teacher in the field of education bring personal beliefs to the class about teaching; they come to class with their teaching styles, as well as a personal understanding of students’ needs.

Some of the objectives of the reflection process are to dig into what the teacher hopes for “good teaching”, and to reflect on the teaching/learning process through different perspectives. Therefore, a psychologist visualizes a picture of a school environment, and this reaction enhances the professional development of his or her education in order to make informed decisions. Farrell (2012) described thoughtful teaching as “imitation experience” and “input and output for development” (p.10). He suggested that there be visible/developing alignment as a dynamic environment for restoring classroom processes and outcomes and advancing teachers and students who motivate and motivate themselves through a continuous and repetitive series in the classroom (quoted in Farrell, 1998). Indeed, our successes and disappointments in teaching practices.

Miller de Arechaga (2001) clarified that teacher growth is linked to individual growth, specially developed as a teacher. He explained that the process involves teachers' choices about how they demonstrate, how they feel and act as teachers, how teachers can recognize the level of knowledge they are developing, and how the immediate forms they make can affect education. the nature of their students (quoted in Miller de Arechaga,2001). This training does not usually occur at different levels of education (elementary school, high school, university). Order is sometimes taken for granted and not academically grown in the policy. It is amazing what things can be learned from this thoughtful re-view and how teaching processes can be improved. Certainly, thoughtful teaching is encouraging and empowering.

ESL / EFL teachers face many challenges in the classroom. Most of the impossible data for class events are usually met by the teacher himself. Some providers are colleagues, teacher advisors, and students themselves (some important information is available about them). But these phenomena are rarely seen or immersed in some form of meditation. Many ESL / EFL teachers are very concerned about using the curriculum they have prepared (no matter how well it works) and never break

it and think. Their daily lessons can be informative in a variety of perspectives to improve the understanding of their teaching (through research and interpretation) in addition to the effects that teaching has on students, good or bad. Wajnryb (1999) explained that finding our own teaching is a way to determine a class with a view other than the one we are really stuck with; it is a way of focusing and simplifying; it is an advantage to collect class estimates and gain information about teaching. Self-examination provides meta-language for teachers (a language you can discuss with other colleagues about classroom situations and events). He emphasized that it promotes improved classroom knowledge and knowledge base and skills that will guide ESL / EFL instructors in discussions and demonstrations with classmates and colleagues, and that decisions will be informed and orderly. In addition, thoughtful comments form the basis of good relations between classmates based on mutual support and commendation. How to ensure good diversity in English Language Teaching (ELT) is the creation of visual review groups. This is done by creative staff who show interest, grow collaboratively, and embrace classroom-related issues such as students' learning styles, needs, and shortcomings; and test equipment, among other features. During this cycle, teachers can classify a topic or topic that should come before the group and other colleagues, and explain the details and lessons of the lesson. Debates emerge and a series of explanations are suggested for the decision-making process that can lead to effective teaching methods. Surprisingly, an excessive number of subjects come from thoughtful review groups. Many of these refer to the teacher's perception of students (verbally / verbally), the amount of student motivation in the classroom, the types of resources used (expired/expired), the types of activities that are planned (boring/engaging) and types of functions (true/false). Indeed, it is encouraging to have opportunities for meditation, clarification, discussion, and management in all of these aspects that are part of our daily lives as educators. It builds trust between jobs,

restores teacher resilience, engages workers in a critical commitment in our field, and tells students that they are important to the process and that there is a deeper awareness of facilitating foreign language success. Visual teaching is a legitimate income from real teaching.

Authors such as Richards, Lockhart, Ramirez, and Wallace, have developed education to help English teachers as a Second Language (ESL) communicate with reflection. Bartlett (1990) stated that “for teachers of multiracial students, being a model teacher presents a real challenge” (p.214). This is justified by the fact that foreign language teaching incorporates many different aspects, such as those quoted earlier, that need to be measured, and that can affect both teaching and learning. Ramirez (1995) states that “in the second language class, critical teaching may involve asking “what” and “why” questions about teaching methods, reasons for language learning, and definitions of student achievement or failure” (p. 372). These requirements will enable teachers to understand what is good or bad, what works or what does not work, what motivates or hinders students, what is easy or slow to learn, etc. other principles that can improve teaching/learning. Being ideally illustrated will link the gap toward suitable and efficient ESL/EFL teaching.

### **Reflective Teaching in Foreign Language Contexts**

The irrefutable evidence concerning reflective teaching is that it aids significant thought and debate among colleagues (teaching faculty) about teaching and learning that will stimulate suitable alteration in syllabus and education. In ESL/EFL settings, these critical actions can impact definitely the consideration of what is going on in our classrooms and in making changes in procedure, calculation, and teaching. Language educators cannot see themselves as inactive agents on the ground. Somewhat, teachers should be complicated intensely in the process, and the only method to do this is taking time to contemplate and replicate there does to foster more real learning in their learners. ESL/EFL teachers or any other teacher in the field of education bring to

class personal beliefs about teaching; they come to class with their personal styles for teaching, personal understandings of students’ want, and even particular expectations of what moral teaching is. Some of the objects of the reflective process are to excavate into what the teacher trusts “good teaching” is, and to reflect on the teaching/learning procedure through dissimilar viewpoints. Consequently, the reflective expert imagines through dissimilar eyes an image of the schoolroom environment and does, and this responsiveness grows professional development in his/her own education to make suitable decisions. Farrell (2012) demarcated reflective teaching as that of “mirroring experience” and as the “input and output for development” (p.10). She proposed a reflective/developing alignment as a revolving point to recover classroom procedures and consequences and to advance self-confident and self-motivated teachers and students through a continuing and recursive series in the classroom (cited in Farrell, 1998).

Based on what was stated above, efforts were made in the present study to find answers to the following question:

*Q. Is there any significant relationship between reflective teaching and Iranian EFL learners’ language achievement?*

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

The participants of the current study comprised 120 advanced Iranian EFL learners who were selected through convenient sampling from different language institutes in Kerman, Iran, to be exposed to reflective teaching for five weeks. Eighty-five percent of the participants were women and thirteen percent of them were men. Also, 8.8 percent of the participants were below 18 years old, 79.2 percent were between 18 to 24, 9.8 percent between 25 to 34, 0.6 percent between 35 to 44, and 1.6 percent of them were between 45 to 54 years old.

### **Instrument**

The needed data was collected by administering a TOEFL actual test to the participants before and after the reflective instruction.

## Procedure

To collect the needed data, the TOEFL test was administered to the participants before the treatment to measure their language competence. Then, the participants received treatment for six sessions according to Richards and Lockhart's (1996) useful guideline in *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms* and Farrell's (2004) three types of reflection in *Reflective practice in action: 80 reflection breaks for busy teachers*. At the end of the treatment, the same TOEFL actual test was administered to the participants to check the effect of reflection on their language

achievement. Finally, the correlation between reflective teaching and the participants' achievement was calculated.

## RESULTS

To see if reflective teaching is correlated with EFL learners' language achievement, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated. The results showed that there was a great positive correlation between the two variables  $r = .757$ ,  $n = 166$ ,  $p = .006$ . There was a large positive correlation between the two variables  $r = .757$ ,  $n = 166$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , with high levels of reflectivity associated with high achievement.

**Table**

*Pearson Correlation between Learners' Achievement and Teacher Reflectivity*

	N	Sig (2-tailed)	Pearson Correlation
Class Mean	120	.000	.757*
Teacher Reflectivity			

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## DISCUSSION

The results of the current study revealed that teachers' thinking is closely related to EFL students' language achievement. According to Akbari (2007), the metaphor, REFLECTION IS A COMPASS gives teachers the ability to stop, look at, and decide where they are at any given time and take where they need to go in the future professionally.

The reason for the important relationship between teacher visibility and student achievement can be found in Akbari, Kiany, Naeeni, and Allvar's (2008) claim that student learning and accountability for student achievement are central to the meditation workplace. Dewey (1933) argues that commitment is one of the hallmarks of a teacher you consider, while Waltermire (1999) states that practicing meditation begins with a teacher's commitment to supporting students to succeed. Dewey hopes teachers' efforts to solve complex classroom problems become educational skills that motivate students and learn. According to Ahmad et al. (2013), critical teachers are real teachers as those teachers explore the objectives of classroom activities and adjust the foundations for teaching for meaningful learning. They also create a fun and exciting learning environment in the classroom;

however, thoughtful teaching is what acting as thoughtful teachers can point to problems as those teachers have to reflect the different needs of the students. Factors such as self-examination and self-assessment encourage them to be aware of their actions and the difficulties of their students. Reflection helps teachers to evaluate and evaluate their teaching with the intention of making sound decisions in order to correct what is important to develop attitudes, ideas, and the effectiveness of teaching that contribute to student achievement and performance. Indeed, real meditation on teaching can prevent students from getting caught up in academic problems and thus becoming more interested in learning (Akbari et al., 2008). According to Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997), success varies from teacher to teacher. This diversity of teacher performance is a major problem for students' educational development.

Meditation teaching is helpful for both pre-serve teachers and in-service teachers. as it offers more benefits than hindrances, teacher education programs are more committed to expanding thought processes between their students and teachers. These programs help budding teachers become more aware of decision-making processes and help them control

the impact of their decisions on the system in which they are used. Beyer (1984) suggested that, as a last resort for potential teacher training, there may be sufficient 'real-life' involvement for students to find teaching methods and teaching methods, linking 'theory' (found mainly in the classroom.) And 'practice' (usually as is done in school), become familiar with the teaching needs, and have the necessary skills and ideas to participate fully in that setting. When the class is a time when students will obviously spend most of their working life, it may make sense to combine this kind of experience as an introduction to their professional practice. As it seems over the years, reflection and practice of meditation are very popular in the field of English language teaching that is almost mandatory in such programs. In fact, many language teachers still agree that the meditation method is a desirable practice among teachers. However, there is still no consensus as to which thought processes reflect the reality of promoting teacher development (Farrell, 2007).

## CONCLUSION

Compared to other studies, this study enlightened us on the subject under investigation. The results of this study suggest one special opportunity for education managers. In fact, the role of professional teachers' evaluation by meeting with inexperienced and experienced teachers. Based on these findings, educators make good use of highly effective teacher activities in terms of effective demonstration processes in terms of achieving high performance. Another area to improve teacher performance is the use of current research findings that will lead to improved teacher awareness. School administrators need to encourage meditation as part of professional teacher development and as part of an ongoing school improvement program. Knowledge of how teachers' points directly relate to teacher quality can be useful in management decisions. As Zhang (2008) points out, teacher knowledge and teacher educational aspects are presented as two factors that are linked to teacher quality. The recruitment of experienced and highly educated teachers who are expected to think critically, as well as the

retention of less trained and more experienced teachers with professional development, may benefit a given level of students' learning time.

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