



Reflective Teaching and Practice Skills: Correlation between EFL Teachers' Reflection and Students' Practice

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Abstract

Language learning and achievement are related to the skills teachers practice and the presence of expert capability such as teachers' reflectivity. The objective of the present study was to search the extent to which EFL teachers are involved in reflective instruction and test the level of growing teachers' awareness of reflective teaching which leads to students' language achievement. Data were collected by the following instruments: a) a TOEFL test administered to 350 Iranian EFL students, b) reflective journals written by 120 Iranian EFL teachers, and c) a Reflective Teaching Inventory. For the qualitative stage, 120 male and female EFL teachers from two language institutes in Kerman, the center of Iran, were selected through convenient sampling and were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. After completing the treatment, a reflective teaching inventory as a post-test was given to the two groups to test the impact of the treatment. The results of the *t-test* indicated that the experimental group outdid the control group in taking advantage of reflective teaching components. This finding raises provocative questions regarding reflective teaching and teaching skills.

Keywords: Language achievement, language learning, reflective teaching, teachers' awareness

INTRODUCTION

Education today is more about thinking than ever before. This is considered to be one of the most important factors in the growth of individuals. Accordingly, teachers and their personalities are important features of teaching and learning, because teachers have a significant bearing on the learning of learners and they play a dynamic role in the teaching and learning progression. Numerous teacher traits are related to students' positive learning development, including their knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and knowledge. However, one of the most influential issues affecting student

success is teacher reflection and teacher awareness of reflection in improving the learning of their learners (Ashraf, Sameer, & Yazdi, 2016; Goldhauber, 2002; Ghorabani, Davodi, Adele, Amirion, 2020; Saunders, 2000). If teachers are not motivated to use their abilities in the educational process, students will not have the opportunity to achieve. This motivation can be enhanced through reflective learning; In addition, teachers' skills are enhanced by reflecting on critical reflection, planning, integration, exploration, and creation. Many resources for students to learn and experience are provided by reflective teachers. In addition, competent teachers often think through the in-depth process of their learning, goals,

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objectives, and methods, which will contribute to creating a new world of education; Therefore, developing the reflection method can help as a central means of improving self-knowledge and adopting novel ways of educating students. McKinnon (1987) Repeated participation in the reflection process and objective setting make teachers more likely to think about innovative curriculum methods. Continuous development is part of the complex reflection process. Educators should consider that learning opportunities are never completely closed (Brookfield, 1995; Ghorbani, Davodi, Adele, Amirian, 2020). Continuous development is enhanced by avoiding repetition and looking at opposite dimensions of knowledge from diverse perspectives (Holly, 1989). A growing group of teachers stresses that teachers be constantly on the move and support their teaching and learning approach. The objective of the current study is to propose the hypothesis that English teachers need to find a way to grow. One reason for being a reflective instructor is that the choices teachers make influence the characteristics of their learners. Thus, the reflective teacher intelligently evaluates his or her teaching performance, makes new choices based on his or her former experience, and applies his or her goals scientifically (Akbari, Behzadpoor, & Dadwand, 2010; Ghorabani, Davodi, Adele, Amirian, 2020). In addition, teachers need to be reflective when dealing with potential uncertainty. There is a lot of change in the classroom among students these days, and there are ups and downs in society as well. As a result, teachers have to bear these changes and shifting situations. They also need to know about the learner's hostile society, level of development, encouragement to learn, and practice. All of these require a teacher to reflect on and retort to the fluctuating necessities of students. According to Grant and Ziechner (1984), reflective teaching allows teachers to recognize themselves more purposely and deliberately and to liberate themselves from repetitive and unreasonable actions. Reflection simply frees us from suddenness and repetitive activity, allowing us to guide our actions with expectation and forming attitudes and goals

that are familiar to the student and learner; It allows us to understand what we are doing when we act (Davy, 1933; Maumen, Aldalala, & Bavane, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The evolution of thought is generally attributed to the writings of forerunners such as Dewey (1933), Shawn (1983), and Farrell (2004), who described reflection as a typical act of replacing thought with practice. Frees the learner from the action. According to Tom Farrell (2004), reflection is not a simplistic approach, but a holistic approach to teaching that has intellectual, cognitive, metacognitive, emotional, otherworldly, and moral characteristics. Teachers need to collect data to adopt reflective methods and consider their movements to improve their teaching methods. Reflective practice involves the continuous practice of teacher-shared intelligence, responsibility, and skill (Farrell, 2004; Maumen, Aldallah, & Bavane, 2020). Three consecutive types of reflexes are acknowledged in the literature (Farrell): reflection-on-action (thinking after the event), reflection-in-action (thinking while doing), and reflection-off-action (thinking before doing). Thinking)); Reflection-in-action refers to thinking when an amazing issue shows its appearance when it is being done. Reflection-on-action refers to a thoughtful observation that evaluates what has happened and what it is. Reflection on action takes place after the first two stages of reflection or before the action the teacher chooses to do in the classroom (Farrell, 2012). For the level of reflection learning, the relevant literature (Ghorbani, Davodi, Adele, Amirian, 2020; Valli, 1997; Van Manen, 1977) also introduced various methods. Many of them classify teacher reflections as technical and complex (Valli; van Manen). At the lowest level of reflection, the teacher's reflection becomes research into the services, plans, tools, and values used to achieve the encoded goals. At the technical level, the teacher understands assessments and educational goals at the applicable level. At this stage, the teacher focuses more on testing and testing the hypotheses underlying his activities. Principles

of teaching and moral and social characteristics arise at critical levels (Van Manen, 1977; Zulfikar and Mujibur Rahman, 2018). A considerable number of studies have been allotted to the ideas of reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-for-action (Burhan-Horsenali & Ortaketep, 2016; Moumin, Aldalala, & Bavaneh, 2020). A little research explains how teachers in the 21st grade express these kinds of reflections. Numerous experimental studies have identified the influence of various tools such as journal writing (Li, 2001; Liu, 2001; Tsang, 2003); Zulfikar and Mujibur Rahman (2018), video recording (Hsu, 200; Huang, 2005), and reaction research (Hagevic, Aydeniz, & Glennon, 2012; Moumen, Aldalalah, & Bavaneh, 2020). Little is known about the reflection that can be achieved. There is very little experiential evidence about what teachers do or reflect on in each sequential type of reflection. Of the reflection methods described, journal writing is the most commonly used because of its practicality (Richards, 1995). The growing research community has used journal writing to study the degree of complexity of reflection by means of a variety of frameworks (Richards, 1993; Lai, Colandra, 2010; Lee, 2005; Lee, 2007; Rodgers, 2020; Tsang, 2003). His research notes that teacher reflections are forms of expression and communication. Through the analysis of reflective journals, some research is simultaneously examined internally (e.g., Camacho, et al., 2012) and through a series of reflections (e.g., Burhan and Ortactep, 2016; Camacho, et al., 2012; Rodgers, 2020). Especially in EFL cases. To this day, few researchers have studied the contents of the image in a variety of ways. Examining 20 student-teacher feedback reports and 20 learning instructional information during reflective exercises, Liu (2001) identified practical teaching topics and other teacher evaluations as teachers' main concerns. He said the teachers' reflections were detailed rather than reflective. In another research, Lee (2005) and Rodgers (2020) reported reflective ideas of three pre-service teachers in a Korean school using meetings, explanations, questionnaires, and reflection magazines. An examination of their reflective journals indicated that

they reproduced the three levels labeled in the Lee (2000) framework and that the main reflections of reflection were individual students' performance, teaching skills, and curriculum/content elements. Lee's model provides a reflection on the process that includes the three basics of recall level, justification level, and reflection level. Moreover, the results showed secondary reflection events; for example, when the level of ownership increased and when teachers started their teaching activities, their extent of reflection was affected by the circumstances in which their reflection occurred. Paul (2007) identifies concepts about the teaching process, teaching work, and teaching process as major concerns between learners and teachers. In a blog-based study, Tang (2013) examined a total of 1503 blog items from 3 colleagues of 49 pre-service English teachers in Hong Kong, understanding their interaction with reflective action and their teaching on areas of concern. Events that reach the blog and the number of words in the blog indicate that they are active in deep activity. Teaching concerns of fourteen different categories were reviewed in a group investigation of certain blogs. Notwithstanding the studies described above, the experience and evaluation of sequential types using journal writing have not been adequately identified. Therefore, the current research addresses the succeeding research queries:

Q1. To what extent do Iranian EFL teachers deal with reflective teaching?

Q2. How does reflective teaching change the reflective behavior of EFL teachers?

Q3. Is there any correlation between teacher reflection and student practice?

METHOD

Participants

To conduct the current research, two groups of participants were selected through convenient sampling: the teaching team and the learners' group. The former consisted of 120 Iranian EFL teachers with MA, BA, and Ph.D. degrees in Linguistics, Translation, and English Literature. The latter comprised 350 EFL English learners who were selected from two bilingual institutes in

Kerman, Iran. The team of teachers taught English at pre-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate, and Advanced levels at English institutions in Kerman. They were randomly assigned to two groups: an experimental group of teachers and a control group of 60 participating teachers. The experimental group received reflective instruction. For the control group, there was no treatment.

Instrumentation

The needed data were gathered through the following tools: (a) TOEFL test (quantitative method) administered to 350 Iranian EFL students, (b) Reflective journals written by 120 Iranian EFL teachers, and (c) Learning the Inventory Learning Inventory (Quality Method).

The Reflective Learning Inventory was developed by Akbari, Behzadpoor, & Dadvand, (2010). This tool is a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire with 1 = always 5 = 29 items. It captures the underlying components of a teacher's reflection; namely, affective, cognitive, metacognitive, practical, and critical. Teachers effectively reflect the reflection of their learners and their affectionate behavior in the classroom (Item 3). Cognitive is the direct effort that teachers make to enhance their professional development (6 points). Metacognitive includes the teacher and his reflections on the ideas and character (7 points). Practical includes accurate run-throughs of instrumentation and reflection, e.g. journal writing, text reports, surveys and questionnaires, audio and video records, observation, practical research, teaching portfolios, discussions, and important opportunity research (6 topics). Lastly, what is important relates to the socio-political factors of teaching (Item 7). The scale and sub-level reliability of this device was measured using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach alpha index for subcategories ranges from 0.591 to 0.870, which is satisfactory. Under the agreement, the all-inclusive inventory has a Cronbach alpha index of 0.782, which is satisfactory [30]. The psychometric elements in the questionnaire were also tested by factor analysis. The results of the analysis (KMO = 0.68) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p = 0.00$) presented that the questionnaire showed satisfactory validity.

Teachers' reflective journal was adopted from Richards and Lockhart's [34]; as well, Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms to accumulate teachers' reflection. Questions (1-3-9) on the reflection-for-action, the middle questions, concentrated on reflection-in-action (4-6), and questions (7-8-9-10) concentrated on reflection-on-action.

Procedures

For the qualitative phase, 120 male and female EFL teachers from two language institutes in the center of Kerman in Iran were randomly allotted to controlled and experimental groups, with the experimental group receiving treatment. Upon completion of treatment, the two groups were given a post-test reflective practice list to check the effectiveness of the treatment.

The current research was conducted through three stages: distribution of the questionnaire, treatment, and journal writing. Data assemblage was first achieved by sharing 120 copies of the questionnaire (Akbari, Behzadpoor, & Dadvand, 2010) among Iranian EFL participants. This questionnaire can be done in 20 minutes. It was used as a test before and after the treatment phase.

For reflective journals, after collecting all the journals at the end of the research process, the authors excluded the erroneous writings, then coded some journals according to the authors' names and gave each participant a nickname, and provided a code number like FT2 indicating a female teacher with complete journals. Each journal is protected in a separate portfolio to assist in the data analysis process. A total of 120 written journals were established and used for final analysis. The number of journals written by a single token for the experimental and control groups was selected with 60 each.

Before starting the treatment, according to Akbari, Behzadpoor, and Dadwand (2010), some lists were distributed to participants in both groups to see if they were related to reflective learning. The treatment program was started after obtaining permission from Kish Supervisor Air companies. The treatment group consisted of 60 participants treated for

six sessions, with each meeting lasting approximately one and a half hours.

The treatment was planned on the basis of the useful guidelines for reflection teaching in second language classrooms by Richards and Lockhart (1996) and three types of reflections by Farrell (2004). At the first meeting, after demonstrating the reflective approach, the instructor, who is a researcher himself, asked the participants to read the rules and write a syllabus for a unit of the book they found to teach at the next meeting. Richards and Lockhart (1996) on lesson planning planned in their respective classes, *Useful Guidelines for Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*, p. 82) At the rest of the meeting, participants were prompted to share their syllabi. In the next session, participants were asked to measure the same curriculum they had advanced after being taught in the previous meeting. Basically, Richards and Lockhart (1996) were tested to measure their text based on the rules proposed by the *Practical Guidelines for Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*. 18) Throughout the rest of the meeting, teachers talked about how they implemented the practice of reflection in their classroom as they intended. In the third session, participants were asked to videotape or audio-record one of their sessions and note the patterns they distinguished from their lesson plan and the types of interactive or in-the-moment decisions. Used to classify (Richard and Lockhart, 1996), taken during teaching and is complex on why they applied these alternatives. Also, they need to measure other features of their teaching, including classroom management, lesson configuration, communication forms, error correction, and so on. For the rest of the session, he looked at and examined summaries from the records and discussed how he experienced reflection in action. In the fourth session, participants are expected to identify one of their classmates, pre-fill in the observation checklist shared between them, and bring them into the classroom for conversation. In this session, he talked about what he learned through observation. In the fifth session, participants were asked to write a journal that reflected on the text-based

guidelines adopted from Richards and Lockhart. To further facilitate teachers in journal writing, some examples of structured journals and reflective journals are shared. Some participants may not be able to write their journals in English in an approved manner, they are not only allowed to write journal sheets in Persian (their native language) or English (their second language). The instructor mentioned the teachers' reflective journals, provided feedback on the teachers' journal writing, replied to their questions and directed them on what to study while writing their journals. Teachers were demanded to write their reflective journals for at least five meetings and put them on a portfolio-like cover and shared them at the end of the meeting. In the last session, a quick appraisal of the broad teaching opinions of reflective teaching was obtainable with some examples of journals shared. At the culmination of the semester, the written reflective journals were considered for data analysis, and then, according to Akbari, Behzadpoor, and Dadvand (2010), the inventory was given to both groups as a post-test.

RESULTS

The Akbari et al (2008) questionnaire was used to answer the question of how much teachers are involved in reflective teaching. Detailed data (average and standard deviation) for all the items in the questionnaire are summarized here.

As shown in Table 1 below, for the practical part, the highest average (2.06) is related to item 4, i.e. discussing practical/theoretical issues with colleagues. The lowest average (1.42) is related to item 5, which allows other teachers' classes to learn about their effective practices. For the cognitive component, the highest average (3.08) is obtained for item 10; Namely, looking through magazine articles or searching on the internet to see what are the recent developments in the profession. The lowest average (1.95) is item 11, which means conducting small-scale research activities in the classroom to get a better idea of learning/teaching processes (Table 1). With respect to the affected part; That is, when talking to students about their family background, interests, hobbies, and abilities, they provided

the highest average (3.65). Item 15, i.e., if students are asked if they like the teaching work, the lowest average (3.58) comes. When it comes to the metacognitive component, the highest average (3.16) is obtained by item 20, i.e., thinking about strengths and weaknesses as a teacher, and the lowest average (2.22) is obtained by item 22. That is, anomalies are thought and contradictions in

classroom practice (Table 1). As far as the significant part is concerned, the highest average (2.30) is obtained for item 28; That is, thinking about ways in which gender, social class, and ethnicity influence student success; The lowest average (1.93) was obtained for item 23, i.e. try to think of examples of social injustice in your environment and discuss them in the classroom.

Table 1
Detailed Data of the Questionnaire

Practical	
I have a file to keep my accounts related to my teaching for review purposes	1.85 .721
I talk to my co-workers about my classroom experiences and ask for their advice and feedback.	1.71 .780
After each lesson, I will write about the successes/failures of that lesson or talk to a colleague about the lesson.	1.72 .781
I discuss practical/theoretical issues with my colleagues.	2.06 .878
I observe other teachers' classes and learn about their skillful practices.	1.42 .556
I urge my colleagues to observe my teaching and comment on my teaching performance	1.92 .606
I read books/articles related to effective teaching to improve my class performance.	2.40 .952
I attend workshops/conferences on teaching/learning issues.	2.02 .630
I want to write articles based on my classroom experiences.	2.63 .712
I look in journal articles or search the internet to see the latest developments in my profession.	3.08 1.027
I do small-scale research activities in my classroom to gain a better understanding of the learning/teaching process.	1.95 .751
I think of classroom events as potential research topics and have found a way to research them	3.00 1.105
Affective	
I talk to my students about their learning styles and preferences.	3.59 .893
I talk to my students about their family background, interests, hobbies, and abilities.	3.65 1.167
I ask my students if they like teaching work	3.58 1.142
Metacognitive	
As a teacher, I think about my teaching philosophy and how it affects my teaching.	2.59 1.077
I feel that my biography or background influences the way I define myself as a teacher.	2.53 .998
I wonder about the meaning or importance of my job as a teacher.	2.64 .926
I will try to find out what aspects of teaching give me satisfaction.	2.85 .844
I think about my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.	3.16 1.214
As a student I consider role models to be positive/negative and how they have influenced me in my practice.	2.79.996
I think about the contradictions and contradictions in my classroom practice.	2.22 1.186
Serious	
I think about examples of social injustice in my environment and try to discuss them in my class.	1.93 .736
I am thinking of ways to allow my students to change their social lives while fighting poverty, discrimination, and gender bias.	2.07 .884
In my teaching, I cover less discussed topics such as aging, AIDS, discrimination against women, minorities, and poverty.	2.04 .808
I think about the political aspects of my teaching and how it affects the political views of my students.	2.07 .768
I think about ways to promote tolerance and democracy in my classrooms and in society in general	1.93 .818
I think about how gender, social class, and race affect the success of my students.	2.30 .887
I think about external common events that affect my learning in the class.	2.12 .743

The second research question of the present study is how the reflection practice of EFL teachers changes through reflective teaching and whether there are any differences in the reflection practice between EFL teachers who adopt reflective instructional instructions. Huh. Therefore, after the test, the average scores of the experimental and control groups show (21.62) and (14.09) in that order, indicating that the experimental group surpassed the

post-test control group. The results of the t-test of the independent samples show that the mean values of the experimental group are statistically different from the values of the control group; The attached samples were tested to measure the therapeutic effect on their reflection. The t-test results of the paired samples presented in Table 3 indicate the statistical significance between the experimental group, before and after the test.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Reflective Practice in Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Percentage			
	Reflection-for-action (%)	Reflection-in-action (%)	Reflection-on-action (%)	Total (%)
Experiment	74	70	78	74
Control	50	39.9	66.6	52

Table 3
Independent samples t-test for pretest of the experimental and control groups

Group	Mean difference	Std. deviation	t	df	Effect size	Sig. (2-tailed)
E-C	0.24	0.208	0.197	58	0.56	0.006

C, control group; df, degree of freedom; E, experimental group; Sig (2-tailed), structural significance; Std, standard

DISCUSSION

In connection to the research questions, the current study showed that teacher reflection is positively correlated with student practice. The reason for the substantial correlation between teacher reflection and student practice was found in Akbari, Kiani, Naini, and Olwar (2008), who recommended that the practice is at the heart of student learning and that echoes responsibility for student achievement. Dewey (1933) noted that responsibility is one of the characteristics of a reflective teacher, and Walter Meyer (1999) also points out that reflective learning begins with the teacher's fervent promise to the success of learners. Is. Dewey believes that academic skills that promote students and learning reflect teachers' efforts to solve complex classroom difficulties. According to Ahmed et al. (2013), reflective teachers are real teachers because these teachers examine the objectives of the classroom doings and adjust the teaching support for evocative learning. They also produce an enjoyable and stimulating learning environment in the classroom; However, reflective teaching, on the other hand, shows

the problems of acting as reflective teachers because these teachers need to reflect on the diverse requests of the students. Features such as self-assessment and self-examination allow them to be mindful of their actions and their students' difficulties. Reflection aids teachers to scrutinize and evaluate their teaching, make rational choices for critical revision, and improve attitudes, opinions and teaching performance that influence students' practice and actions.

The results of this study may prompt teacher education program directors to further consideration of their approaches to modify practices that promote a reflection on teaching practices among teachers. Increasing the likelihood of teachers' reflection on ethical, critical, social, and related issues is a necessary starting point for the scrutiny of current research. This means that the role of teacher education programs is to stimulate the opportunity for teachers to reflect that these programs are designed to enhance teachers' understanding, to look at their skills from a critical standpoint, beyond the methodological features of teaching.

Allowance for tuition. Exercises are contextual (Valli, 1997).

CONCLUSION

The current research has shed empirical light on the problem under investigation. The results obtained from the data analysis present a unique opportunity for education administrators. In fact, the role of professional teacher appraisal in collaboration with an expert and inexperienced teachers is emphasized. On the basis of the obtained results, teachers will take advantage of more active teacher actions according to beneficial reflection processes in achieving higher performance. Another area for improving teacher performance is the application of the results of a current study to guide teacher improvement awareness. School supervisors should be encouraged to be part of the professional growth of teachers and to reflect as an element in the school's incessant progress plan. Information on how teacher traits are related to teacher quality can guide managers' job decisions. As Zhang (2008) noted, teacher practice and teacher education characteristics are reflected as two factors associated with teaching excellence. Employing knowledgeable and highly educated teachers is expected to be more insightful, and the supervision of less competent and less knowledgeable teachers will benefit the education system by enhancing their professional development and providing quality support to students during practice

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