The Implementation of Reflective Teaching Practice By Indonesian EFL Teachers

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Abstract

Reflective teaching is one strategy to improve professional development for teachers so that the teaching and learning process is more effective and efficient. This study aimed to find out how Indonesian EFL teachers implement reflective teaching in their classrooms, the impact of implementing reflective teaching, and what difficulties are faced when implementing reflective teaching. This study employed a qualitative, descriptive case study approach. A questionnaire and interviews were used to collect data from 18 teachers, which were then analysed using thematic content analysis. Based on the findings of the research, in the implementation of reflective teaching by EFL teachers, there are five ways: use reflective journals, ask for feedback from students, collaborate with colleagues, record videos, and record audio. Better preparation, improved teacher-student interaction, and improved classroom management are the three effects that EFL teachers notice after implementing reflective teaching. There are three teacher difficulties in implementing reflective teaching: time and workload, lack of peers to collaborate, and knowledge of reflection methods.
Keywords: EFL teachers; impact of implementation; professional development; reflective teaching; teacher difficulties

Introduction

Over the last few decades, there has been increasing emphasis in the field of teacher education, where teachers are required to be able to improve and enhance their own quality. Therefore, reflective teaching is one way that can help teachers develop their teaching methods because reflective teaching is a continuous and systematic process of considering and analyzing one's teaching practices and experiences (Dewey, 1998). To overcome problems in the learning and teaching process in the classroom, you can use what is called reflection. Reflection can also evaluate what has passed and can improve a teacher's performance so that the teaching and learning process is more effective and efficient. Reflective teaching practice is one of the recurring themes in teacher professional development and teacher education. In the realm of teacher development, teachers are no longer passive and imitate, but teachers and educators work collaboratively (Farrell, 2018). Teachers are investigators in their own classrooms, so they determine what aspects of their classrooms they want to know more about. Reflective teaching is essential because it is a process in which educators engage in self-assessment and analysis of their teaching practices with the goal of increasing their effectiveness in the classroom. This approach is particularly valuable for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, as it allows them to adapt their strategies to meet the varying needs of language learners.

In practical implementation in the classroom, reflective teaching is problem-solving that aims to improve learning and educational outcomes. Likewise, according to Sanders (2000) and Ashraf et al., (2016), one of the factors that plays the most role in student success is reflection and the teacher's attitude toward improving student learning. Reflective teaching enables teachers to connect theory and practice to improve their teaching practice and professional

development (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019), as well as to identify the level of quality of their reflection (e.g., dialogic or transformative reflection), as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their practicum practice (Vaughn et al., 2019). So experts try to show that reflective teaching must be used selectively. Therefore, a reflective teacher must be aware of the limitations and obstacles in the EFL class (Gudeta, 2022).

Therefore, to obtain real increased results in the exploration of the concept of reflective practice in the educational community, several researchers have investigated educators' knowledge about reflective teaching (Farrell, 1999). In the United States, reflective teaching practices have received significant attention, particularly through programs such as National Board Certification and professional development systems in various school districts. Reflection-based education in the United States encourages teachers to engage in structured reflection to improve their teaching skills (Vaughn et al., 2019) and also explores the use of reflection in professional development (Impedovo, 2016). Then some of them focus on the use of reflective strategies in certain countries, such as Iran (Khoshsima, 2016), Turkey (evki Kömür, 2016), and Saudi Arabia (Sibahi, 2016). In Indonesia, according to UU NO 14 Tahun 2005 tentang guru dan dosen, it discusses the process for students and teachers to gain meaning from learning, obtain values, and be able to evaluate, think about, and reflect on the results of these values (Hendriwanto, 2021).

Ample empirical evidence has shown that reflective teaching plays a very important role in improving teaching practices and their provisional development, so that each teacher's method of implementation is definitely different in reflective teaching (Khanshan & Yousefi, 2020);(Poulou et al., 2019). But although there have been a lot of researchers who discuss how they implement reflective teaching, there are still few who discuss the difficulties faced by EFL teachers in implementing reflective teaching in the classroom and the impact they feel. So, to find out the implementation of reflective teaching and the difficulties faced, the following are the researcher's questions to guide this research:

1. How is the implementation of reflective teaching practice by Indonesian EFL teachers?
2. What is the impact of implementing reflective teaching?
3. What difficulties exist in the implementation of reflective teaching practice?

Method

The researchers conducted this research by using a qualitative, descriptive case study approach (Aberdeen, 2013). Qualitative research is the process of collecting and analysing data to obtain insight into or knowledge of the phenomenon under study. According to Cresswell (2012), the main purpose of qualitative research is to investigate a social phenomenon in detail so it can provide detailed information. In addition, Hollweck (2015) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context. So this method is appropriate to use in this research because it aims to find out how reflective teaching is implemented, what difficulties are faced, and what the impact of implementing reflective teaching is. This research was conducted in October 2023 at different schools in the city of Medan, Indonesia. Participating in this research were 18 EFL teachers (eleven females and seven males) who have been teaching for approximately five years. This research uses a convenience sampling method for four reasons (Abbott, 2009). The first reason is that researchers can easily reach research participants at certain times. Second, the distance between the campus and school will save researchers time. Third, because all the teachers in the school were their colleagues, they were willing to participate for research purposes. The

final reason for choosing a school institution is "teaching skills," which is the final unit of mastery.

To collect the data for this research, the researchers used questionnaires and interviews. The data collection technique in this research is: first, conducting interview sessions with five teachers. In an interview session, the teacher meets directly with the researchers at a certain time; each interview lasted between thirty minutes and one hour. Then the researchers asked questions to all participants. All participants' answers were audio recorded and written down with participant's consent. Several questions were asked by researchers regarding the application of EFL by teachers in reflective teaching as well as the difficulties and impacts of implementing reflective teaching. Second, using a questionnaire with closed and open questions, 13 participants were given two types of questions regarding the impact they felt after implementing reflective teaching and some of the difficulties they faced when implementing reflective teaching in their teaching. The research used thematic content analysis to analyse the data from interview questions and responses to the questions. One method of data analysis that aims to find themes or patterns in data gathered by researchers is thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher read, listened, and understood the data from interviews and questionnaires. After that, the researcher started coding the data by finding the main idea of the data and assigning a code to each piece of data found. Then, the researcher looked for themes and determined each piece of data that had been coded into several themes.

Results
Implementation of reflective teaching by EFL teachers

The aim of this research is to find out how EFL teachers implement reflective teaching in their teaching. Based on the data analysis that has been carried out through questionnaires, there are five ways teachers implement reflective teaching in their teaching. It can be seen from the following table:

Table 1. Implementation of reflective teaching

Num	Implementation of RT	Skor
1	Reflective journal	35,7%
2	Ask for feedback from students	28,6%
3	Collaborate with colleagues	14,4%
4	Record videos	14,2%
5	Record Audio	7,1%

From the data in the table 1, teachers most frequently use reflective journal writing when implementing reflective teaching. Reflective journals are personal notes or documents created by educators to reflect on their teaching practices, experiences, and professional development. The purpose of keeping a reflective journal is to increase self-awareness, encourage continuous improvement, and facilitate in-depth analysis of teaching methods and strategies. In practice, reflective journaling is not done at every meeting but once in two or three meetings at the end of the lesson. They tend to use this reflective journal as an evaluation to prepare for the next lesson so that learning will be better.

The second practice of implementing reflective teaching is asking for input from students (feedback) regarding the learning that has been carried out. A good learning process always takes place in two directions, involving teachers and students. Teachers and students play an important role, and they are the key to the success of the learning process. If teachers feel they

are teaching well but do not get a positive response from students, then the learning has not been successful. Therefore, teachers must begin to evaluate and improve the conditions of their learning by asking students for feedback. In practice, teachers ask students to provide feedback containing criticism, input, suggestions, and improvements or corrections to the learning process that has been undertaken. The aim is simple, namely to provide reflection to teachers regarding things in the learning process that need to be improved. For example, are there any notes that show deficiencies in the learning content, methodology for delivering the material, the way the teacher interacts with students in the classroom, and how to create more effective learning to make students more interested.

Then the third practice of implementing reflective teaching is collaborating with colleagues. Teachers can ask their colleagues to monitor and see how the learning process is being carried out. Colleagues can provide assessments and suggestions regarding things they feel need to be improved. Teachers can also have discussions with other teachers during breaks or at certain times to discuss and exchange their teaching experiences. Peer observation with discussion is proven to provide added value in reflective teaching. Teachers can critically analyze their professional teaching practices in a confidential setting. Informal and verbal communication with colleagues, as well as asking each other questions and providing evaluations, is generally preferred by teachers. For example, although their conversations openly discussing their strengths and weaknesses during the teaching and learning process, especially in EFL classes, may be considered 'embarrassing' for some teachers, most of the teachers interviewed indicated that sharing with colleagues may be a more suitable strategy.

The fourth implementation practice is recording videos during the learning process. The tendency for teachers to record videos is because it is difficult for teachers to remember what they are doing in the learning process. But if they record on video, then the video will be analyzed when they are at home. After the teacher analyzes and finds things they need to improve, they can compare the video with the video after they have made improvements. Recording videos for teaching reflection can be a tool to improve teaching skills and understanding of teaching experiences. However, according to researchers, this is less effective because when teachers take videos, students can know that they are being recorded, so they behave better than usual.

The fifth practice of implementing reflective teaching is recording audio during learning. A teacher can record audio from the beginning of the lesson to the end of the lesson. Usually teachers record audio secretly from students; this aims to make students more comfortable and able to carry out their usual activities in the learning process without knowing they are being recorded. Then the results of the audio recording will be analyzed at home as material for teacher improvement and evaluation. Therefore, recording audio for reflection is the best way to record thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

The impact of implementing reflective teaching by Indonesian EFL teachers

The implementation of reflective teaching by EFL teachers has a positive impact on improving their teaching. Based on the data analysis that has been carried out through interviews, Researchers grouped the results of their research into three parts. These three parts have the most dominant impact on participants. These three parts include better preparation, improved interaction between teachers and students, and better classroom management.

1. Better preparation

In general, teachers who implement reflective teaching will always try to evaluate their teaching methods based on the results of criticism, suggestions, and evaluations they receive so that they can improve in the teaching and learning process. The results of reflective teaching have an impact on their teaching preparation for the better. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

*"Actually, there are many positive impacts from reflective teaching." In my opinion, after doing reflective teaching, I can improve my teaching abilities, such as by adding video and game learning media so that students don't get bored, and this increases students' learning motivation abilities." (*excerpt *1, interview, teacher 1)*

Teacher 1, as could be seen in excerpt 1, explained that reflective teaching has a big impact on improving the way teachers teach. Creating a more interesting atmosphere so that students do not feel bored with ongoing learning, such as by showing interesting videos according to the learning topic and playing games when students start to feel bored, will increase their enthusiasm again. Implementing reflective teaching also makes teachers more able to organize activities in the classroom more effectively and efficiently, such as the material taught, the media used, and the time needed. This can also be seen in the excerpt below:

*"Before entering class and teaching, I have prepared my lesson plan well, as well as the media that I want to use in the material I will teach." Because previously I didn't prepare a lesson plan, my teaching in class was less than satisfactory; sometimes I was even confused about what else to do in class because I forgot and didn't prepare a lesson plan." (*excerpt *2, interview, teacher 3)*

From excerpt 2 by participant 3, it can be seen that the impact of implementing reflective teaching in the classroom can help teachers know their weaknesses and overcome these problems. For example, if the teacher is forgetful and often confused about what else to explain in class, then by making a lesson plan, the teaching and learning activities will run successfully until the end of the lesson.

2. Improve interaction between teachers and students.

A good learning process always takes place in two directions, involving teachers and students. Teachers and students play an important role and are the key to the success of the learning process. By implementing reflective teaching, the teacher can assess the aspects of the teaching and learning process that the students actually don't like. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

*"Because I asked students to write criticism and suggestions regarding the teaching process that had been carried out, I got a lot of good suggestions from students, and this strengthened the interaction between students and teachers." (*excerpt *3, interview, teacher 1)*

From excerpt 3 by teacher 1, we can see that by asking students to provide suggestions or feedback during learning, it will be easier for teachers to identify their weaknesses, and this can make interactions between teachers and students better. Apart from students, the impact of implementing reflective teaching also causes interactions between teachers and other teachers to get better. This is related to what teacher 3 said:

*"I often discuss with other teachers the experiences they have while teaching, the difficulties they face, and how to overcome these difficulties. We exchange ideas and give each other suggestions." (*excerpt *4, interview, teacher 3)*

The teacher 3 said that by implementing reflective teaching, teachers indirectly provide a sense of concern for each other, and this strengthens interactions between colleagues, which has a positive impact on increasing their professionalism as teachers.

By reflecting on teachers interactions with students, teachers can better understand students' needs and expectations. This can improve teacher-student interaction, creating a positive and supportive classroom environment. Teachers who regularly reflect on their teaching can involve students in the reflection process, inviting students to participate in understanding and assessing their learning. Teachers who reflect may be more open to collaborating with their colleagues. They can share experiences, teach strategies, and provide mutual support.

3. Better classroom management

Like the impacts discussed previously, by implementing reflective teaching in learning, teachers will better understand the situation and conditions in the classroom. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

"After implementing reflective teaching in the classroom, I can understand the conditions in the classroom and the rules that I apply so that I become better at managing the classroom." (excerpt 5, interview, teacher 4)

Teachers who are accustomed to reflecting will find it easier to adapt their teaching methods according to the needs and changes in the learning environment. Through good classroom management, teachers can keep the classroom conducive to the learning process of all students. Teachers who engage in reflective teaching tend to seek out and try various learning strategies. They can adapt their teaching methods to better suit students' needs and learning styles. Apart from that, teachers also increasingly understand how to overcome problems in the classroom, as stated by teacher 5 in the *excerpt 6*:

"There is one male student who is super active, quite naughty, and often makes noise." After I observed and analyzed the reflective teaching that I applied, I understood the child's weakness so that he doesn't make a fuss, namely by frequently saying his name and inviting him to always interact." (excerpt 6, interview, teacher 5)

In excerpt 6 by teacher 5, it can be seen that the impact of implementing reflective teaching makes teachers better at managing classes. Teachers can more easily find out which learning strategies are suitable to use in certain situations, and teachers also have the ability to adapt and be confident in front of students as a result of understanding students and their environment.

Difficulties in implementing reflective teaching practices

Based on the results of research conducted regarding the difficulties of implementing reflective teaching, researchers grouped the results into three sections. These three parts are the most dominant difficulties by participants. These three parts include: Time and Workload, Lack of peers to collaborate, and Knowledge of Reflection Methods

1. Time and workload

The difficulty most frequently explained by participants in implementing reflective teaching in EFL classes is a lack of time. Especially in implementing reflective journals. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

"Not enough time; usually I reflect at the end of class time, but there is not enough time; this is what makes me rarely reflect on learning." (excerpt 7, interview, teacher 5)

From the excerpt *7*, the obstacles that occur are due to lack of time to carry out reflective teaching, they cannot always be reflective in every meeting. One of the problems is limited time. The reflection process requires sufficient time to reflect, analyze, and plan changes. Time constraints can be a serious obstacle. Then, the next problem is the large workload. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

"Even though I do reflective teaching, there are several moments when I stop reflective teaching, due to the many demands of the office, etc." (excerpt 8, interview, teacher 4)

Teachers often have busy schedules with lesson preparation, teaching, meetings with parents, and other administrative responsibilities. Lack of free time makes it difficult for teachers to reflect deeply on their teaching experiences.

2. Lack of peers to collaborate

Apart from time constraints, participants also listed other difficulties during interviews and discussions with participants. In this discussion, there were several difficulties expressed

by participants; all of these difficulties came from internally or their own egos. This can be seen in the excerpt below :

" To carry out collaborative work between teachers and have discussions is very difficult, because some teachers do not accept criticism." (excerpt *9, interview, teacher 2)*

From the excerpt *9* it can be seen that although teachers often apply reflective teaching in their classes, but some teachers who feel uncomfortable when their learning methods or classes are given criticism and suggestions from colleagues. They feel offended by this. This can be caused by factors such as ego or a lack of self-confidence. Opening up to feedback and reconsidering teaching practices can be difficult for some people. Some teachers may have difficulty receiving feedback, especially if the feedback is constructive and asks critical questions about their teaching practice. Accepting criticism can be a challenge. Teachers need to understand that self-reflection is not about judging oneself negatively or finding fault. The main goal is for growth and improvement. Self-reflection helps teachers identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Receiving regular feedback from peers, students, or supervisors can be an effective tool for understanding strengths and weaknesses in teaching.

3. Knowledge of Reflection Methods

The responsibility that rests on teachers and students burdened with the principles of reflective teaching is not the only difficulty teachers identify in this section. Another problem that reduces teachers' ability to be reflective is the lack of comprehensive teaching and understanding. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

"In my opinion, the application of reflective teaching has had a very positive impact in improving their teaching and the professional development of teachers. "But it is very unfortunate that there are still many teachers who are not motivated and lack teacher knowledge regarding reflective teaching." (excerpt 9, interview, teacher 2)

From the explanation in excerpt 9, we can see that the obstacle to reflective teaching itself is that teachers may not be familiar with the concept of reflective teaching or may not have sufficient knowledge or skills to reflect effectively. Many teachers may not have received adequate training in reflective teaching during their education. This may require additional training or support.

Discussion

Based on the responses to this research, it appears that all EFL teachers used reflective teaching to improve their teaching skills, participants also showed that implementing reflective teaching had a positive impact on improving teachers' thinking skills to correct their shortcomings in order to become better at teaching. The more EFL teachers reflect on their pedagogy to improve their students' English learning, especially considering the difficulties of learning it in an EFL context, the more effective they will be in improving their reflections. In their research, J. A. Braun & Crumpler (2004) show a positive correlation between implementing reflectivity and the resulting impact. According to Braun and Crumpler, implementing reflectivity empowers teachers to be more effective and confident. (J. A. Braun & Crumpler, 2004) and Colton and Sparks-Langer et al. (1990) describe it as an ongoing effort to examine and understand oneself as interconnected with consistently serving others (Braun & Crumpler, 2004). They state that its impact will enable teachers to develop their identities and increase their efficacy, change their lives in better ways, develop their abilities, and ultimately engage in reflective practice (J. A. Braun & Crumpler, 2004).

The findings of this research are consistent with our main aim: to see how reflective teaching is implemented by EFL teachers and what impact it produces. Specifically, we found

that teachers who actively reflected on their teaching experienced further growth in key aspects such as instructional differentiation and classroom management. As well as building and maintaining effective relationships with students and colleagues, developing their inclination towards research and exploration, and having a strong sense of efficacy. job satisfaction and a lower likelihood of burnout (Sadeghi & Khezrlou, 2016). Our findings are consistent with research by Minott (2023), who concluded that the implementation of reflective teaching can improve teaching skills and support student learning. However, our research adds a contribution by exploring specific aspects of the implementation of reflective teaching as well as the impacts resulting from the implementation of reflective teaching by EFL teachers.

Our analysis reveals that institutional support, including training and recognition of reflective teaching practices, plays an important role in successful implementation (Fonkamo & Zeru, 2022). Institutional leaders need to understand the importance of creating a culture that supports instructional reflection as an integral part of teaching practice (Zeichner & Liston, 1987); (Moradkhani & Shirazizadeh, 2017); Sparks-Langer et al., 1990). This research confirms that the implementation of reflective teac hing has a positive impact on the quality of teaching in higher education environments. Therefore, higher education providers are expected to promote a culture of reflection as an integral part of teacher professional development, supporting growth and innovation in teaching practice (Newell, 1996).

Conclusion

This research explores how reflective teaching is implemented by EFL teachers, the impact felt on learning, and the difficulties EFL teachers feel in implementing reflective teaching. This research shows that implementing reflective teaching has a positive impact, such as improving various aspects of learning in the classroom. There are various ways of implementing reflective teaching so that EFL teachers can choose the most effective and efficient method by considering the difficulties they face.

Implementing reflective teaching has been proven to improve teachers' teaching abilities. Therefore, reflective teaching is important for teachers and pre-service teachers to practice. In implementation, the school must care more about reflective teaching so that it can be an incentive for all school staff to engage in teamwork, various training, and seminars to increase knowledge about reflective teaching because reflective teaching requires time, energy, commitment, and collaboration with colleagues, administrators, mentors, and coaches.

It is very important for us to realize that implementing reflective teaching has a positive impact on making the teaching and learning process better. This is in accordance with the results that researchers have obtained and is also supported by other research studies, such as research by Anderson et al. (2019), who concluded that implementing reflective teaching can improve teaching skills and support student learning.

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