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Inhibitory Factors of Reflective Teaching Practices: English Teachers' Perspectives

Abstract

The significance of reflection in improving professional development for teaching professionals that impacts the quality of education has been widely recognized. By reflecting, the teachers can make all efforts when planning, implementing, and evaluating teaching activities. The present study aims at discovering EFL teachers' inhibitory factors of reflective teaching. The research used Inhibitors to EFL Teachers' Reflective Teaching Questionnaire (IETRTQ) to gather data from the participants. The participants were English teachers for junior high schools in East Manggarai regency, East Nusa Tenggara province, Indonesia with a total of 97 teachers participating in the study. The data were statistically analyzed using SPSS software to assess the amount of agreement between the participants' viewpoints on the inhibiting elements of incorporating reflective teaching practice with their instructional activities. The present research revealed that English teachers had a moderate awareness of the inhibitory factors to their reflective teaching practices (69 teachers or 71.13%). The implications of the findings of the present study are discussed.

Keywords: EFL reflective teaching; inhibitors of reflective teaching; reflection; teaching English

INTRODUCTION

Reflection practice is an essential component of teacher professional development. It is described as an in-depth assessment and evaluation of a class event, experience, or important occurrence preceding, during, and following the event. (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). Practice of reflection for teachers aims to assist the teachers to become aware of the present reality (Hussein, 2006), using theory in class, refining teaching methods, and encouraging professional growth through reflection on teaching practice (Cirocki & Farrell, 2017) and communicate a second factor that provides the foundation for the significance of instructors' reflection practices (Delgado et al., 2020). Moreover, the practice of reflection enables the teachers to strengthen their critical thinking abilities and examine, interpret, and learn from their own and others' teaching.

Reflection in teaching is a continuous method for reviewing teaching and learning and allowing teachers to relate their experiences. Cirocki & Widodo (2019) reveal the four components of a reflection; reflection before the lesson, reflection during the lesson, and reflection after the lesson. Reflection before the lesson is a teacher's effort to imagine and structure lessons, prepare for issues and think about approaches that include students' demands in the teaching and learning process. While reflection during the lesson refers to the teacher's efforts to reflect on all events related to the theory used to support the teacher's actions (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). In contrast to the two previous reflections, reflection after

the lesson is a form of summative or retrospective concept that orientates to assist teachers describe what they observe in class, examine the various teaching positions and explain their judgments in classroom. This type of reflection also allows teachers to clarify what they would do differently if they delivered the material in the class again at a different time. Therefore, with reflection activities or practices, the teacher can make all efforts when planning, implementing, and evaluating teaching activities.

In relation to the fundamental objective of teachers' reflection activities, Nguyen (2017) and Widodo & Ferdiansyah (2018) emphasized that in order to achieve high-quality education and teacher professional development, the practice of reflection must be given more attention, as teaching experience alone does not guarantee better teaching practice. On the basis of the previously provided definition and purpose of reflection, a reflective teacher is one who critically reviews his practice, generates ideas for how to improve performance in order to enhance student learning, and then implements those ideas. According to Jay & Johnson (2002), reflective practice consists of three essential steps: description, comparison, and evaluation. At the description stage, the teacher reflects on the learning challenges he faces. In the second stage, comparison, the teacher "considers the material for reflection through various frames," including opposing viewpoints. The instructor honed his ability to transcend his own experience, allowing him to discover meaning he hadn't yet learned from others, understands the instructional setting and its complexities at this level. In the third stage, Reflective teachers combine new and old knowledge to evaluate the solutions at the critical stage. This stage is the decision-making stage that results from a situational analysis; it will be used to design different teaching methods or instructor approaches in learning activities.

There have been numerous studies in recent years discussing the practice of reflection as an effort to develop teacher professionalism. For example, Amalia et al., (2020) examined reflective practice in lesson planning among teacher educators in doctoral programs. The results of their research show that lesson planning experience enables classroom teachers to increase their quality of teaching. Azizah et al., (2018) researched reflective practices carried out by students who run teaching practicums. They found that students who run English teaching practicums need more experience in order to make good and professional use of reflective practice. Despite the fruitful findings of previous studies on this topic, there is still a lack of research on teacher inhibiting factors in reflective teaching practices and procedures (Moradkhani & Shirazizadeh, 2017). Therefore, identifying the factors that prevent them from practicing reflection to better the effectiveness of their

instruction, which is considered the ultimate goal of reflective teaching, becomes very important to do (Moser et al., 2021; Farrell, 2014). Henceforth, this study is an attempt to specifically address the problem of inhibiting English teachers' reflective practice. The underpinning question of this research is to what extent do English teachers perceive the potential barriers to their reflective teaching?

METHOD

The survey design was utilized as the technique of inquiry in this study. A survey was conducted to investigate teachers' perspectives of what prevents them from engaging reflective teaching practices to teach English in their various schools' classrooms. The participants were English teachers at junior high schools in East Manggarai district, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The researchers applied the criterion purposive sampling technique in determining the sample. There are several criteria used by researchers to select the participants in the study, such as participants being active English teachers and teaching English at the junior high school level.

In data collection, the researchers distributed the questionnaire to the participants and asked them to fill it out. The questionnaire, Inhibitors to EFL teachers' reflective teaching questionnaire (IETRTQ) used by the researchers is a questionnaire adopted from (Afshar & Farahani, 2018). It consists of 27 statements and a Likert scale of 1-5 was used in the questionnaire ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The distribution of the questionnaires was carried out in face-to-face meetings. The researchers made an appointment with the participants to meet. This questionnaire aims to find out the perspective of English teachers about the inhibiting factors regarding the practice of reflection in learning activities.

To analyze the data, the researchers applied SPSS software in order to determine the level of agreement of the participants' perspectives on the inhibiting factors of reflective teaching practice in their teaching activities. Descriptive statistics analysis was employed to analyze the gathered data from the questionnaire results with three classifications, namely high, moderate, and low. Table 1 reveals the criteria to determine the perceptions of the English teachers on the inhibitory factors of their reflective teaching.

Table 1. The Classification of Perception

No	Formula	Classification
1	X<Mean -1SD	Low
2	Mean-1SD>X<Mean +1SD	Moderate

3	X> Mean + 1 SD	High

Where: X= Total Score and SD= Standard Deviation

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: The frequency of inhibitory factors of reflective teaching practices

NO	Classification	N	%
1	High	12	12.37
2	Moderate	69	71.13
3	Low	16	16.5
	Total	97	100

The data in table 2 revealed that the English teachers who participated in this study showed some degree of perception on inhibitory factors of their reflective teaching practices. Among the ninety-seven (97) English teachers, there are twelve or 12.37% of teachers who perceive high inhibitory factors of reflective teaching practices, sixty-nine or 71.13% of them perceive moderate inhibitory factors of reflective teaching practices and sixteen or 16.5% of them perceive low inhibitory factors of reflective teaching practices.

There are three variables of inhibitory factors of reflective teaching practices: lack of knowledge inhibitors, affective and emotional inhibitors, and teaching situation inhibitors. Data in table 3 revealed the frequency of these reflective teaching practices inhibitors perceived by the English teachers of the present study.

Table 3: Frequency of IETRTQ questionnaire

No	Classification of sub-variables	N= 97		
		Low	Moderate	High
	Lack of knowledge inhibitors			
1	Some teachers are not familiar with using journals and diaries and other types of self-reflection	18%	51%	31%
2	Some teachers are not theoretically strong enough for having reflection on their practices	18%	57%	25%
3	Some teachers are not familiar with the beneficial outcomes of reflective teaching	18%	52%	30%
4	Some teachers don't believe in reflection due to their strong belief in traditional ways of language teaching	20%	50%	30%
5	Novice teachers usually don't have any idea and information about reflection and its advantages	26%	54%	18%

6	There are no in-service training courses on language learning and teaching developments including 'reflective teaching' for language teachers	13%	50%	37%
7	Some teachers have not been reflectively trained	19%	47%	34%
8	Some teachers don't take systematic teacher training courses (like DELTA and CELTA)	17%	53%	30%
9	Some teachers don't perceive self-reflection as an opportunity for improvement of their teaching practice	24%	44%	32%
Affective and Emotional Inhibitors				
10	Some teachers suffer from the burnout	19%	58%	23%
11	Some teachers lack motivation	30%	43%	27%
12	Some teachers lack sense of responsibility	30%	50%	20%
13	Some teachers have students who don't show interest for learning, which makes them demotivated for improving their teaching practices	19%	37%	44%
14	Some teachers believe that the students are not active and eager; and the teacher is wasting his/her time to reflect on teaching	16%	49%	35%
15	Some teachers are too confident about how to teach a foreign language. They think they know everything	10%	56%	34%
16	Students' unwillingness to learn or participate in classroom activities may demotivate teachers for having reflection	16%	42%	42%
17	Some teachers are lazy for thinking and acting (teaching) reflectively	45%	40%	15%
18	The personality type of a teacher determines the extent to which he/she thinks reflectively. Some teachers are not used to think routinely	18%	59%	23%
Teaching Situation Inhibitors				
19	In some language teaching institute, there is no 'Reflection Session' for teachers about classroom achievements and failures	25%	57%	18%
20	There is no mutual understanding between managers and teachers about how to teach a foreign language	22%	49%	29%
21	Teachers tend to be creative while managers tend to be strict about how to teach. Teachers need to obey the managers' outline	15%	43%	42%
22	Huge load of materials to be covered in the syllabus make teachers always think about covering the materials rather than reflecting on their teaching	9%	46%	45%
23	The rules and regulations of some institute are too strict to let teachers have freedom of action (e.g., to think and act reflectively)	7%	41%	52%

24	Teacher is a machine programmed by the institute authorities and is not allowed to act based on his/her Reflections	23%	48%	29%
25	Low salary demotivates some teachers to think reflectively. Consequently, they don't care about the job anymore	21%	49%	30%
26	Language teachers suffer from job insecurity which demotivates them from thinking and teaching reflectively	22%	49%	29%
27	Most teachers are not satisfied with their wage. They don't have the motivation to think more about improving themselves and their teaching	24%	46%	30%

Table 3 data shows that several inhibitors may prevent EFL teachers from reflecting on their language teaching. They reported various levels of reflective practice as a result of a lack of knowledge, affective, emotional inhibitors, and teaching situation inhibitors that lead to not reflecting on their language teaching.

Reflection has been acknowledged as a crucial aspect of teachers' professional development. However, the findings of the present study revealed that English teachers did not practice reflection for their teaching due to their inadequate knowledge of reflective teaching. This finding seems to be in line with a study conducted by Yanuarti & Treagust (2016). They asserted that many experienced teachers are unaware that they are supposed to be mindful of reflective teaching practices. The teachers' practice of reflection was mainly confined to their commentary on learners' work within lessons, as opposed to their own pedagogical approaches. In other words, given the absence of understanding, teachers overlooked reflective teaching. In addition, Derinalp, (2022) suggests that to encourage teachers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the term, programs for the education and training of teachers are encouraged to include a module on reflective practice.. Her study reveals that the EFL teachers understood reflective practice as a strategy for problem-solving, wherein activities such as a knowledge-sharing exercise, a method for enhancing teaching techniques, and a vehicle for professional growth.

Another interesting finding of this study is the affective, emotional inhibitors and teaching situation inhibitors share the same level of agreement. The English teachers perceive that both aforementioned inhibitors contribute 14% to English teachers' reflective teaching practice. In other words, the English teachers did not make a reflection on their teaching practice due to those two inhibitors. This result might indicate that when it comes to employing reflection as a lens for assessment to improve their professionalism, EFL teachers rely much on their routine teaching experience, peer sharing and observations are

generally preferred by teachers over journaling or even organized notes, which are considered to be a waste of time and disruptive to a busy schedule (Kharlay et al., 2022). Moreover, Cole (1997) asserts that working conditions for teachers have led to emotions and psychological conditions that prevent professional development and reflective practice. The emotional frameworks of worry, panic, isolation, hopelessness, powerlessness, and animosity created as a result of these imposed structures include working conditions, the outside structures that schools and school systems put in place, the profession, the government, and people in general.

Taking the study's findings into consideration, language teachers who do not critically reflect on their teaching practice will not have better-informed practice, practical knowledge, or innovative approaches of knowledge. As a result, teachers who do not do so tend to "teach as they were taught" and promote poor teaching practices. (Braun Jr & Crumpler, 2004). On the other hand, it has been acknowledged that reflection is regarded as a quality that distinguishes language teachers and students who do well (Akbari, 2007; Kember et al., 2000), as well as a factor that contributes to the efficiency of language instruction and acquisition (Gelder, 2005; Kember et al., 2000 and Willingham, 2008).

The possible reasons for the findings of the present study as such might be due to the education system in Indonesia. It is self-evident that there is no assistance for the teachers, such as guidelines or a handbook for reflective practice to be put into flesh during the teaching-learning process. Neither the Ministry of National Education nor the pre-service teacher curriculum at universities has taken into consideration the importance of reflective practice and be it a compulsory practice for teachers or prospective teachers in order to improve their teaching practice. It is because reflection aids the teacher to reflect on his daily learning activities (Damon, 1992) and helps language learners gain self-understanding and self-knowledge (Fendler, 2003). Language learners can introspect, think, discover, and solve a problem by using reflective thinking (Phan, 2009). Critically reflecting on teaching practice leads to more informed practice, practical knowledge, and new modes of thinking and competence expression (Crandall, 2000). Non-reflective teachers will repeat ineffective teaching strategies (Braun Jr & Crumpler, 2004). Thus, reflection is considered a quality shared by effective language teachers and students (Akbari, 2007) and a contributor to effective language teaching and learning (Gelder, 2005; Kember et al., 2000; and Willingham, 2008).

Considering its importance to language teaching and learning, reflection can benefit English teachers and students. They gain a greater awareness of teaching and learning, a

deeper understanding of the variables associated with teaching and learning, and spark positive change in their practice (Liou, 2000). In addition, teachers can also benefit from reflecting on their own areas of development and teaching by becoming more aware of their own strengths (Kennedy-Clark et al., 2018). According to the findings of a study carried out by Loan, (2019), reflective teaching enables teachers to uncover the areas of their teaching that need improvement and also helps them understand the strengths and flaws of their own teaching. A suggestion from Markkanen et al., (2020) might be very useful for English teachers to assist them to improve their reflective practices, especially the ones who are constantly required to meet the diverse needs of students while dealing with difficult situations involving students. They suggest that using frameworks like Gibbs (1988) reflective cycle (*description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan*) may help English teachers concentrate on reflective learning gained from trying experiences and offer an organized context for pondering on events and attaining knowledge from them.

CONCLUSION

Gaining awareness of reflective teaching and its contribution would not only be desired but a must in dealing with the teacher's professional development and the student's needs. The findings of the present study revealed English teachers' viewpoints on reflective teaching inhibitors. Their teaching reflection was lessened due to their inadequate knowledge about it. Therefore, the training program is perhaps the most important addition of the study to the field. Those who plan to build and implement comparable training programs in their own contexts should take note of the following points. First, reflective teaching practice should be properly addressed right on time in both pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher professional development. By providing instructors with an in-depth understanding, it is anticipated that they would be able to engage in self-reflection and enhance their teaching abilities, so contributing to their ongoing professional growth. Second, it is essential to spend time to facilitating the development of reflective teaching. This period should be freed from the uncertainties of internships, which place students in a stressful condition of survival, and devoted solely to reflective teaching.

Moreover, this study focused on teachers' perspectives on reflective teaching inhibitors by using a survey method. Further studies on strategies of reflective teaching applied by non-English teachers are required in order to contribute a more thorough and comprehensive knowledge of reflective teaching practice.

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