



## EFL TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS FOR ELT CLASSROOM AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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### Abstract

Reflective practice is an essential component of effective language teaching. This study explores EFL teachers' reflections in the ELT classroom and examines their beliefs regarding the role of reflection in professional development. Employing a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design, this study involved one EFL teacher at a junior high school in Karawang. Data were collected through classroom observation, open-ended interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that the teacher regularly engages in reflective activities before and after teaching, particularly in lesson planning and evaluating students' learning progress. The teacher also believes that self-reflection facilitates continuous improvement of teaching strategies and instructional media. Importantly, the results of this study imply that systematic reflective practice should be integrated into teacher professional development programs and teacher education curricula, as it supports teachers' pedagogical growth, enhances classroom management, and contributes to more effective English instruction. Encouraging reflective habits among EFL teachers can therefore strengthen instructional quality and promote sustainable professional development.

**Keywords:** *Reflective Practice, Self-reflection, Teacher's Belief*

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher's duty is not only teaching in the classroom and giving an assignment to the students, the teacher's order as a model and inspiration to their students. Being a professional teacher cannot be avoided by a reflective teacher. A reflective teacher becomes crucial in language teaching (Farrel, 2007). It is closely related to how teachers reflect what they teach in the classroom. Reflective teaching is as a self-evaluation for teachers to develop their ability in teaching.

Niemi (2015) argues that in the European Commission there is an emphasis that teachers' professional development should be supported through a 3-phase model: Initial teacher education, induction (for new teachers, 3-5 years after graduation),

and in-service teacher education. This continuum supports teachers' career-long development. Furthermore, in the Indonesian classroom situation learning much found the teachers play an active role in the teaching-learning process. Teachers are also using conventional method and often using the textbook to teach. It can be traced by Richard (2015), that the teacher teaches students based on the book guide. Especially in English lessons, many students lack interesting in learning English. It supported by Pre-service teachers' experience and observation at the one of Junior High School in Karawang. Most students, not interest in learning English because they less of vocabulary. Students view English lessons as

a difficult lesson. So that's why the teachers must do reflection to refine their teaching.

In the context of Indonesian school, vocabulary becomes one of the important components of learning English. It can be traced from Cahyono and Widiati (2008) stating that vocabulary is likely an essential way to learn English. Additionally, vocabulary is the main component of arranging a phrase or sentence. Karagöz et al. (2014) noted that in the language system, vocabulary is the essential aspect to deliberate the idea or feeling to make communication more effective. The first thing to think about when you are trying to communicate verbally is how you are going to communicate anything. The same thing was said by Allen (1983) without plenty of vocabulary knowledge; there will be a misunderstanding of meaning when trying to communicate. Furthermore, among vocabulary comprehension and language, there is a clear connection because of their completion of each other (Vela and Rushidi 2016).

Comprehension of vocabulary has to be a special thing if the student will start to learn English. Because vocabulary is viewed as a crucial skill when we want to learn about reading, listening, writing, and speaking in second language learning (Mehring, 2005). Therefore, learning vocabulary is needed for second language learners if they want to communicate correctly. Because learning vocabulary can make communication be effective and have absolute academic enforcement.

Based on previous research, it is found Cirocki and Widodo (2019) discussed teacher's reflection in Reflective Practice in English Language Teaching in Indonesia: Shared Practice from Two Teacher Educators. In this study the researchers were classifying of reflection into four components; *reflection-before-lesson*, *reflection-during-lesson*, *reflection-after-*

*lesson*, and *reflection-beyond-lesson*, as a representation of teacher's attention through the importance of reflection in successful lesson delivery, from planning to execution. The present contribution acts as evidence of our dedication to EFL teacher education in Indonesia, where our focus is to create reflective practitioners committed to starting the swing and integrating innovation into education (Cirocki, A. & Widodo, H. P. 2019). Related to those conditions, the teachers demanded to have self-reflection to enhance their ability in teaching-learning English. It supported by Farrel (2007) that the teachers have to create and develop their knowledge about teaching-learning. However, a few research that concerns about reflection in language teaching. In this paper, the writer wants to observe deep EFL teachers' reflections for the ELT classrooms in Junior High School in Karawang.

The study aims to find out EFL teachers' belief toward using self-reflection as reflective of them in teaching English in the classroom. This focus of the study is to know how the teacher carries out his self-reflections. Besides, the writer wants to teachers take time for reflecting their self in teaching English in the classroom. It aims enhance teachers' abilities in teaching and managing the classroom. The participant of this study will be an English teacher at Junior High School in Karawang. The researcher has observed the site and collecting information on the data when the researcher conducted as a pre-service teacher in this school. This research encourages the teacher to be aware of self-reflection. Teachers exactly can resolve the problem during teaching, apprehend their students learning needs, and develop their quality in teaching.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Reflection in Language Teaching

John Dewey is the pioneer of the reflection theory. Dewey (1933), views the reflection as a director of the credibility form of the knowledge. Reflection could be a pondered and an active handle. It is approximately considering memorize. Dewey accepted that reflection might be truly valuable for making sense of situations or occasions that we found astounding or difficult to clarify. He recommended that reflection for learning ought to incorporate reviewing the occasion and after that posturing questions to investigate why things turned out the way they did and what conceivable activities might have given a diverse result.

## **2. Reflection In, On, and For Action in Language Teaching**

Schön (1983) was developed Dewey's concept and classify reflection into three categories. They are: Reflection in-action, Reflection on-action, and Reflection for-action (as cited in Farrel, 2012; Farrel, 2018). Reflection in-action as a term of reflection that intends to use by the teacher when they are ongoing teaching English in the classroom. It means teacher do reflection during their action, thinking of what is happening, and resolve the problem that emerges during the teaching-learning process. According to Schön's (1987) opinion, he stated that reflection-in-action refers to the active reflection of sights, acts, and practices while teaching activity.

Reflection on-action means that teachers do reflect on whether there is a problem or not in the previous teaching. Moreover, teachers are thinking about to find out the alternative way to deal with. According to Farrel (2018), the way of Schön's reflection-in-action established on Dewey's reflection-on-action, the result of both can be used to primary a teacher's future resolution (reflection for-action). As well, reflection for-action or

called anticipatory reflection refers to look ahead or expect the problem that may appear and the situation will happen in the next teaching. It allows the teacher to prepare well their self in teaching.

## **3. Self-reflection as Key Success of Teach**

Reflective practice in the language classroom can be conducted in several ways: learning to know students' capacity, self-reflection features that support learning. It enables the teacher increasingly aware of developing their performance in teaching and important being a professional teacher. Based on Farrel (2018), teachers have the chance to examine their relationships with students, their values, their abilities, and their successes or failures in a realistic context if they commit in reflective practice. The teacher who commits in reflective practice can evolve a deeper understanding of their teaching, evaluate their professional growth, developing their skills, and become proactive and confident in their teaching.

To build professional knowledge, the teacher can habituate reflective practice. It is very useful to know about student needs. Moon (2003), Titus & Gremler (2010), they declare that teacher can comprehend students learning needs in a better way with reflective practice. Roadman (2010) said that reflective teachers usually break down teaching material into more understandable sections.

## **4. Beliefs in language teaching-learning**

Breen (2001), Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) claimed that there are some significant factors in the learning process; they are points of view, beliefs, and attitudes that pupils' have. Beliefs can be the influential thing of motivation in teaching-learning activity (Ferguson & Braten; 2018). Before teaching practice, usually, teachers do preparation as

well as designing the syllabus and preparing a lesson plan. Teachers' beliefs are more affecting teacher on teaching-learning in the classroom than the teachers' knowledge (Gilakjani & Sabouri; 2017).

## 5. Previous Research

Although there are many previous types of research, it is found Farrel (2018) discussed teacher's reflection in Reflective Practice for Language Teachers. The study generated there are five ways to do reflection; teaching journals, critical friends, teacher development groups, classroom observations, and / or action research. While Iqbal (2017) examines teacher's reflection in Reflection-in-Action: A stimulus Reflective Practice for Professional Development of Student Teachers. This study put the result based on statistical results, most of them agreed with reflective practice and they do in their teaching classroom.

Furthermore, Cirocki & Widodo (2019) investigate teacher's reflection in Reflective Practice in English Language Teaching in Indonesia: Shared Practice from Two Teacher Educators. In this study the researchers were classifying of reflection into four components; *reflection-before-lesson*, *reflection-during-lesson*, *reflection-after-lesson*, and *reflection-beyond-lesson*, as a representation of teacher's attention through the importance of reflection in successful lesson delivery, from planning to execution.

Meanwhile, Azizah, Nurkamto, and Draji (2018) discussed the teacher's reflection in Reflective Practice: The Experiences of Pre-Service EFL Teachers in Teaching English. As the title, this previous study was taken from the teacher's experiences by the questionnaire, interview, and teacher diary. In advance; teachers giving the students simple questions to find out the problems. It

was like teacher's routine to confirm the students' understanding of a lesson in the teaching-learning activity, the teacher does analyze the class' condition directly by looking at the class activity critically, teacher memorizes the problems appeared in the teaching-learning process as the discussion topic in the reflection after teaching, the teacher prepares the lesson for the next teaching by discussed the teaching activity they have done, teacher predicts and prepares about what will happen in the next teaching (do reflection-for-action).

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative as a research approach because the research will be focused on how do teachers carry out self-reflection for ELT classrooms and how to do teacher's belief reflection for ELT classrooms. The reflection is careful observation naturally. It is in line with Hatch's (2002) qualitative study that tries to portrait natural phenomenon. The researcher uses narrative inquiry as to the research design in this research. Student teachers use individual narrative experiences to narrative inquiry practices (Yanto and Pravitasari, 2020). It is applied in this research by the aim to describe and interpret the data or process and seek to understand participants' point of view. It is in line with Murray's (2009) narrative inquiry that produced practical pedagogical information.

The author chose one EFL teacher. Although this study involved only one EFL teacher, this choice is methodologically justified within the qualitative narrative inquiry framework. Narrative inquiry prioritizes depth of understanding over the number of participants, focusing on rich, detailed exploration of individual experiences. By concentrating on one participant, this study was able to capture an in-depth portrayal of reflective practices in a

real classroom context, allowing for nuanced interpretation of the teacher's beliefs, actions, and professional development process. He is requested to answer eleven questions of the open-ended interview. The most important thing in this study is EFL teachers who participated in this study. They had to make time for helping the researcher to collect the data. The researcher collected data by using an interview. The type of interview used in this research is an open-ended interview. The questions are written in English and Bahasa Indonesia designed to explore the teacher's reflective practices and beliefs. The questions addressed three major aspects: (1) reflection before teaching, (2) reflection during teaching, and (3) reflection after teaching. Recorder documentation is the supporting data of this study which can be evidence of this study. It consists of interview documentation of researchers with EFL teachers who participated in this research. Recorder documentation is as the supporting data in this research. The instrument is a tool to collect data. The instrument that the researcher used is based on the data collection techniques including observation, open-ended interviews, and recorder documentation.

The researcher uses six steps based on Braun and Clarke (2006) in this research, the steps were: familiarizing, transcription, coding, categorizing, naming, and interpreting the data. Familiarizing: the researcher requires read the data deeply to get any information. Transcription: the researcher listen the audio record carefully to transcript the data. Coding: in this step, researcher requires focus on the data. Categorizing: the researcher has shorting the data. Naming: the researcher has identifying the data. Interpreting: in the last step, researcher has reporting the data.

Afterward, the data were transcribed to facilitate the author in analyzing the data. This study uses the Interactive Model

designed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) to analyze the data. The steps are data reduction, data display, concluding or verification. In the reduction process, the author read-deeply the data or transcriptions of participants' stories. In the data display process, the author shows the data information about teachers' experiences in the form of text. Last, the author introduced the arguments with related theories of the research findings in the verification stage.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are two general finding patterns of this study. It consists of reflection-on-action that is carried out by the teacher and reflection is viewed properly by the teacher. The detailed findings are represented here.

### 1. Findings

#### 1.1. Reflection on action is carried out by the teacher

The teacher prepares his teaching previously. It helps him to equip students in the learning process. He also considers students' learning styles and needs. The teacher's reflection-on-action can be traced from the interview transcriptions.

Researcher: What are you doing before starting teaching learning activity? (*Apa yang Anda lakukan sebelum memulai aktivitas belajar mengajar?*)

Teacher: **I am preparing lesson plan for 2-3 meetings in a week** (*Saya mempersiapkan RPP untuk 2-3 pertemuan dalam seminggu*).

Based on the obtained data from the interview transcription, it illustrates that the teacher prepares lesson plan for 2-3 meetings. It means he does reflection on action. Besides, the teacher also evaluates the material that will be delivered. It assists him to provide proper material that is in line with students' needs. The interview transcriptions

describe how the teacher reviews the material previously.

Researcher: What are you doing after teaching learning activity? (*Apa yang Anda lakukan setelah mengajar?*)

Teacher: Usually, **I will review the material I taught before to see how far student understands.** (*Biasanya, saya akan mengulas kembali materi yang pernah diajarkan sebelumnya untuk melihat sejauh mana pemahaman siswa*).

## **1.2.Reflection is viewed properly by the teacher**

Teacher does simple self-reflection concerning his teaching practice. It assists him is aware of what he has done and felt when he taught English lessons. The teacher's reason does self-reflection can be visible from the interview transcription.

Researcher: Why do you do self-reflection toward your teaching? (*Mengapa Anda melakukan refleksi terhadap pengajaran Anda?*)

Teacher: Because **I want to know what I have did/feel when I taught English lesson.** (*Karena saya ingin tahu apa yang telah saya lakukan atau rasakan ketika saya mengajar pelajaran Bahasa Inggris*).

According to the data from interview transcription, it explains that the teacher does simple self-reflection purposes to know how was his teaching practice done. Moreover, teacher beliefs that mirroring can facilitate him to improve his abilities in teaching practice. He also beliefs that self-reflection gives him occasion to think aloud about his teaching improvement. It can be presented from the interview transcription.

Researcher: What benefit do you think from doing self-reflection toward your teaching?

(*Menurut Anda apa manfaat dari melakukan refleksi mandiri terhadap pengajaran Anda?*)

Teacher: **I think it will give me an opportunity to develop or even change my teaching method/media. So, I can teach English with a right teaching method/media in the classroom.** (*Saya pikir refleksi mandiri dapat memberi saya kesempatan untuk berkembang atau bahkan mengubah metode/media pembelajaran saya*).

## **2. Discussion**

### **2.1.Reflection on action is carried out by the teacher**

The teacher provides learning material previously to assist students in comprehending the material. It helps the students to grasp the material easily. It is in line with Farrell (2018) explains the importance of reflection in language learning and teaching. It is claimed that after teachers retained training of reflection, they can perform reflective teaching strategies (Nurkamto & Sarosa, 2020). It means that training of teaching reflections is crucial in assisting the teacher to be reflective teachers. Based on Quesada (2011), reflective practice has benefits for teachers. It helps teacher becomes professional because previously experience of teaching equips teacher for a better achievement in teaching. Teacher reflection on action forms a process of mental conceptions works, comprises beliefs, thoughts, and actions (Marcos, Miguel, and Tillema: 2009). Reflection on action has to result in teaching-learning activities assessment relating to the lesson plan (Azizah, Nurkamto, & Drajati, 2018).

### **2.2.Reflection is perceived properly as the teacher used to apply simple reflection.**

Simple habits are as a simple self-reflection. According to Azizah, Nurkamto, and Drajadi (2018), that it has a lot of ways to do self-reflection. Sometimes, the teacher is not aware enough that they are doing self-reflection even though with some easy things, like giving students questions about previous learning or reviewing, managing situations in the classroom, solving the problem, discussing with peers concerning teaching practice, and preparing for next teaching practice. Reflection should be experienced more by the teacher as it potentially assists them in utilizing properly and professionally (Azizah, Nurkamto & Drajadi, 2018). It allows the teacher to understand well in resolve about their teaching, as the output, students will receive the best possible chance of learning activity (Farrell, 2018). Reflective practice helps the teacher to improve their English teaching skill (Azizah, Nurkamto, Drajadi, 2018) because it requires the teacher to assess, think, and feel about themselves of teaching practice. It is a crucial section for professionally English teacher development (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). Lubis (2017), states that reflective teachers can evaluate the learning processes and students' perspective of teaching-learning activity constantly and regularly. While Iqbal (2017), declare that reflective teachers can develop the teachers' understanding that their teaching style deeply.

## CONCLUSION

Being a professional English teacher requires often a reflection on teaching practice. As we know, there are generally three types of reflective practice. They are a reflection on action, reflection in action, and reflection for action. Based on the previous explanation, the research findings answer the research questions in this research and it is related to title EFL teachers' reflections for ELT classroom at Junior High School. From the first question, it obtained that reflection on

action is carried out by the teacher. He prepares teaching previously by considering students' learning styles and needs. He usually prepares a lesson plan for 2-3 meetings in a week. The teacher also evaluates the material that will be delivered to students. It helps him to teach his students by knowing how far students' understanding from the previous material. Meanwhile, the second question has been answered clearly that reflection is viewing properly by the teacher. He usually does self-reflection by simple self-reflection exactly. The simple self-reflection equips him to prepare his teaching. He also believes that it gives him occasion to think aloud about his teaching improvement.

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