

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON REFLECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICE
IN ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) CLASSROOM: A CASE
STUDY OF ENGLISH NOVICE TEACHER**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to explore the perceptions of English novice teachers regarding reflective teaching practices in EFL classrooms in rural schools. The study employed a qualitative description with a case study design as the research method, and data collection was conducted online through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals with five English novice teachers selected through convenience sampling at the secondary school level. The findings revealed that novice English teachers had positive perceptions regarding the implementation of reflective teaching practices. English novice teachers applied some reflective practices in their teaching, but some practices proved challenging for them due to a lack of understanding, limited preparation time, and a lack of collaboration with peers, hindering them from engaging in more effective reflective practices. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of reflective teaching practices by English novice teachers in rural schools was less effective in developing the quality of their teaching. This study suggests that teacher education programs, especially for English teachers, and schools should equip prospective teachers with adequate understanding and support. This can be achieved through structured training programs, mentoring initiatives, and learning communities to prepare future English teachers for a successful teaching career in rural settings by fostering effective reflective teaching practices.

Keyword : *English novice teacher, Reflective practice, English Foreign Language (EFL)*

INTRODUCTION

Reflective teaching has become an integral part of teachers' professional development in English language teaching (ELT). This involves teachers consciously analyzing their teaching experiences to evaluate performance and find solutions for improvement (Mann & Walsh, 2017). Developing reflective skills from an early age is very important for novice teachers to acquire problem-solving abilities, pedagogical reasoning, and the ability to adapt in diverse classroom contexts (Ulvik & Riese, 2015). This is especially important for novice English teachers who may have limited teaching experience (Perak, 2015). Therefore, to advance their

profession, teachers are encouraged to continue learning and improving their abilities both in science and teaching practice.

Previous research on prospective teachers shows that inadequate guidance is the main problem that hinders productive reflective practice (Alger, 2006). In the context of education in Indonesia, reflective practice has been promoted formally through teacher certification. However, many teachers still rarely evaluate their teaching practices, especially novice teachers who have no experience in teaching, especially in rural areas who only focus on explaining material in class. Their main focus is completing teaching assignments and assigning homework (Richards and Lockhart, 1996). Moreover, novice English teachers have to face various problems that arise in the classroom. Creativity skills in the classroom are important to encourage student motivation and interest in learning (Silver, 2015). To overcome this problem, English novice teachers can apply reflective teaching practices in their teaching. Reflective teaching practices are a method to increase teachers' teaching awareness to investigate teaching skills through reflective teaching to improve teachers' teaching methods and increase teacher professionalism (Mesa, 2018). Beside that, Reflective practice is the first tool to improve the teaching and professionalism of an environment-based teacher (Mathew et al., 2017). Therefore, a novice teacher needs to carry out reflective teaching practices to find out the extent of his success in teaching in the classroom.

The teacher as the main actor in teaching in the classroom must receive attention because the teacher is one of the keys to successful learning. As Shirao (2020) said, teachers are the most important and influential element in classroom teaching. This means that a teacher must be able to develop and optimize the way he teaches in class. Dealing with this, by participating in lectures and tutorials, creating portfolios and learning journals, having a support system of peers, observing people closely, and taking care of themselves, an individual can enhance their guiding abilities (Richard and Farrell, 2005). By following several approaches, reflective practice can have a significant impact on teacher development by requiring increased teacher self-awareness of the challenges or challenges faced in the classroom. According to Mathew et al. (2017), reflective teaching involves the process of teachers analyzing their pursuit of improvement and transformation towards better teaching outcomes. Qing (2009) asserts that reflective training aims to critically reflect on teaching experiences, enhancing understanding and the quality of teaching. The application of reflective practice facilitates teachers in enhancing their teaching quality and evolving into professional educators. Besides that, using reflective enables teachers to become more aware of how they perceive the classroom environment and allows for the modification of student

behavior Fatemipour (2009). As a result, teachers gain a deeper understanding of their instruction and acquire the ability to advance their practices.

However, universities in Indonesia have not included a reflective teaching curriculum in teacher education. As a result, prospective educators do not yet understand reflective teaching and its implementation. Pre-service teachers' limited understanding of reflective teaching is caused by their lack of prior knowledge from university education (Nurkamanto and Sarosa, 2020). Although reflective teaching is mandated as an important aspect in academic qualification and teacher competency standards, this practice is not in line with government directives that encourage teachers but do not force schools to engage in reflective teaching practices for teacher professional development. Whereas, the reputation of a particular school is affected by the quality of its teachers. Therefore, teacher performance can be seen from the magnitude of the influence of teaching on students (Hassan at., al 2020).

Despite that, the duration of a teacher's teaching experience also influences their reflective teaching. Farel (2004) argues that as teaching experience increases, a teacher becomes more reflective in their approach to teaching. This means that the time spent by teachers in the classroom allows them to more easily determine teaching strategies based on teaching experience. Therefore, as a novice English teacher with limited teaching experience, it is essential to engage in reflective practice to evaluate teaching in the classroom and create more effective teaching processes. Additionally, this serves as part of a teacher's professional development to cultivate a sense of responsibility towards the teaching profession.

Several previous researchers have conducted studies in different contexts, revealing various significant findings regarding teachers' reflective practices. McCoy & Lynam's (2021) findings analyzed reflective practices in the first teaching experiences of pre-service foreign language teachers, demonstrating that reflective practices assist pre-service teachers in implementing necessary changes to enhance classroom teaching. Another discovery by Rusdiana and Rochsantiningsih (2021) conducted a case study on three English teachers at SMP Bogor. The researchers found that these three teachers had limited conceptual understanding of reflective teaching and did not know how to apply it in real-life situations. Additionally, Lee (2007) explored the perceptions of secondary school EFL teachers towards reflective teaching and the actual implementation of reflective teaching practices in Hong Kong. Through qualitative research and semi-structured interviews, it was shown that most participating teachers exhibited a positive attitude towards reflective teaching, considering it beneficial for facilitating professional development and improving instructional practices. However, only about half of them were actively involved in reflective teaching due to time

constraints, heavy workloads, and a lack of knowledge and skills required for reflective teaching.

Based on the explanations from previous research that have extensively investigated reflective teaching in the context of teacher education, most participants in these studies were senior EFL teachers with significant teaching experience. There is limited research specifically exploring the perceptions and experiences of novice English teachers who are just starting their teaching careers. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting a case study to explore the perceptions and experiences of novice English teachers regarding the benefits and challenges of implementing reflective teaching practices in their English classrooms. Obtaining these findings is crucial to assist school education programs in facilitating the professional development of teachers, especially novice English teachers, to teach reflectively from the early stages of their careers.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design, explaining that a case study can answer descriptive questions to provide an explanation for why a phenomenon occurs (Creswell et al., 2007). The participants in this study are 5 English novice teachers teaching at junior high schools (SMP) from 4 different rural schools. Participant selection was done through convenience sampling, selecting based on the availability and accessibility of English novice teachers with less than 3 years of teaching experience. Creswell (2017), this method is suitable for research with faster and more efficient data collection, considering limited resources and time. Research data were collected through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals filled out by participants over a period of 3 weeks. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions to explore participants' perceptions, understanding, and experiences regarding reflective teaching. Given the varying distances between participants, the researcher conducted online interviews through the WhatsApp application, adjusting to each participant's time zone and obtaining their consent regarding data privacy. The researcher initiated the interviews formally and politely, providing open-ended questions.

The reflective journals aimed to capture the reflection process undertaken by teachers in their day-to-day teaching practices. Data analysis used a thematic approach with inductive coding. The thematic approach focuses on identifying main patterns or themes from data without using a framework in qualitative methods (Charmaz, K., 2014). The steps in this research involved collecting data for transcription. Next, the initial coding was done, where

the researcher identified inductive concepts, ideas, and themes in the data. The subsequent step was to look for patterns and how these codes related to each other. Then, main themes were developed by linking these categories. This method helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the main issues emerging from the data. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of data sources and member checks. Afterward, the researcher transcribed the data into text, grouping data based on research questions to obtain research results (Gay et al., 2011).

Here is a description of the participants, novice English teachers in several junior high schools in this study.

Table 1: Description English Novice Teacher

City/district	Gender		Years of teaching
Sorkam	1 Female	1 Male	< 3 years
Sibolga	-	1 Male	< 1 years
Tembung	1 Female	-	> 1 years
Kota pinang	1 Female	-	< 5 monts

Based on the table above, the participants in this study consist of 5 novice English teachers (3 females and 2 males) with less than 3 years of experience in developing their careers as educators. The selection of participants has been completed after they finished their English language education program and started teaching English, not as substitute teachers. Furthermore, the participants come from rural schools in the North Sumatra province. They were selected from different schools, except for the participants from Sorkam. There are 2 participants from an SMP (Junior High School) in Sorkam, namely a female teacher and a male teacher. They are categorized as novice English teachers because the female teacher has taught for less than 3 years, while the male teacher has taught for less than 1 year. The choice of 5 participants was made due to the scarcity of English novice teachers found by the researcher in rural schools, in line with the criteria needed for the study. Additionally, obtaining approval and availability from English novice teachers willing to participate in this research posed challenges.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the results of online interviews with all participants via cellphone via private chat and personal telephone calls. Researchers have recorded the results of interviews with participants and summarized the perceptions of English novice teachers regarding the reflective teaching practices they carry out in their respective schools. The results show that teachers have different points of view in its implementation. They define reflective practice from contextual, social, experiential or deliberative and technical perspectives. Teachers who have taught for approximately 2 years and teachers who have taught for approximately 1 year have the same opinion about reflective teaching even though they are expressed in different words. Meanwhile, those who have been teaching for approximately 1 year stated that reflective teaching is a reflection carried out by teachers regarding teaching practices and teachers' beliefs regarding learning in the classroom. Apart from that, they explained that reflective teaching is an activity reflecting on teaching that can be done alone or with friends at school to develop better teaching by sharing experiences related to teaching and discussing problems in teaching. Furthermore, several teachers who have worked for more than 3 years who have teaching experience said that reflective teaching is teaching based on experience, then evaluating our own teaching in order to improve teaching practices, methods, techniques and strategies to improve the results of the teaching and learning process.

From the explanation above, related to Taggart and Wilson's (2005) explain that teachers who carry out contextual perspective reflection can understand the concepts, context, and theoretical foundations for classroom practice and they assess the implications of their actions and beliefs. It means that teachers who carry out this reflection understand what they have to do regarding their teaching practice and are aware of their beliefs in teaching. Calderhead (1992) asserts that implementing reflective teaching in schools can foster innovation and creativity, leading to improved learning opportunities for students.

Based on the results of online interviews, the researcher identified the reflective teaching practices of English novice teachers. The conclusions drawn from the interviews indicate that these teachers engage in reflective practices. Based on the results of reflective journals filled in by participants for 2 weeks, the researcher identified the daily reflective teaching practices of novice English teachers. Conclusions drawn from reflective journals indicate that teachers engage in reflective practice.

Table 2: Description Reflective Journals

No	Initials	Teaching journal	Video recording	Peer observation	Students feedback	Workshop / seminar	Action research
1	T1	-	-	√	√	√	√
2	T2	-	-	-	√	-	√
3	T3	-	-	-	√	√	√
4	T4	√	√	-	√	√	√
5	T5	-	-	√	√	√	√

Based on the table above, there are 5 English novice teachers who implement reflective teaching practices. However, only one of them carried out journal teaching during the learning process for various reasons. In addition, novice English teachers do not take notes on their lessons, because they think it is not important and prefer to focus only on the teaching material. In the observation column, it can be seen that only two teachers carry out peer observations to improve the quality of their teaching. Meanwhile, T2, T3 and T4, on the other hand, did not participate in peer observation, citing a lack of awareness regarding its implementation. Furthermore, from the table it can be seen that all teachers received positive responses from students regarding their teaching and they actively participated in school workshops/seminars. However, T2 has never attended a seminar/workshop event, perhaps due to the school's lack of information. Lastly, all teachers implemented action research in their classrooms during the teaching process.

In short, it can be concluded that beginner English teachers, with approximately three years of teaching experience, have not fully developed their professionalism as educators, this is due to several obstacles that influence them, from lack of awareness of the teachers themselves or school factors that lack information so that some teachers have not carried out certain activities. which can enhance their skills and hinder their overall professional growth.

In addition, based on questionnaires and interviews obtained by researchers from each teacher regarding the importance of reflective teaching, the conclusions are as follows:

Table 3: Description Important of Reflective Teaching

No	Initials	The Importance of Reflective Teaching
1	T1	Teachers become more innovative and creative
		Teacher knowledge increases
		Teachers aware of their strengths and weaknesses in teaching
		Teachers know the success of student learning
2	T2	Teachers can to improve their teaching abilities
		Teachers continue to increase their knowledge
		Teachers learn from their own experience
3	T3	Teacher can to be a role model for other colleagues
		Teachers become agents of change to improve teaching

		abilities in schools
		Teachers are wiser in providing teaching strategies
		Teachers better understand the nature and ways of teaching students
		Teachers are more aware of suitable applications for teaching in language classes
4	T4	Teachers feel more confident teaching and can hone their teaching better on what works and what fails after teaching.
5	T5	Reflection is important for self-evaluation as a teacher to find out each other's strengths and weaknesses in teaching and to be able to share experiences or new ideas with fellow teachers.

The statement above is the opinion of an English novice teacher about the benefits of carrying out reflective practice in English foreign language (EFL) classroom. novice teachers consider reflective practice useful for professional development and improving the quality of learning. However, they still need increased capacity and support to be able to implement it optimally. Reflective teachers tend to utilize the experiences and learning of educators to improve their teaching practices.

On the other hand, teachers also have several obstacles in carrying out reflective practice in the classroom which can disrupt teacher performance, based on the results of the questionnaire regarding the Impediments by teachers as follows.

Table 4: Description Impediments of Reflective Teaching

No	Initials	Impediments of Reflective Teaching
1	T1	Teachers lack time, and teachers' backgrounds in educational programs lack training in reflective practice
2	T2	Lack of focus and training and limited preparation time
3	T3	Lack of time and Lack of Collaboration with peers
4	T4	Teachers do not understand the concept and its implementation in depth and Lack of Support and Provision
5	T5	Limited time, support, and teaching guidance hinder novice teachers' engagement in substantive reflective teaching practices.

Based on this statement, there are several obstacles faced by every English teacher. One of them is the lack of time for class reflection. According to Loughrn (1996) explains, providing an explanation of the problems related to reflection training, especially about how long the reflection time and pedagogical teacher experience influence the possibility of learning and the results of that experience. Related to teacher constraints, the problem of teachers' lack of readiness in implementing reflective training is also very necessary.

According to Ballard (2006), teachers must be educated to become reflective practitioners. In addition, Cunningham (2001) stated that reflective teacher practice requires time and commitment to continue developing oneself. Furthermore, Lee (2005) believes that after completing a teacher training program at a university, a lack of training and education related to reflective teaching can be a challenge for teachers to develop themselves. The obstacles experienced by novice English teachers in rural areas are also caused by support factors from schools that lack information and involvement in the implementation of reflective teaching in schools, apart from that, the awareness of some teachers is also one of the obstacles factors due to reduced knowledge or awareness of english novice teacher. Therefore, some teachers must be able to develop their professionalism as teachers by overcoming existing obstacles and finding solutions to improve the learning process in the classroom more effectively.

Discussion

This study highlights significant insights into the benefits and challenges of reflective teaching practices faced by novice English teachers. Consistent with recent research, the main findings emphasize that novice teachers often struggle with in-depth reflection without adequate support (Walk et al., 2022). Common barriers faced by participants in this study, such as high teaching workload and limited access to professional development opportunities, have also been documented as obstacles to reflective teaching practices in various rural contexts (Aravind et al., 2020; Kim & Kim, 2022). Furthermore, this research strengthens evidence that a shallow understanding of reflective concepts contributes to the suboptimal implementation of reflection by novice teachers (Mrázová & Korthagen, 2022). In other words, the lack of application in reflective teaching practices can impact student success and the quality of teacher instruction.

The impact of insufficient reflective practices can make it challenging for novice teachers to develop their teaching and pedagogical skills, leading to the repetition of the same mistakes without learning from experiences (Killen, 2013). This means that teachers must continually analyze their teaching methods because students taught by novice teachers with insufficient self-reflection may hinder student success. The overall school achievement, including in English language learning, may decline due to the lack of reflection carried out by teachers (Wong, 2009). Therefore, the lack of reflective teaching practices in novice English teachers can have a negative impact on their teaching quality and the school as a whole.

Based on these findings, proposed policy implications include the development of collaborative mentoring and coaching models (Herman et al., 2023), facilitating online communities of practice to share reflective experiences among rural teachers (Bates & Wayman, 2021), and integrating critical thinking about reflection into pre-service teacher education programs (Körkkö et al., 2022). Through these initiatives, it is expected that teachers' reflective capacity can be enhanced to support professional development and improve student learning quality in rural schools. Through such training, novice English teachers in rural schools should enhance their teaching quality by reflecting on their EFL classroom practices without waiting for the school to observe each teacher to identify strengths and weaknesses in their teaching. Furthermore, this research is essential to understand the perceptions of novice English teachers in rural schools regarding the implementation of reflective teaching practices. However, it is evident that reflective practice training is less effective among novice English teachers due to a lack of knowledge and school policies that encourage and provide opportunities for teachers to develop their professionalism through various training programs.

Therefore, to improve the teaching quality of novice teachers, especially those teaching English in EFL classes, they should engage in reflective teaching practices to understand and analyze their success in language instruction. Activities such as journal writing, teaching diaries, recording teaching processes, seeking feedback from students about strengths and weaknesses in the teaching process, and peer discussions with fellow teachers can enhance the professional quality of novice English teachers.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the explanation above, teacher practice in reflective practice has benefits and obstacles for teachers to implement. The benefits of reflective practice in teaching are very important for English novice teachers to make them knowledgeable, innovative and aware of the extent to which the learning methods that teachers use are realized for students well so that teachers can realize what is going well and what is not during the learning process. In addition, the researcher concluded that the teacher demonstrated their ability to understand reflective practice. This can be seen from the teacher's definition of reflective teaching. Teachers have provided their perspectives on their reflective practice. Besides that, the Impediments faced by teachers are that they lack time, lack of training or most teachers only know about classroom reflective practice because they have never been trained before at their university and finally there is a lack of teacher preparation, especially for teachers who still

lack experience, which makes them afraid and not confident in carrying out reflective practice. Therefore, the importance of reflective teaching practices conducted by novice English teachers is crucial for them to continually develop pedagogical skills and understanding. Unfortunately, many novice teachers have not engaged in reflection optimally. Hence, researchers suggest schools facilitate online or offline communities of practice for novice English teachers to discuss and share teaching experiences. These discussions can enhance reflection and understanding among novice teachers. Senior teachers should embrace collaboration with novice teachers in teaching practices to provide mutual feedback. Additionally, regular training from schools is essential to enable novice teachers, especially English novice teachers, to reflect on their teaching in EFL classes. For future researchers, qualitative and quantitative studies on reflective training programs for novice English teachers are still needed to develop theories and evaluate the effectiveness of such programs. Studies like these can be conducted through case studies or classroom action research in various schools.

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