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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Measuring Reflective Teaching among Moroccan University EFL Professors: Perceptions and Pedagogical Implications

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| ABSTRACT

A crucial component of successful pedagogy, reflective teaching is still a nebulous idea in Morocco, mostly because it can only be completely realized when teachers are provided with the right opportunity to further their professional development and participate in methodical reflective practices. The purpose of this study was to find out how English language instructors in Moroccan universities perceive their degree of reflection and how their teaching methods reflect these perceptions. Two stages of multi-method design were utilized. Five professors were chosen randomly from among the participants of the first survey for the second stage, consisting of semi-structured interviews. A questionnaire was used to gather data from 100 EFL instructors in the first stage (Akbari, Behzadpoor & Dadvand, 2010). In order to identify trends in their questioning style—which was an indicator of reflective teaching—their teaching approaches were observed and scrutinized employing the seating chart method. It was also sought under this research if there was any relationship between the level of reflective teaching and experience in teaching. The results showed that the professors reflected to some degree and were more inclined to trust their instincts than structured reflecting exercises. The professors' participation in learner-centered and metacognitive reflection was higher than their participation in critical, practical, and cognitive reflective activities. According to the study, more methodical and cooperative reflection practices that concentrate on comprehending students' learning styles and critically analyzing instructional circumstances are necessary if instructors are to improve their pedagogical efficacy.

1. Introduction

This study examines how Moroccan university EFL professors see their own degrees of reflection and how these views are used in practice. Reflective practice is a concept that is well-known in the literature on Language Teacher Education (LTE) (Kullman, 1998). According to Burton (2009), reflection is a crucial component of teachers' professional growth, which is why reflective teaching is important in this setting. Though more research is needed to fully understand how reflection leads to higher-quality teaching and the procedures needed to improve learning outcomes, research suggests that reflective teaching improves instructors' knowledge and attitudes (Thiessen, 2000; Akbari, 2007). There is some research on how teachers view their own level of reflection and how these views affect their teaching practices, although most of the literature is concerned with the "what" and "how" of reflective teaching. More research must be done in order to know about instructors' classroom strategies, tacit assumptions, and the determinants of these practices. As proposed by Borg (2009), such understanding is essential in comprehending the thinking and beliefs of instructors. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify how Moroccan teachers view their reflective practices and how these perceptions are reflected in their classroom questioning strategies. This study takes into account reflective practice, which is commonly accepted as a concept within the Literature of Language Teacher Education

(LTE) (Kullman, 1998), and takes into account particularly Moroccan university EFL lecturers' perceptions of their own level of reflection and their perception of how they use such perspectives in the classroom.Drawing on Burton's (2009) contention that reflection is crucial to teachers' professionalization, this study places special emphasis on the significance of reflective teaching. In addition, studies have indicated that reflective teaching improves teachers' attitudes and knowledge (Kabilan, 2007). However, further studies are essential in order to determine the processes that result in improved learning and how reflective teaching improves the quality of instruction (Thiessen, 2000; Akbari, 2007).

More scholarship on parallel issues, including teachers' professional identities and reflective practice (Farrell, 2011), and issues, limitations, and experiences in relation to reflective teaching (Kuit & Reay, 2001; Wolfensberger et al., 2010) also point similarly to the need for reflective teaching. More volumes of literature in the area have been made possible by the application of case studies and the design of reflective teaching tools such as the English Language Teaching Reflection Inventory (Akbari, Behzadpoor, & Dadvand, 2010). A study of how instructors view their own reflection is yet to be done, despite reflective teaching's material and approach having been provided with quite a large amount of attention. To the point that there is yet such a gap, more precisely in the instructors' evaluation of their own reflections vs. what they really do in their own teaching activities, this must be researched further. While Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005) contend that the findings serve to illuminate teachers' professional, cultural, political, and personal identities, Borg (2009) highlights the importance of the findings in comprehending teachers' thinking and perceptions.

It is crucial to look at how teachers' perspectives of their reflective practices show up in their instruction since each teaching setting is different (Brosh, 1996) and teachers' beliefs have a big impact on their professional development (Borg, 2006). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate Moroccan teachers' perspectives on reflective practices and how these perspectives are represented in their methods of questioning in the classroom. This study is guided by the following research questions:

➢ What degree of reflection can be deduced from the professors' answers to the reflection inventory?

➢ How do the EFL instructors at Moroccan universities demonstrate their degree of reflection in their instruction?

Additionally, the following null hypothesis is tested in this study:
Hypothesis Null (H_0): The level of reflective teaching and teaching experience do not significantly correlate.

2. Literature Review
Drawing from the seminal writings of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983), a significant amount of research has emerged in the field of reflective teaching practice in recent decades. These trailblazers highlighted the significance of fusing theory and practice, as well as experience and reflection. "Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends" (p.9) is how Dewey (1933) described reflection. In the 1980s, Schön brought the idea back to life with "practitioner-generated" challenges, which emphasize problem-setting above problem-solving (Farrell, 2007).

In contrast to the more passive role that instructors play in traditional teaching models, reflective teaching entails a proactive role for teachers (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). Reflective teaching promotes active involvement and aims to modify students' behavior, whereas traditional teaching depends on passive student interaction. Reflective teaching enhances instructors' self-awareness, self-concept, and reflective thinking, according to studies on the subject. Liou (2001), for example, discovered that pre-service teachers who participated in practice-related conversations reflected more critically. In a similar vein, an Australian research by Smith et al. (2012) verified that participants' attitudes toward teaching and reflection were enhanced by a program that encouraged reflective practice. Additional studies have looked into the use of different resources, such student feedback, peer observations, and teacher diaries, to encourage reflective practice. Peer-videoing in a community of practice helped instructors cultivate reflective skills that improved their instruction, as demonstrated by Harford and Mac Ruairc (2008). Action research initiatives assisted teachers of English language learners become more self-assured and introspective, according to Sowa (2009).

Research on teachers' views of their own reflective practice, however, is limited, despite these advances. The difficulty in creating useful inventory for reflective teaching is perhaps the cause of this imbalance. In Stout's (1989) research, most of the teachers viewed reflection positively and believed that their setting was conducive to it. To bridge this gap, the present study explores Moroccan EFL university teachers' perceptions of their reflective practice and how these perceptions are echoed in classroom practice, specifically in questioning. By raising Moroccan teachers' awareness of how reflection affects their professional growth and teaching effectiveness, the project seeks to contribute to the body of research on reflective practice in foreign language

teacher education. The study aims at giving perspective on Moroccan English teachers' use of reflective practices in their teaching, more precisely with regard to professional accountability and decision-making.

3. Method

In order to gain a deeper insight into the reflective practices of Moroccan university lecturers, this study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase of the study, a survey was used to quantify how reflective teachers viewed themselves. The questionnaire asked questions about the professors' perceptions of whether they practiced reflection, how they previously used to evaluate their teaching, and the factors that affected their reflective practices. To meet the requirements of providing an overview of the professors' reflecting practice, the research utilized a guided questionnaire to collect self-reported data for various facets of reflection. The research progressed further into the qualitative route via a series of interviews in the second phase. To obtain more information on how the reflective practices of the five chosen professors from their self-reports affected their teaching, they were interviewed after being chosen from the survey participants. The interviews were to obtain more insight into the views and experiences of the professors concerning their reflective practices. The interviews were geared towards establishing how the professors applied reflective approaches to teaching, how they viewed their reflections impacting their classroom practices, and what challenges or advantages they linked with reflective instruction. It aimed to investigate the link between professors' beliefs regarding reflection and the actual teaching practices and, in the process, acquire valuable insights into how reflective practice is envisioned and applied by Moroccan university lecturers.

3.1 Participants

The initial phase of the research involved 100 Moroccan university professors at four Moroccan universities: Hassan I, Hassan II, Moulay Ismail, and Mohamed V. The respondents were selected based on willingness and availability. The permission slip inquired whether they would be willing to be observed while they taught. Around 70% of the 100 respondents were female and 30% male. Though the participants' backgrounds varied, they had an average of six years of teaching experience. The academics were ranked based on their scores from the questionnaires and then this group was divided into three. Five academics were chosen from this group to take part in in-depth interviews for the second part of the study. The purpose of these interviews was to discover more about their reflective practices and how they put them into practice in their teaching.

3.2 Instruments

Following Akbari et al. (2010), a 29-item Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always) questionnaire was used in the first phase (see Appendix 1). Five categories, which were addressed in the questionnaire, were Practical, Cognitive, Learner, Meta-Cognitive, and Critical. The initial 42 items of this questionnaire were reduced to 29 following its prior testing by Akbari et al. (2010) on a sample of 300 teachers using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the original was 0.91. The authors validated the adapted version used in this study, and Cronbach's alpha revealed a high level of dependability with a reliability coefficient of 0.82.

The 29 items in the reduced version were divided into five sections, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The questionnaire items categorized into five sections

Components	Questions	Definition
Practical	1-6	Actual acts of reflection using different tools, such as keeping journals or talking to colleagues.
Cognitive	7-12	Conscious efforts for professional development through attending conferences, reading professional books, and journals.
Learner	13-15	Deals with knowledge of learners and their affective/cognitive states.
Meta-Cognitive	16-22	Concerns teachers' knowledge of their personality, their definition of learning and teaching, and their view of their profession.
Critical	23-29	Focuses on the socio-political dimensions of teaching.

Five of the participants in the second phase of the study were interviewed using only open-ended questions in an attempt to get data from them. The interviews were conducted to gain the views and opinions of the participants on their reflective teaching practices. The open-ended questions helped in gaining a better understanding of the reflective processes of the academics through allowing them to articulate their experiences, opinions, and views in their own words. The semi-structured interview format offered flexibility while making sure that all the important issues were covered. A set of open-ended questions was posed to each participant in order to further understand their reflections on reflective practice, how they practice it, and how they

believe it affects their teaching. In addition to giving examples of what they have gone through in their own teaching practice, participants were also encouraged to elaborate more on their responses and consider how they could apply their reflections to practice. To ensure that the data was accurate, the interviews were tape recorded as well, and notes were taken during the interview sessions so that important things would not be left out. The tapes were transcribed for subsequent analysis as well. Through this process, researchers could qualitatively analyze data and determine common themes, trends, and surprises about the individuals' reflecting practices. Additional information on reflective practices' form within the teaching and how the teachers feel they are being impacted by them when reflecting upon teaching was aimed to be gleaned.

3.3 Data Analysis
Descriptive statistical techniques were utilized to prepare the completed surveys and analyze them. The observational information gathered from the five randomly picked academics was prepared for analysis as well in phase two. Qualitative techniques were utilized to research the information obtained from the five interviewees. To determine predominant themes concerning reflective practice, verbatim interview transcriptions were coded. Key words were identified through open coding and categorized into more general themes like "reflective tools," "impact on teaching," and "challenges in reflection." Cross-case analysis was used to compare participant response and establish similarities and differences. Member verification was employed to establish validity, and findings were interpreted in light of the body of knowledge relating to reflective practice. An effective grasp of how the participants perceive and utilize reflection in instruction was obtained as a result of this approach.

4. Results
4.1 Quantitative results

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Practical Component			
I talk about my classroom experience with my colleagues and seek and seek their advice/feedback.	100	2.83	1.429
After each session, I write about the accomplishments/failures of that lesson or I talk about the lesson to a colleague.	100	2.77	1.462
I discuss practical/ theoretical issues with my colleagues.	100	2.85	1.452
I observe other teacher's classrooms to learn about their efficient practices	100	2.57	1.305
I ask my peers to observe my teaching and comment on my teaching performance.	100	2.560	1.2498
Total		2.82	1.37
Cognitive Component			
I read books/articles related to effective teaching to improve my classroom performance.	100	2.31	1.323
I participate in Workshops/conferences related to teaching/learning issues.	100	2.64	1.275
I think of writing articles based on my classroom experiences.	100	2.29	1.336
I look at journal articles or research the Internet to see what the recent developments in my profession are.	100	2.85	1.381
I carry out small-scale research activities in my classes to become better informed of learning/teaching processes.	100	2.89	1.355
Total		2.59	1.33
Meta-Cognitive Component			
I talk to my students to learn about their learning styles and preferences.	100	2.83	1.400
I talk to my students to learn about their family backgrounds hobbies,	100	2.85	1.381

interests and abilities.			
I ask my students whether they like a teaching task or not.	**100**	**2.89**	**1.355**
Total		**2.85**	**1.37**
Learner Component			
As a teacher, I think about my teaching philosophy and the way it is affecting my teaching.	**100**	**2.83**	**1.400**
I think of the ways my biography or my background affects the way I define myself as a teacher.	**100**	**2.85**	**1.381**
I try to find out which aspects of my teaching provide a sense of satisfaction.	**100**	**2.89**	**1.355**
I talk to my students to learn about their learning styles and preferences.	**100**	**2.83**	**1.400**
Total		**2.85**	**1.38**
Critical Component			
I think of ways to enable my students to change their social lives in fighting poverty, discrimination, and gender bias.	**100**	**2.85**	**1.381**
In my teaching, I include less-discussed topics, such as old age, AIDS, discrimination against women and minorities, and poverty.	**100**	**2.89**	**1.355**
I think of ways through which I can promote tolerance and democracy in my classes and in the society in general.	**100**	**2.71**	**1.423**
I think about instances of social injustice in my own surroundings and try to discuss them in my classes.	**100**	**2.73**	**1.406**
I think about the political aspect of my teaching and the way I may affect my students' political views.	**100**	**2.95**	**1.351**
Total		**2.82**	**1.38**

The findings of the research indicate that various components have varying degrees of involvement in reflective teaching practices. With a mean score of 2.82 and standard deviation of 1.37, the Practical Component indicates a moderate degree of involvement in such activities as seeking comments and discussing classroom life with colleagues. Less commonly enacted are approaches based on more direct communication, such as visiting other teachers' classrooms (mean = 2.57) and having peers observe them teaching (mean = 2.56). The variation in responses indicates that some teachers practice these reflective tasks while others do not. The mean score of 2.59 implies comparatively low involvement in cognitive reflection in the Cognitive Component, such as reading books, attending workshops, and doing research. Rather than reading literature and writing about their pedagogical practice, researchers like academics are more interested in research work and staying updated with the latest developments, as is evident from the standard deviation of 1.33. With a mean of 2.85, the Meta-Cognitive Component shows comparatively higher engagement in activities designed to increase self-awareness and know the interests and backgrounds of students. This component's self-reflection is not very self-aware or critical, however. With a mean score of 2.85, the Learner Component also shows a modest level of consideration for teaching philosophy and how one's own background influences teaching. Less extensive self-reflection is less common, yet attention to teacher satisfaction and student learning style is the rule. Lastly, an average of 2.82 for the Critical Component indicates a moderate level of thinking about gender discrimination, poverty, and political consequences of education. Though not a common practice, instructors do think about how their own instruction might impact the social orientations of their students. Overall, there is moderate practice of reflective teaching in all domains, but depth and frequency of reflection vary, with some such as practical and meta-cognitive reflection showing more practice than cognitive, learner, and critical reflection.

4.2 Qualitative results

Some major conclusions about the participants' perceptions of reflective practice and how it had been applied within their teaching were developed from the analysis of the interviews. All participants had a clear understanding of reflection, and they mostly described it as a process of self-evaluation and ongoing improvement. Reflection, however, enabled a participant to "identify areas of weakness and make changes to improve student learning." The participants emphasized the application of reflection towards strengthening student participation and teaching results. Under reflective methods, the faculty presented a set of strategies from journaling to peer discourses and class observations to facilitate reflection. While one teacher mentioned "keeping a reflective journal after each lesson," another stated, "I prefer to discuss my teaching with colleagues, as it helps me gain new insights." The depth and frequency of use, however, varied. Most participants concurred that reflectively practicing had enhanced their teaching practices, especially in lesson planning and student interaction. One teacher recorded that reflection improved classroom management and said, "I noticed fewer behavior problems because I became more proactive in developing engaging activities." Another teacher replied, "Reflection helped me to better understand the needs of my students, so I altered the way I teach to be more inclusive." There were obstacles confronting participants like time, large classes, and poor institutional support despite the acknowledgment of the significance of reflective practice. For instance, one of the participants said, "I find it hard to reflect thoroughly with my large class size and pressure to get through the syllabus," whereas another said, "The institution doesn't provide any formal means for reflection, and that makes it hard to integrate reflection into my practice." In order to further improve their capability for reflection, some participants also indicated a need for more formal support structures, such as training sessions or seminars. "I believe reflective practice workshops would be of real benefit in helping us strengthen our teaching," one teacher suggested, with others suggesting regularizing reflection as part of professional development courses.

5. Discussion

This study sought to determine the degree of reflective teaching among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors in Moroccan universities and how this reflection manifests itself in their instruction. Several important conclusions about the two main study topics may be made in light of the findings from the reflection inventory and the observed teaching methods.

1. What level of reflection can be inferred from the professors' responses to the reflection inventory?

According to the reflection inventory results, the professors' overall level of reflection is moderate, with differing levels of participation across the various components. The highest means (2.85) were found for the Meta-Cognitive and Learner Components, indicating that instructors reflect more on their own teaching strategies, ideologies, and knowledge of students' learning styles and backgrounds. This result supports the notion that instructors in higher education frequently consider how their instruction fits the requirements of their students and how they might modify their approaches more effectively.

The lowest means, however, were found for the Cognitive and Practical Components (2.59 and 2.57, respectively), indicating that instructors participate in reflective practices that entail more external, research-based activities, like reading scholarly publications, going to workshops, or watching colleagues. In a similar vein, hands-on activities such as completing research on their own teaching methods or allowing peers to observe them in action were less prevalent. A modest amount of thinking on the wider social and political ramifications of teaching, such as topics like poverty, gender discrimination, and students' social views, was also indicated by the Critical Component (mean = 2.82). Overall, the results indicate that professors are somewhat involved in reflective teaching practices, especially in student-centered reflection (Meta-Cognitive and Learner), but they are less involved in more research-oriented or peer-driven reflective practices (Cognitive, Practical, and Critical). Although reflection is occurring, this modest degree of involvement suggests that more may be done, particularly in encouraging more profound and regular reflective practices across all components.

2. How is the Moroccan university EFL professors' level of reflection realized in their teaching performance?

Understanding how the professors' degree of reflection is manifested in their actual teaching performance was the aim of the second study question. It was clear from the study's interview phase that instructors' use of reflective methods was not always firmly established in their regular teaching and was very erratic. Professors talked about less planned and more intuitive reflecting practices, such having casual discussions about teaching experiences with colleagues or using their own discretion when assessing the needs of students. The comparatively low scores in the Practical and Cognitive Components are consistent with this finding, indicating that reflection frequently takes place at a surface level, emphasizing immediate teaching experiences rather than entailing more methodical examination or reflection grounded in research.

Higher scores on the Meta-Cognitive and Learner Components demonstrated that instructors were aware of the preferences and histories of their students, but this awareness did not necessarily result in appreciable adjustments to their lesson plans or teaching methods. This implies that although reflection occurs, tangible changes to instructional strategies might not necessarily follow. As demonstrated in the Practical Component, the absence of participation in formal feedback systems or peer

observation suggests that reflection may not be adequately connected to professional development or collaborative learning, both of which are critical for enhancing teaching practices in a more structured way.

From the quantitative and qualitative data, the Moroccan university English teachers are largely involved in metacognitive and learner-centered reflective practices where they reflect moderately on their instructional methods, students' interests, and background moderately. This suggests that they are somewhat aware of their instructional method and students' needs. Still, there is comparatively a lower proportion of engagement in practical, critical, and cognitive reflective practices, suggesting that even though professors do reflect on general issues like social impact and philosophy of teaching, they are unlikely to take part in peer observation, research, and professional activities like going for workshops or literature reading. On balance, it implies that teachers could be helped by having more opportunities and support to become more actively involved in a wider range of reflective practices, including research and peer reflection.

5.1 Implications and Recommendations

Some of the key areas that need development are indicated by low levels of commitment to reflective practice. Professors' attendance at reflection may be increased through inviting them for more formalized reflective exercises such as workshops and peer observation. Developing a reflection culture would further involve developing space where instructors share teaching strategies in comfort, air challenges, and receive feedback. Furthermore, offering opportunities for professional development with a focus on reflective teaching and its connection to teaching performance can enable teachers to transcend simple reflection to more effective and transformative practices.

6. Conclusion

With variation on many reflective dimensions, this study shows the level of reflective teaching practice among Moroccan university EFL instructors. While professors are more likely to engage in learner-centered and metacognitive reflection, they are less likely to engage in critical, practical, and cognitive reflective practices—all of which are more necessary for deeper pedagogical development. It was discovered that professors do reflect upon their teaching experiences from time to time, but such reflection is typically spontaneous and intuitive rather than research-based or systematically planned. It is suggested that colleges give teachers more opportunities for professional development, peer review, and collective reflection in order to promote more effective teaching. Finally, these actions would enhance teaching quality and student learning by facilitating wider and deeper use of reflective approaches to teaching.

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