

A Longitudinal Study of Reflective Teaching Development in English Language Classrooms of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract: This is a longitudinal study that examines the systematic development of reflective teaching (RT) practices of the English Language Teaching (ELT) professionals of North Coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh namely Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam. The research tries to quantify reflectivity as it exists without any interventions, and evaluate what changes, if any, the year-long action research intervention produces. Based on the theories of John Dewey (1933) and Donald Schön (1983), the research examined how much baseline reflectivity exists and how much change the year-long action research intervention brings about. The study adopted the mixed method of quantitative and qualitative, and quantitative methods were used were the English Language Teaching Reflection Inventory (ELTRI), and qualitative method were teaching journals, video-recorded self-analysis and peer-observation reports. In total, 67 ELT practitioners from technical institutions and secondary schools were involved in the study. Quantitative results showed that the teaching experience was negatively correlated with reflectivity, with a clear "mid-career dip" for teachers with between 11 and 15 years of experience, and then a positive correlation for teachers with 16 or more years of experience. The qualitative longitudinal intervention, which employed the Reflective Teaching Model (RTM) and "Loop Input" enabled a gradual transition from the "technical rationality" towards "critical reflection" by making it possible for teachers to base their pedagogical actions on applied linguistics theory, instead of "common-sense" beliefs. Most barriers identified to sustained practice were systemic (82% time constraints, 65% lack of formal training). The study concludes that reflective practice and support by institutionalizing multilingual UDL (Universal Design for Learning) is necessary to improve the self-efficacy of teachers and learning outcomes of students in the region.

Keywords: *Reflective Teaching; ELT Professionals; Action Research; Teacher Reflectivity; Mixed-Methods Research; Universal Design for Learning (UDL).*

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Introduction

Research Objectives

1. To measure the current state of reflective teaching by the ELT professionals in Andhra Pradesh in five dimensions (Practical, Cognitive, Learner, Meta-cognitive and Critical) of ELTRI.
2. To measure the effect of the longitudinal structured intervention (Action research) on the development of pedagogical planning,
3. The teacher-centered approach to learner-centered approach based on the "Into-Through-Beyond" model.
4. To detect personal and institutional challenges to reflective practice in the regional context, and to suggest data-informed, constructive strategies to address them.

Literature Review

The Philosophical Roots of Reflection - Wilson - 2019
Using the idea of reflective practice is not a new phenomenon but rather it has its foundations firmly established in the early 20th century in the sphere of education. The first widely accepted broad

definition of reflection was given by John Dewey (1933): "The process of reflection is an active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge, on the basis of the grounds that support it. Dewey believed that reflection differentiates in two ways between "routine action" (tradition, authority) and "reflective action" (self-analysis, evidence). He stressed three important attitudes that the practitioner should have to be truly reflective: Openness to listen to others, Responsibility towards the consequences of pedagogical actions, and Wholeheartedness towards the profession.

Wendell and the Artistry of Practice Donald Schön (1983, 1987) greatly advanced the cause of reflective teaching in professional education. Schön questioned the current paradigm of "Technical Rationality" in teaching, which equated teaching to the application of scientific theory to predictable problems. Instead, Schön suggested that professional practice is frequently "messy," and is filled with uncertainty and value conflict. He coined two fundamental ideas: Reflection-in-Action: the "thinking-on-your-feet" process in which a teacher modifies a lesson as it is happening depending on the students' responses. Reflection-on-Action: Critically examining a teaching episode after it has taken

place to gain insights into why it occurred as it did. This process, argues Schön, is not knowledge constructed before, but rather professional knowledge that is constructed through practice, the "artistry of practice. The ELTRI Framework and taxonomies. Later students have tried to classify the layers of reflections.

Van Manen (1977) outlined a set of levels beginning with Technical Reflection (how to do things effectively), then Practical Reflection (what is assumed when something is proposed to do), and finally Critical Reflection (what the ethical and sociopolitical implications of doing something are). To offer a valid and quantitative way to assess reflectivity in the specific domain of English Language Teaching (ELT), Akbari, Behzadpoor and Dadvand (2010) designed the English Language Teaching Reflection Inventory (ELTRI). This tool is broken out into five parts: Practical: How to use resources such as lesson plans and journals. 2. Cognitive: Being involved in professional development and research. Learner: Focus on learners' needs, interests and feelings. 4. Meta-cognitive: Reflecting on their beliefs, personality and identity as a teacher. 5. Critical: Analysis of the social and political implications of teaching.

Action Research and Professional Development Action Research (AR), a contemporary approach to literature, is recognized as a key process of developing reflectivity. AR is a "data-led" way forward that allows teachers to act as researchers in their own classrooms. Teachers use a Plan–Teach–Debrief process, which allows them to move beyond merely consuming theory to "reconstructing experience". Research across a variety of settings, ranging from Bhutan to Norway, has shown that students' critical thinking skills and achievement of course goals improve with structured intervention. The term "Universal Design for Learning (UDL)" and "Inclusion". The connection between reflective teaching and inclusive education has emerged as a focus for research, with recent findings from Vishnubhotla (2024). Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-backed approach that gives flexibility in the presentation of information and engagement of students. Having someone's view of you in the lens of reflection makes it possible for you to evaluate whether your approach is comprehensible to all students, including students who have disabilities or come from a different linguistic background, as teachers do in the case of Andhra Pradesh.

Research Design

Methodology

This study was a mixed-methods research longitudinal design, where quantitative surveys were supplemented by qualitative cycles of action research throughout one entire school

year. This "holistic approach" allows for overall statistical trends being balanced with in-depth phenomenological analysis of the "lived experiences" of the teachers. Setting and Participants The study was carried out in the North Coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh (Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam). This is one of the top education centers that have lots of engineering colleges, polytechnics and secondary schools. A purposive sample of 67 ELT practitioners was chosen to be included. The cohort included:

- 32 General Education Teachers.
- 32 Special Education Teachers.
- 3 Dual Certified Teachers.

The educational level included Bachelor's (10.4%), Master's (59.7%) and doctoral (29.9%) degree. Data Collection Instruments The Quantitative ELTRI Questionnaire was a 29-item questionnaire that rated the 5 dimensions of reflection on a 5-point (1=Never to 5=Always) Likert scale.

Teaching Journals/Diaries: Participants kept weekly journals of their personal reactions, teaching difficulties and observations. 3. Video Recorded lessons: At least one lesson was digitised per cycle by each teacher, which would act as an "objective mirror" for the teacher's own self-evaluation of their classroom English and teacher-talk patterns. Peer Observation Reports: Teachers participating in "critical friendship" dialogues Non-judgmental feedback about classroom dynamics.

The Intervention: Action Research Cycles This study employed a sequence in Reflective Teaching Model (RTM) which consisted of Plan, Teach, and Debrief. In first phase, teachers provided a draft lesson plan (Draft 1) reflecting their intuitive beliefs.

- Action Phase: Implementation of the lesson, recorded and analysed.
- Intervention Phase: Participants learnt in workshops with the help of the "Loop Input" (learning deep content through participation in the pedagogical methods taught) and got analytical debriefing through "decompression time".
- Revision Phase: 2nd submission of a theoretically-informed lesson plan (Draft 2).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 25 to determine mean scores, standard deviations, and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) for significance testing ($p < 0.05$). Qualitative data from journals and video transcripts underwent inductive thematic analysis, where themes emerged naturally from the texts.

Results and Interpretation

The results below are collated from the data gathered from the 67 participants during the extended intervention period. The Overall Mean Score for Reflective Practices as a group by Experience is depicted in.

Table 1: Demographics and Overall Mean Scores of Reflective Practices by Experience

Experience Level in ELT	N	Mean Score (1.0 - 5.0)	Standard Deviation
1–5 Years (Novice)	10	2.62	0.78
6–10 Years	19	2.61	0.70
11–15 Years (Mid-Career)	17	2.42	0.75
16–20 Years (Experienced)	12	2.67	0.81
21+ Years (Veteran)	9	2.64	0.65

The data suggest a non-linear path of the reflective development. The novice teachers (1-5 years) have moderate reflectivity (M=2.62) as they are exposed to reflective methodologies recently in their teacher training programs. There is, however, a quite large "mid-career dip" between ages 11-15 (M=2.42). This indicates that educators during this stage may be

susceptible to "routine based behaviour", "burnout" or "professional stagnation" – where teaching becomes routine. Constructively, the highest reflectivity is of those teachers with 16-20 years of experience (M=2.67); Theory to experience and the "artistry of practice" mature over a number of decades of sustained effort.

Table 2: Comparison of Reflective Dimensions (ELTRI Components)

ELTRI Dimension	Mean Score (1.0 - 5.0)	Std. Deviation	Perceived Priority
Learner Component	4.21	0.73	High
Meta-cognitive Component	4.18	0.49	High
Practical Component	3.46	0.50	Moderate
Critical Component	3.31	0.69	Low-Moderate
Cognitive Component	3.30	0.71	Low

The analysis of the five components shows that the North Coastal AP ELT practitioners value the Learner component (M=4.21) and the Meta-cognitive component (M=4.18) the most. This shows a high awareness and interest in student interests and in their own teaching identities. On the other hand, the lowest scores were achieved for the Cognitive Component (M=3.30). This

indicates that teachers are very interested in their students, but less involved in formal professional development activities, such as research articles, classroom inquiries, and international conferences. This gap represents a constructive opportunity for institutional intervention for the promotion of teacher-as-researcher models

Table 3: Impact of Longitudinal Intervention (Pedagogical Planning Shifts)

Assessment Area	Pre-Intervention (Draft 1)	Post-Intervention (Draft 2)	Theoretical Shift
Lesson Objectives	Vague ("Students will understand")	Measurable (Bloom's Taxonomy)	Behavioral to Constructivist
Instructional Model	Logical sequence (Warm-up, Follow-up)	Into-Through-Beyond Model	Habitual to Systematic
Theoretical Basis	Common-sense ("It's fun")	Applied Linguistics (ZPD, SIOP)	Intuitive to Evidence-based
Scaffolding	Minimal/Absent	Explicit visual/verbal cues	Teacher-centered to Learner-centered

The evolution of teacher planning over the academic year. Initially, teachers relied on "common-sense" beliefs (e.g., using a game simply because it is fun) and vague objectives using non-measurable verbs like "know" or "understand". Following the intervention using "Loop Input" and the "Into-Through-Beyond" model, teachers began to justify their choices with theoretical

underpinnings, such as Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) model. The second drafts demonstrated a more sophisticated ability to "scaffold" instruction, ensuring that content was comprehensible and technically aligned.

Table 4: Identified Barriers to the Implementation of Reflective Teaching

Barrier Category	Frequency (%)	Primary Concern	Impact on Practice
Time Constraints	82%	Heavy teaching loads	Lack of "decompression time"
Lack of Training	65%	Formal methods unfamiliar	Uncertainty in "how" to reflect
Institutional Resistance	48%	Lack of incentive/support	Reflection viewed as "optional"
Isolation	35%	Limited peer collaboration	Feelings of professional solitude

This table highlights the systemic challenges that impede RT in the region. Time constraints (82%) emerge as the most pervasive barrier, aligning with global research that reflection requires "dedicated time" often missing from overburdened

teaching schedules. Additionally, a lack of training (65%) suggests that even motivated teachers may not know the appropriate methods for systematic self-evaluation. The frequency of isolation (35%) underscores the need for "collegial types of reflection" and

"critical friendship circles" to replace the tradition of teaching as a solitary endeavor.

Discussion

The findings of this longitudinal study present a rich picture of data on teacher growth in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. These results are placed in the context of the current academic literature and their positive implications are discussed.

Development of Technical to Critical Reflection

The data from the intervention shows that although many teachers are intuitively skilled, they tend to stay in a situation of "technical rationality". They are concerned with the efficiency of achieving desired goals, rather than doubting the goals. The participants gradually worked towards Critical Reflection in the action research cycles, thereby engaging in the "moral and sociopolitical implications" of their teaching. For example, in the technical institutions of Visakhapatnam teachers came to understand that the teaching and learning of abstract grammar was less effective than that of English for Specific Purpose (ESP) such as report writing for Mechanical Engineering which made their students' future career more effective.

The ability of collective reflection

One of the major findings from the qualitative analysis was the way in which collative reflection was shown to transform. Teachers were often seen as a profession in isolation so it was found that peer observations and 'critical friendship' dialogues helped teachers to overcome the sense of isolation and to make 'deliberate and informed decisions'. An important "mirror-like" viewpoint was offered through the use of audio video recordings. One teacher-trainee reported that seeing the video gave her insight into the interactive patterns that she was not aware of during the live lesson, for example overuse of the word "OK". This aligns with Brookfield's (2017) perspective that opportunities for people to engage in conversation about the way they are teaching in the classroom are the best way to support good teaching.

The Gray Divide and The Burnout Factor

Table 1 shows that the "mid-career dip", a finding which is important for educational planners in Andhra Pradesh, is an interesting phenomenon. The decreasing reflectivity of teachers with between 11 and 15 years' teaching experience indicates a teaching experience plateau or burnout. This is in line with the findings from Bhutan and Turkey of the need for purposeful professional development to get the interest of the mid-career teachers to innovate pedagogy. In a positive sense, this period should be considered a "pedagogical imperative" for intervention, not a state that never ends.

Multilingualism and the UDL Lens

With students in multi-generation classrooms in North Coastal AP learning both English and Telugu or various local languages, reflective teaching can be used as a tool for inclusion. Reflection on practice led teachers to become more aware of the need for Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. They started to use a variety of media such as graphics, videos and interactive simulations to make the material accessible to all students. This shift recognizes that a "one-size-fits-all" instructional approach does not fit all students' needs.

The use of technology in reflection.

Technology oriented tools were also examined. Although traditional journals are useful, the integration of digital e-portfolios, blogs, and AI-based feedback systems was seen as a potential area for further exploration. This technology can enable the teacher in Andhra Pradesh to observe a teacher in another country on Skype or Google Hangouts and therefore widen his or her cognitive and socio-cultural understanding.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study, which follows students over time, illustrates that reflective teaching is a dynamic, "iterative cycle" of professional development. The following suggestions are given for the maintenance and development of reflective practices in the English language classrooms of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh:

1. Make Reflective Practice a Regular and Accredited Part of Faculty Development: It is important to formalise reflective practice so that it is an integral part of faculty development programmes, not an option.
2. Conduct Regular Structured Training of teachers using formal reflection techniques e.g. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1988) and ELTRI self-assessment.
3. Promote collaborative models: Curriculum planning and development and "critical friendship circles" between ELT and technical faculty should be encouraged to minimize faculty isolation and mid-career burnout.
4. Encourage the use of e-portfolios, video-recordings of lessons and AI tools for writing to encourage reflection on learning based on data and evidence.
5. Targeted Professional Development: Specialized interventions that can lower the "plateau effect" and promote teacher professional vitality throughout their career (between 11 and 15 years).
6. Apply Universal Design for Learning Principles: Universal Design for Learning should be the main method of implementing reflective teaching, which will make ELT inclusive and responsive to the needs of multilingual and diverse learners in the region.

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