# *EFL University Teachers' Perceptions toward Reflective Teaching as a Necessity for Professional Growth*

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**Abstract**:

This research aims to investigate the university EFL teachers' awareness of the importance of reflective teaching and its necessity for professional development. It also aims to find out whether these teachers can reflect on their educational practices and change their beliefs and assumptions. In addition, it seeks to figure out what investigation procedures teachers can use to reflect on their practices. Data for the study were collected through a questionnaire distributed to fourteen (14) EFL teachers and a structured interview with a specialized teacher in 'Teacher Education Development' (TED) at Tlemcen University. The findings revealed that university EFL teachers are aware of the importance of reflective teaching as it invites them to the continuous practice of their intellect, responsibility, and professionalism. Moreover, reflective teaching enables teachers to make appropriate instructional decisions by implementing several investigative procedures. Finally, it helps EFL teachers to become more aware of their actions, more skilled, and better informed about their teaching practices. This work emphasizes the value and necessity of reflective teaching for professional development.

**Keywords**: *reflective teaching, EFL university teachers, teacher education development, investigative procedures, teachers' professional development.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, professional development has become a focus of interest and a main concern of educators while it was neglected in the past. In other words, the traditional training of EFL teachers ignored the nature and significance of professional development. In the Algerian context, there is an urgent need for professional development because of the demanding nature of the teaching profession. Nevertheless, the conception of professional development is still in its initial stage.

Due to the complex nature of teaching, most teachers do not have time to change and improve their teaching practices. However, following the same way of teaching and the same set of strategies and methods along the teachers' careers is not the way that will lead to their professional development. Many teachers think that time and gaining experience will help them to improve their professionalism. This belief, however, is not entirely right. We cannot deny the importance of experience, but experience alone is not sufficient for growth. According to Richard and Nunan (1990), "experience alone is insufficient for professional growth." Hence, English language teachers in Algeria should receive professional development training. Additionally, EFL teachers should consider starting their professional development by learning new strategies and techniques, updating their teaching practices, and identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, English language teachers in Algeria should be trained to develop professionally.

Some teachers, on the other hand, believe that they are the best in the class and that their views and assumptions about teaching are unquestionably correct without examination. As a result, they follow these instructional practices as part of their professional careers even though teaching strategies, techniques, methods, and approaches are constantly evolving, and students are not all the same. They still refuse to change their beliefs, values, or teaching techniques. Therefore, these teachers will fall into a routine, which will lead to serious classroom issues. Owing to the demands of their employment, teachers would be unable to cope with the various constraints they face. It may also prevent them from progressing in their careers. Additionally, teaching will be inefficient, and students' learning outcomes will not meet teachers' expectations. That is to say, teachers are expected to develop a high degree of knowledge of how to teach, the types of decisions they make as they teach, and the importance and implications of a specific instructional decision beyond the automatic or routinized response to classroom situations. One way to do this is to observe and reflect on one's teaching, as well as to use observation and reflection to bring about improvement and update instructional practices. Reflective teaching is the name given to this method of instruction.

Reflective teaching is considered as a professional development activity that improves teachers' practice and develops professionalism. Engaging in the reflective thinking process could allow teachers to question their assumptions, beliefs, and practical theories to change and improve their practices. Besides, identifying weaknesses in the teaching and learning process would create new ideas that might be applied in their classrooms. To put it another way, reflective teaching gives teachers the chance to consolidate their existing skills and develop new ones. According to Richard and Lockhart (1996), critical reflection of one practice can provide a deep understanding of teaching and contribute to ones' professional development.

Unfortunately, in our country, a lack of professional development training, diverse beliefs and expectations about teaching, and the complex nature of teaching can all make it difficult for teachers to adapt and improve their instructional practices. Furthermore, the aforementioned factors can cause teachers to become engrossed in their daily routines and lose sight of what is going on in their classroom. Therefore, teachers will not be able to develop professionally and learners will not improve. This problematic situation encouraged the researchers to look for an alternative that may solve the problem. Reflective teaching is the alternative that may allow EFL teachers to reflect on their practice, gain new insights and make changes, and enhance their professionalism. In light of this, the researchers want to know the extent to which university EFL teachers are aware of the value of reflective teaching and how necessary it is for professional development. This paper aims to find out if EFL teachers can focus on and alter their views and assumptions, as well as what investigative methods they can use to do so. Three research questions are raised as follows:

1. Do EFL teachers change their beliefs and assumptions about teaching practices?

2. Does reflective teaching adequately lead to professional development?
3. How does reflective teaching help teachers professionally develop themselves?

This would lead to generating the following hypotheses:

1. EFL teachers need to know about reflective teaching so that they may change their beliefs and assumptions about teaching practices.
2. Reflective teaching is a key component of professional development that may provide teachers with data and proceedings leading to achievable objectives.
3. Several investigative procedures are introduced to be used by teachers to help them investigate classroom teaching as they are means of professional development.

# 1. Literature Review

## 1.1. Reflective Teaching Defined

Reflective teaching has been defined differently and by different scholars. In this context, it is a term used to refer to the process that leads teachers to develop professionally through analyzing their teaching practices to improve or change them for better results. According to Richard and Lockhart (1994, p.1) reflective teaching is when teachers "collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching". Bailey (2006, p.193) also described this process as "gathering data about one's teaching, interpreting those data, and using our reflection to implement change". It is mentioned by Tice (2004, p.1) that reflective teaching means examining what you carry out in the classroom, thinking about its purpose and effectiveness as a process of self-observation and self-evaluation. That is, by collecting information about what goes on in teachers' classrooms, and analyzing and evaluating this information, they identify and explore their practices and underlying beliefs. This may then lead to changes and improvement in their teaching. Moreover, Pollard and Collins (2005) regarded that the notion of reflective teaching enhances professional development and competency. It helps teachers to improve and develop themselves as a core of professional development. By doing reflective teaching, teachers can find their teaching's strong points and weaknesses and have the chance to understand them and try to overcome them. Thus, reflective teaching can have a positive influence on the professional growth of teachers.

## 1.2. Investigative Procedures for Reflective Teaching

Reflective teaching, which is at the heart of professional growth, is described as the process of learning from and through experience to gain new perspectives for self-evaluation. Examining daily practice assumptions for self-awareness and objectively assessing their reactions to practice scenarios is part of this. However, experience by itself is inadequate for professional advancement, but when combined with reflection, it can be a powerful catalyst for teacher development. Therefore, reflective teachers can explore their teaching through several developmental activities. These are investigative procedures; including peer observation, keeping a diary, teachers' portfolio, and lesson report; that can be employed as valuable tools for self-evaluation and professional growth responses to practice situations.

### 1.2.1. Peer Observation

Peer observation as a form of collaborative professional development is a reciprocal process that provides the observed teacher and the observer with the opportunity to enhance the quality of teaching practice. According to Semmoud (2015, p.44), peer observation is "a collaborative non-evaluative process consisting of two or more peers who mutually take profit from the exchanges held in dialogues. It is within these dialogues that arise questions which intend to stimulate reflection and discussion meaning to provide each other with feedback". Simply put, peer observation provides a chance to see how other teachers teach, closely watching and monitoring a language lesson to gain an understanding of some aspects of teaching and learning or classroom interaction. This may be done with a simple observation task or through note-taking. In turn, a teacher might discover that a colleague has effective teaching strategies that the observer cannot be able to gather and collect the information about the lesson. As well, it is a way of developing self-awareness of one's teaching. This type of observation can yield its greatest benefits when used as a means of sharing thoughts, ideas, strategies, and techniques between and among teachers. Since the reflective model of peer observation can become a key process in professional

learning, many experienced teachers assume that peer observation had given way to look at teaching as a platform for observing how effectively the teachers are engaging with their students in the classroom.

Richards (1996, p.13) proposes some guidelines for peer observation, they are as follows:

- Observation should have a focus. The value of observation is increased if the observer knows what to look for. Giving the observer a task such as collecting information on student's participation during a lesson provides a focus for the observer.
- The observer should use specific procedures. If the observer wants to observe teacher-student interaction, a variety of procedures could be used.
- The observer should remain an observer. An observer who is a participant in the lesson cannot observe effectively.

Admittedly, peer observation can help both novice and experienced teachers benefit from each other through improving teaching practice, developing confidence and congruence as well as developing collegiality. Most importantly, they will be reflective and critical about their professional practice. In this way, observers see new techniques in action, have new ideas for their teaching, and reflect on their assumptions, beliefs, and teaching practices based on what they witness. On the other side, observed teachers benefit from analyzing the descriptive data that the observer collects about classroom interaction and the class environment. They can also grow through discussion that was resulted from observer questions and suggestions to improve learning outcomes. Hereby, peer observation is the dynamic model of professional learning that supports a new vision for professional development.

### 1.2.2. Keeping a Diary

One of the effective ways that teachers can use to inquire about their teaching and classroom practices is keeping a diary. This task demands teachers to collect data about all the teaching events that happen in their classrooms and mention them in a diary. The gathered data will serve the teacher to make reflection and help them to get new insights about the teaching events. Keeping a journal helps teachers to understand themselves, understand their classes, and understand both the teachers' and learners' experiences as the lesson was developed.

Richards and Lockhart (1994) pointed out that colleagues can share a journal and get together to discuss it. Thus, putting a journal is very important in the sense that encourages collaborative teaching. Journal writing is perhaps the easiest tool to use for self-assessment, and it is also seen as a mirror that reflects the work of the teacher. Writing in the same context, Klug (2002, p.1) suggests that: "a journal is also a tool for self-discovery, an aid to concentration, a mirror for the soul, a place to generate and capture ideas, a safety valve for emotion, a training ground for the writer, and a good friend and confidant."

### 1.2.3. Teacher's Portfolio

Teacher's Portfolio as a scholarly activity is a compilation of teachers' past and ongoing accomplishments. It contains the teachers' thoughts, insights, and feelings about teaching and learning among others that relate to everyday classroom practice. Murray (1994, p.25) defined the portfolio as "a collection of documents that represents the best of one's teaching and provides one with the occasion to reflect on his or her teaching with the same intensity devoted to scholarship or research". Similarly, Portfolio encourages teachers to assemble materials that document their abilities, for when the teachers decide which materials to include or exclude. Hereby, they reflect on which teaching practice worked well and why. It gives the teachers a chance to become reflective practitioners as well as it can offer a look at development over time, keeping one see teaching as an ongoing process of inquiry, experimentation, and reflection.

### 1.2.4. Lesson Report

Teachers describe the major aspects of the lesson in the lesson report. Richard (1996, p.9) defines a lesson report as "a structured inventory or list which enables teachers to describe their recollection of the main features of the lesson". A lesson report gives teachers a clear procedure for what happens during the lesson, how much time is spent on different parts of a lesson, and how effective the lesson is. On the other hand, a lesson plan portrays what the teacher designs to do during the lesson. The lesson report should be well organized to be effective. On this basis, Richards (1996, p.10) recommends the following procedures in preparing report forms:

1. Identify the different kinds of teaching activities and resources.
2. Use the lesson report form to record the procedures used throughout the course.
3. Meet periodically to compare the lesson report with those other teachers teaching the same course.

Following these steps helps the teacher doing his job effectively simply because they had already prepared and fixed the time for activities. Therefore, teachers' self-confidence will be increased and respect will be gained by learners.

### 1.3. Teacher Professional Development

Since the task of teacher education helps language teachers to develop into aware, self-critical and self-directed teachers, the diversified roles of the teachers impel a new view of the process of teacher development. Simply, the term development refers to growth or change. As Benmoussat (2003, p.258) defined it "the empowerment of the teacher, in the sense of endowing him with the status of an autonomous professional". Teacher development, henceforth, is seen as a continuous process that pushes teachers to change their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions on teaching and replace them with the new ones that have a positive impact on their teaching practices. In the same context, Gnawali (2008, p.219) says that a teacher`s development "…is to keep alive a sense of challenge and adventure in one`s career and to avoid getting into a rut".

Even though Pennington (1990, p.219) points out that "every teacher needs professional growth throughout his or her career", teachers' professional development can be possible only through teachers' reflection on classroom events which allow them to figure out ways for betterment on their teaching profession, as well as it develops the ability to use new techniques and strategies. Likewise, Perkins (1998, p.20) posits that "if we are doing something we enjoy, then continuous Professional Development is a natural component of our daily work life. It is an attitude." It is worth ending by saying that the crucial objective of this process is to ameliorate the effects of teachers' own experience and their conscious efforts, and merely to promote teachers' improvement.

### 1.4. Reflective Teaching as a Necessity for Professional Growth

Teachers, who adopt reflective teaching, gain a better understanding of their teaching style. Being aware of the behavioral ways of teaching will help them to associate their actions with their learners by collecting information about their teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, values, and classroom practices, for self-assessment and change. By doing so, they can cope with many of the routine demands of teaching and also accomplish a high level of awareness.

In this regard, Webb (1996) pointed out that: "If we are to become more effective teachers, we need to become more reflective teachers. To be reflective we need to articulate out theories of learning, critically examine and them replace those parts which we suspect or, better still, can show do not work" (p.30). In other words, effective teaching requires teachers to continuously engage in reflection. Being a reflective teacher means that teachers have to examine carefully and regularly their practices, beliefs, values; identify the options available; consider their values as a professional, and make conscious choices about how to act to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of their work.

The involvement of reflection on teaching leads teachers to become monitors of their teaching practices which they can bring about change when it is necessary for learners. Along the same line, Pennington (1992, p.48) postulates that "the term reflective teaching has come to signify a movement in teacher education, in which students, teachers or working teachers analyze their practice and its underlying basis, and then consider alternative means for achieving their ends." That is, reflection provides teachers with the essential data which can be the first step to achieve their goals. In short, reflective teaching is an ever-developing process full of systematic observation, arduous exploration, and rational selection in which teachers' teaching competence will be improved and their professional development can be attained.

## II. Methods and Materials:

The researchers design an exploratory case study dealing with 14 university EFL teachers and mainly with a specialized teacher in the field of TED in the department of English at Tlemcen University (Algeria). This research work is based on two different analytical devices

which are a questionnaire and a structured interview. The questionnaire is made to explore the experiences, beliefs, or attitudes of the informants. Thus, it aims at hypothesizing, testing, and refining quantitative and qualitative research approaches which are adapted to fulfill the purpose in view. The interview, on the other side, is to clear the site from ambiguities and to strengthen data delivery and validation. A structured interview which takes the form of an oral questionnaire is held with a specialized teacher in the field of TED. Data collection concerns the professional development of the informants. The questions were encompassed on the pedagogical preparations of teacher candidates, reflective teaching of EFL teachers, and the way they reflect on their practices to meet their students' needs and reach the highest level of professionalism.

## 1. Data Gathering Tools

There are two research instruments used in this research work, namely a questionnaire and a structured interview. Bogdan and Biklen (1998, p.100) state that: "many sources of data were better in the study than a single source because multiple sources led to a fuller understanding of the phenomenon you were studying". These tools allow the researchers to gather a great amount of reliable data from different informants in a short period. They were ranked as follows: five associate professors rank B, five others rank A, and four Lecturers (ranks A and B).

### 1.1. Teachers' Questionnaire

The researchers used a questionnaire as it is the most useful research instrument in language studies, and it is easy to analyze. According to Nunan (1992, p.143), the questionnaire is "a relatively popular means of collecting data in field settings and data themselves are more amenable to quantification than discursive data such as free-form field notes participant-observers journals, the transcripts of oral language." This questionnaire is addressed to 14 university EFL teachers; the informants respond with their opinions about reflective teaching, and their awareness as being reflective practitioners, and whether they implement some of the investigative procedures in their teaching. It included 11 questions that embodied the procedures of reflective teaching in enhancing teachers' professional development, especially in pre-service and in-service training.

### 1.2. The Structured Interview

The second research instrument used in this work is a structured interview. The interview questions allowed the researchers to gather a wide range of information that concerns teachers' professional development. The aim of this interview as a complementary research tool is to provide the researchers with extra empirical data of teachers' practices, regarding several aspects of their role as being specialists in TED. More importantly, identifying to what extent EFL university teachers reflected on their teaching practice and whether this reflection drove them to professionalism. Indeed, 10 questions were addressed to a specialist in the field of TED at the English department. These questions generally embodied the extent to which EFL teachers were ready to teach and if they have received efficient and satisfying training that allowed them to cope with any constraint that might face them in teaching. Moreover, it aimed at discovering the techniques used to reflect on their practice and whether they led them to progress and mastery of teaching to handle all teaching procedures involved in educating their learners.

## 2. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The systematic investigation carried out led to the analysis of the collected data. These are analyzed right below. Each question is going to be examined separately.

### 2.1. The Analysis of the Questionnaire

**Question One:** Is your teaching backed up on former acquisitions through:
a- Teaching experience
b- Professional development
c- Others

In this question, the researchers intended to check the sources of teachers' pedagogical practices. As for the results found, 11 out of 14 of the respondents said that their teaching was backed up on former acquisitions through teaching experience and professional development. However, some informants mentioned that they may also acquire their teaching through peer observation, readings, and humanistic factors.

**Question Two:** Have you ever been subjected to any training? If yes, what kind?

The second question aimed at knowing whether teachers have been subjected to any training and what kind. Half of the respondents (7) had the opportunity to have training; some of them received both pre-service and in-service training while others had only one of them. However, the remaining informants declared that they benefited from other types of training such as IELTS, seminars, conferences, study days, and civic education.

**Question Three:** Do teachers' assumptions and beliefs influence their teaching practice?

The objective of this question was to uncover if teachers' assumptions and beliefs influence their teaching practice. All the participants (14 out of 14) agreed on the fact that teachers' assumptions and beliefs had an impact on their pedagogical practices.

**Question Four:** Have you ever thought to change your teaching beliefs? If yes, for what purpose?

By asking this question, the researchers attempted to be well informed if teachers change their teaching beliefs. The majority of the informants (12 out of 14) strove to change their teaching beliefs.

According to the majority of the informants, there are various reasons behind changing teaching beliefs. First of all, teaching was shaped and framed according to the learners' preferences and interests. Thus, it is a must to reformulate from time to time one's beliefs since teaching variables were not static or homogeneous. Thus, teachers should adapt their beliefs and practices according to the changing needs within a different context. Moreover, teachers changed their teaching beliefs because of the new generation of learners and the newly established technology among them. In addition, they changed for the betterment of students' proficiency level as well as to update teaching techniques and enhance the quality as well as the sustainability of education. More importantly, it was for the purpose of having better teaching practices and for teachers own growth.

**Question Five:** What does reflective teaching mean to you?

This question aimed to investigate if teachers recognize the concept of reflective teaching and whether they were aware of its benefits. It was somehow astonishing that most of the respondents had an idea about what is meant by reflective teaching and they tended to define it based on their own experience. Most of them stated that reflective teaching is a way of evaluating and assessing one's teaching practices by other colleagues or members of the teaching community. Others said that reflective teaching is to question themselves and their ways of teaching seeking better teaching and re-considering what is being done in class to learn from their mistakes. Essentially, it helps to correct, adapt, and reinforce teaching practices.

**Question Six:** Do you agree with the fact that reflective teaching should be viewed as a continuous professional development? If yes, for what purpose?

The main target of this question was to ascertain whether reflective teaching should be viewed as CPD. 13 out of 14 of the informants agreed on the fact that reflective teaching is a form of CPD. Consequently, they claimed that reflective teaching should be viewed as a CPD for the sake of keeping teachers updated with new approaches and methods of teaching that might help them improve their teaching practices and develop their professional competence to meet the students' needs.

**Question Seven:** Have you ever kept a journal/ diary?

The major goal of this question was to check whether teachers explore the option for change by using one of the investigative procedures which is keeping a diary. Only 3 out of 14 of the participants confirmed that they used diaries about their teaching practices. On the other side, the remaining teachers indicated that they had never kept a diary.

Question Eight: Do you use lesson reports in your daily teaching? If yes, what do you generally mention in it?

Through this question, the researchers intended to know about the adoption of lesson reports by teachers. 7 informants stated that they used lesson report in their daily teaching, within which they mentioned the objectives and aims of their lesson's tasks, the difficulties raised at certain points, the easiness of tackling some lesson points by learners, and how the lecture was delivered (good, average, poor) as well as students' interaction and motivation. However, the other half of teachers reported that they did not use lesson reports in their daily teaching.

**Question Nine:** have you ever observed a colleague performing a lesson?

The objective of this question was to collect data about the investigative procedures which is peer observation. Here, the researchers asked teachers whether they had acted out as observers. 12 informants replied that they observed colleagues performing lessons. About 2 informants reported that they had never observed a mate performing a lesson.

**Question Ten:** Have you ever been observed by a peer performing a lesson?

By the present question, the researchers wanted to see if all teachers had been observed by a peer. 13 out of 14 of the respondents answered that they had been observed by a colleague. However, 1 teacher stated that s/he had never been observed while performing a lesson.

**Question Eleven:** which exploratory task do you think works best for teachers' professional development? and why?

a. Peer Observation
b. Keeping a Diary
c. Teachers' Portfolio
d. Lesson Report

To fulfill the purpose in view, the researchers put this question to check which exploratory task worked best for teachers' professional development. The majority of the respondents (12 out of 14) chose peer observation as the most useful investigative procedure that helped teachers to determine the inadequate practices, correct them, and progress. In addition, peer observation led teachers to keep in touch with colleagues to have feedback as well as for better group work. On the other hand, the other teachers selected the other investigative procedures which are: keeping a diary, lesson report, and teachers' portfolios. They reported that these exploratory tasks helped them to do their job adequately which mainly gave teachers an idea about learning outcomes over some time i.e., formative assessment.

### 2.2. The Analysis of the Structured Interview

The first question aimed to ascertain the experience of the informant and if this latter influenced his professionalism or his way of teaching. The informant said that he has considerable experience of teaching for around 30 years. The main target of the second question was to unveil if the respondent was ready to teach and implicitly determine if he received any training before he tackled the job of teaching. The participant claimed that he was ready to cope with the task of teaching since he was subjected to pre-service training in the fourth year of his studies at the university. At that time, students were sent to secondary schools to be acquainted with teaching in general. However, he claimed that this training was not sufficient once he is with his students, as things were completely different. He stated that sometimes he just felt that he was falling into the trap, and to go out of the trap, he went back to some books and references to save himself and that was not sufficient. Through the following question, the researchers intended to uncover whether time or experience enhanced teacher's performance. As for the results, the informant claimed that he almost mastered all the teaching procedures and with the experience, he became better because in the flow of time he managed to overcome all the constraints that stood before him and he would even find strategies with which he just reached the outcomes of his students in a very fruitful and positive way. As for the fourth question, the researchers called attention to the opinion of the informant, if he was satisfied with his experience and to check whether he thought he reached the highest degree of professionalism. The informant stated that in the flow of time he experienced some strategies that proved to be successful and satisfactory. Thus, he declared that his experience was a good experience of teaching according to the outcomes that his students reached through these last 10 years. In the light of the next question, the researchers wanted to know if the informant had an idea of the definition of reflection and whether he was aware of reflective teaching and its benefits. Since the informant was specialized in the field of TED, he was aware enough of the meaning of reflective teaching. He defined reflective teaching as an in-ward looking form of inquiry that teachers who inquire about their teaching may be better in their teaching all along with the career of teaching. He said that if teachers do not inquire about their teaching. They would certainly fall into the trap of jadedness, and once they fall into the trap of jadedness, they cannot get out of it. He confirmed that the lifeboat is reflective teaching because it just enhances and helps teachers and discloses to them the ways with which they can make their teaching better and better all their career of teaching. The point from the sixth question was to investigate if the informant at English department reflects on his teaching practice to fulfill his students'

needs. The respondent assumed that he reflects on his way of teaching and the results of his reflection were satisfactory. The following question aimed to ascertain the ways or techniques used by the participant to reflect on his teaching practice and if he improved his performance to refine his weaknesses he noticed in his teaching. He reported that reflection is mirroring as if it is a mirror that helps teachers to see faces and such as their teaching. He added that when he looks at teaching by undertaking an investigative procedure, then he can see all the weaknesses. These could be a lesson report, keeping a diary, teachers' portfolios, and peer observation, the latter is the most powerful source of insight. The objective of the eighth question was to unveil whether the informant asked for the advice of his colleagues especially experienced teachers in general and if he had the desire to enhance his way of teaching in particular. In addition, it was intended to discover the strategies that the teacher asked the observer to use to qualify his/her way of teaching. The answer of the respondent denoted that he invited many times colleagues but their observations were not atomistic, they were holistic and they cannot focus on every single aspect of his teaching at the same time. Therefore, the informant pointed out to ask the observer to focus only on a particular aspect or item of teaching. Then, discuss it in the debriefing step i.e., post-observation. The main target of the next question was to stress the idea of those taking students' needs as beneficial in developing teachers' performance. When teachers take notes about the weaknesses of their students, this will allow effective teaching to take place. By asking this question the researchers attempted to see whether this process improved the teaching task. The informant took notes about his students to know what they need because sometimes they need a systemic language with which they can build and embark on the concepts of the language that happens naturally. More importantly, he prepared lectures according to the students' needs. The last question was the most important as the current work was based on its answer. Through this question, the researchers tried to discover whether the respondent had positive or negative attitudes towards reflective teaching and if they have felt progress by applying this methodology. The informant strongly agreed that reflective teaching developed professionalism. The interviewee claimed that no teacher can attain the scale or the level of professionalism without being a reflective practitioner. He said that the purpose in view is when a teacher becomes professional; he needs to make his students good and positive learners that everything he teaches to them should be acquired by all students at the same time.

## III. Discussion of the Main Results :

The purpose of this study is to check the extent to which EFL teachers understand the value of reflective teaching and how important it is for professional development. It also attempts to explore whether these teachers can reflect on their classroom instruction and alter their views and assumptions. Besides, it aims to determine what types of investigative processes teachers can utilize to reflect on their activities. According to the data analysis of the questionnaire and the structured interview, interesting results were discovered.

Regarding the first hypothesis, EFL teachers are found to be aware of the reflective teaching value and the benefits it offered to their teaching. This was evident in their description of reflective teaching and when they mentioned that they often reflected on their practice to correct their errors to achieve their teaching goals. Furthermore, the majority of teachers strove to change their beliefs and assumptions about their instructional practices. This implies that being a reflective practitioner pushed them to alter their views about teaching actions and, hence, adjusting their performance. It is in line with studies of Bartlett (1990), Francis (1995), Briscoe (1996) who claimed that teachers are challenged to investigate and uncover their assumptive worlds, including personal and professional experiences, practical theories, beliefs, values, and behaviors, through reflection. As a result, teachers can increase their efficacy by improving the understanding of their teaching through reflective practice (Ferraro, 2000). This heightened self-awareness is thought to be a motivator for change (Osterman and Kottamp, 1993; Pennigton, 1995).

Regarding the second hypothesis, results showed that almost all teachers confirmed that reflective teaching is a key component of professional development. The latter provides teachers with data and procedures leading to achieve objectives such as keeping updated with new approaches and methods of teaching practices and develop their professional competence to meet students' needs as well as teachers' growth. Many studies in this field demonstrated that

reflective teaching helps to facilitate professional growth. For example, research conducted by Griffiths (2000), Akbari (2007), Killen (2007), Conley et al. (2010), Jacob ( 2011), Soisangwaran and Wongwanich (2014) had shown that reflective teaching is an essential part of teachers' professional development. Furthermore, Cruichshank, Kennedy, Williams, Holten, and Fay (1981) pointed out that full professional development is unlikely to occur without systematic reflection since reflective teaching promises an alternative conceptualization that appropriately recognizes thoughtful and professional aspects of teachers' work (Calderhead and Gates, 1993).

Moving to the last hypothesis, the findings indicated that EFL teachers believed that reflective teaching helps them improve professionalism by allowing them to use a variety of investigative techniques. Keeping a diary, lesson reports, teachers' portfolios, and peer observation are examples of these. Peer observation, on the other hand, was regarded by the majority of EFL teachers as the most important source of insight. When asked the reasons behind such a choice, the participants listed some benefits of peer observation like helping teachers determining awkward practices, correcting them developing their teaching. Moreover, it led them to keep in touch with colleagues to have feedback as well as for better group work. Research related to the efficacy of peer observation is extensive, with many studies investigating how its usefulness is perceived by participating teachers. These studies reveal that peer observation can function as a valuable developmental tool for both observers and observed teachers. According to Gosling (2005), the developmental approach of peer observation enables reflection on the effectiveness of participants' teaching and assists them in improving the quality of learning and teaching, as well as promotes discussion and disseminates good practices.

## IV.    Conclusion:

Teaching is a complex process and the task of reflection is not an easy one. Therefore, teachers must work hard and look for any way that will help them in enhancing the effectiveness of their teaching practice. Reflective teaching is considered one of the most beneficial approaches that promote professional development. It encourages the practitioners to examine their beliefs and attitudes about teaching and alter whenever they feel that is necessary for both change and growth. Consequently, this paper has tried to show that reflective teaching deserves an attempt and its purpose was to demonstrate the importance of reflective teaching and to convince teachers that it is the appropriate way to change their teaching practice, assumptions, and beliefs about these instructional practices and develop professionalism. The present research work was therefore not free from limitations. First, the research work was only limited to the department of English, which is why the researchers cannot be assertive to one hundred percent. Moreover, the researchers have found that University EFL teachers are reflective practitioners, however, they work only with one investigative procedure, which is peer observation, and ignore the others which are the teacher's portfolio, keeping a diary, and lesson report. Despite these limitations, the current investigation is a contribution to the field of teacher professional development, and a call for further research is of significant value to study the other side of reflective teaching and teacher professional development.

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