

The Effect of Teachers' Reflection and Experience on Their Creativity: A Case Study of Language Institutes in Eghlid and Abadeh Cities

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Abstract

The study of creativity and reflectivity has been of great interest to educationalists in general and language teaching practitioners in particular. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between teacher's reflection and experience on their creativity in language institutes. To this end, 80 teachers were selected randomly from different language institutes based on some criteria: level of teaching, degree, gender. The participants were asked to complete two sets of standard questionnaires during the study. Reflectivity questionnaire was developed by Kurt and Atamturk (2012) in the form of 5 point Likert scale, the reliability of which was found to be .84. Creativity questionnaire was developed by Khani and Boghayeri (2014). Data analysis and statistical calculations revealed that there was a significant relationship between the teachers' reflectivity and creativity. Also, there was a significant relationship between reflectivity and creativity as well as teachers' years of experience.

Keywords: Creativity; Reflectivity; Experience; Teachers

INTRODUCTION

The role of creativity, as with the role of reflection, is to uncover idea of truth, and help us understand them more deeply. Creativity, like thought, takes quiet time and a sense of space to encounter it with our full attention. In the same way that reflection is a central concept in education. Reflection is by nature an excellent tool for EFL/ ESL teachers' professional development and it can even be used by those who are pressed for time. This is one of the most problematic aspects of contemporary working life, in educational institutions and beyond. Reflective teaching and practices came into spotlight in the post-method era discussions (Prabhu, 1990). Schon (1983, 1987)

proposed a model which has inspired other scholars to propose their own models. Schon's model had two main processes: reflection in action and reflection on action. Reflection on action is making decisions using the tacit knowledge and happens in the midst of acting, while reflection in action occurs after the action. Through reflection, teachers can react, examine and evaluate their teaching to make rational decisions on necessary changes to improve attitudes, beliefs and teaching practices which lead to better student performance and achievement. These judgmental practices can impact positively the understanding of what is going on in our classrooms and in producing changes in methodology, assessment, and instruction, which would naturally bring in higher student achievement in the wake of itself (Pacheco as cited in Akbari, Kiany, Naeeni, & Allvar, 2008).

To fill in the gap the present study aims to tap the relationship between reflectivity and creativity and their effect on experience in teaching .more specifically, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Is there any significant relationship between teacher creativity and teacher reflectivity of the EFL teachers in the language institutes?
2. Is there any significant relationship between teacher creativity/teacher reflectivity of the EFL teachers in the language institutes and their experience?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are a few empirical studies in the realm of TEFL/TESL focusing on reflection. Recently, reflection has come to be regarded as an important teacher-related factor in the field of TEFL/TESL by researchers specially empiricists. They began to test its impact on or its relationship with other variables empirically (Akbari & Behzadpour, 2007). Coro (2004) (cited in Farrell, 2008) investigated teachers' reflections about methods for adult literacy instruction vis-à-vis their beliefs about effective adult literacy instruction. He found that in some cases, "participation in practitioner inquiry research appeared to correlate with the use of more student-centered approaches" (p. 213). Tigelaar, Dolmans, Meijer, DeGrave, and Van der Vleuten (2008) explored the relationship between medical teachers' interactions and collaborative reflection processes during peer meetings. The results of the analysis showed that the interactions promoted reflection on technical and moral, political and emotional issues. A number of researchers have highly recommended that reflection be included in teacher education programs for both pre-service and in-service teachers (Wallace, 1991; Richards & Lockhart, 1994) Thus, the present study focuses on the possible effect of Iranian EFL teachers' self-reflection on their language learners' writing achievement.

Reflection is a purposeful act of thinking which seeks solutions to problems encountered in the process of teaching and learning (Loughran, 1996). According to Farrell (2008, p. 2) teachers "collect data about their teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching." The rise of reflective practice in the field of ELT can be considered as one of direct results of the post method debate (Prabhu, 1990;

Kumaravadivelu, 1994; 2001; 2003). In this context, the revolutionary debate about post method started a plethora of changes in the practice of the EFL teacher including the concept of reflective teaching. van Manen (1977) considered reflection as consisting of three elements of technical rationality, practical reflection and critical reflection, while Korthgen (2001) views reflection as comprised of organized, rational, language based decision making processes that include non-rational, gestalt type operation (Akbari, 2007). A study was conducted by Sharifi and Abdolmanafi (2014) entitled "the effect of reflective teacher on pre-service" in which a detailed examination of reflection in pre-service teacher education was provided. It focused on the process of the promotion of reflective thinking in teacher education.

Another study was done by Rezayan and Nikpoor (2014) in the area of reflectivity. The fundamental purposes of this study were to see whether (1) there was a relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' degree of reflectivity and their students' language achievement in English classes, and (2) to explore whether there was a relationship between teachers' degree of reflectivity and their teaching experience. Data were collected based on a questionnaire entitled "Teacher Reflectivity" which has been designed based on six factors: cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective, practical, critical and moral. The subsequent data analyses via correlation revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' degree of reflectivity and students' achievement. Meanwhile, the findings showed that correlation between teachers' degree of reflectivity and years of teaching experience was not significant. Still, another study was done by Shabir Ahmad and Wajid Khan (2013) about reflectivity. Results of the study showed that teachers who were trained in reflective practice have found a big difference in their teaching skills. Kaufmann (2003b) argued that the concept of creativity has been too loosely defined and inappropriately driven by a bottom-up operationist approach. The study was done in the area of creativity by Hennessey and Amabile in 2009, the finding showed that psychological study of creativity is essential to human progress.

METHOD

Participants

The participants of the study consisted of EFL institute teachers of Eghlid and Abadeh city. 80 teachers were selected randomly from different language institutes based on being female or male, the level of teaching, degree of education, level of teaching and age. They ranged from 23 to 44 of age. The teachers were females, and they had MA or BA degree. The level of teaching in different institutes was for teenagers and youth; their teachers have PHD, MA and BA degree. They teachers taught English in elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels.

Instruments

In order to investigate the relationships between teachers' reflectivity and creativity, two questionnaires were used, as follows:

Teacher Reflectivity Questionnaire

The reflective teaching instrument was developed by Akbari, Behzadpour and Davvand (2010). The questionnaire included 29 items on a 5-point Likert format ranging from 1=never to 5=always. The questionnaire enjoys high reliability and validity as a measuring instrument for teacher reflectivity, as the reliability for the measure with the sample in the present study was found to be .84.

Teacher Creativity Questionnaire

The questionnaire of creativity of EFL teachers was developed by Khani and Boghayeri (2014) to measure the creativity of the EFL teachers in the classroom. The questionnaire consisted of creativity in 5 areas including knowledge, developmental area, teaching style, class activity, and skill. Validity and reliability of this questionnaire was measured by Jon-Chao Hong, Jeou-Shyan Horng, Lih-Juan Lin, Shih-Hui, Chang Hui-Chuan Chu and Chan-Li Lin (2010). The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency analysis on the various influential factors identified gave a Cronbach's coefficient value between .57 and .82 and a coefficient of .92 for the overall questionnaire, indicating that the Creative questionnaire has internal consistency.

Interview

The researcher after collecting questionnaire asked some questions from teacher. These questions retrieved from [www. Udel.edu/csc](http://www.Udel.edu/csc), it has two main parts includes personal qualities and professional experiences. These questions asked orally and their answers analyzed for the data analysis.

Procedure

At first, the questionnaires were distributed among the subjects of the study in summer 2017. The subjects were all female. They were asked to put a check mark on the selected item from very little to very much for creativity questionnaire and highly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, highly agree for reflectivity questionnaire. They filled these questionnaires. The researcher also interviewed teachers and asked questions about their years of experience in teaching. Then, they were collected and scored based on scoring procedure.

After collecting the necessary data, the researcher used descriptive as well as inferential statistics to interpret the data. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software, which was recognized as appropriate statistical software. At first, using the descriptive statistics, the level of teacher reflectivity and creativity of the teachers was supposed to be explained. Then, using Pearson correlation, the relationship between teacher reflectivity and teacher creativity was investigated. To do so, a number of Pearson correlations were employed to check the validity of the null hypotheses of the study.

RESULTS

This study was an attempt to find the validity of the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between teacher creativity and teacher reflectivity of the EFL teachers in the language institutes.
2. There is no significant relationship between teacher creativity/teacher reflectivity of the EFL teachers in the language institutes and their experience.

Reflectivity questionnaire

After collecting this questionnaire, it was analyzed and graded appropriately according to the original test criteria. Table 4.1 reveals the descriptive statistics for this questionnaire and Table 1 illustrates the graphical representation of the frequencies in bar format.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for reflectivity Questionnaire

No.	Min	Max	Mean	SD
80	150.00	391.00	258.90	55.289

As it can be seen in table 4.1, the grades are highly dispersed among the participants and vary between 150 and 391 which mean the population under study includes a wide range of reflectivity.

Creativity questionnaire

After the participants completed this questionnaire, the researcher collected the questionnaires and interpreted and analyzed the results. Table 4.2 indicates the descriptive statistics for this questionnaire.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the creativity questionnaire

No.	Min	Max	Mean	SD
80	18.00	40.00	28.95	5.170

As with creativity questionnaire, the results of this questionnaire also represented a wide range of participants. The grades are dispersed among the participants and vary between 18 and 40 which mean the population under study includes a wide range of reflectivity.

Teacher's experience

The researcher interviewed with the teachers and asked them about their level of education, the year of teaching, and their experience about teaching. The following table presented their year of experience.

Table 3. The Participants' Experience

years of experience	frequency	percent
1-5	14	17.50
5-10	25	31.25
10-15	31	38.75
Total	80	100

As you can see in this table, most of the participants have the experience of 10 to 15 years and a few of them have 1 to 5 years of teaching. Teaching experience, typically five years or more, produces higher student results. Some studies further suggest that the effect of inexperience can be a significant obstacle to student achievement. The study based on interview showed that the teachers with high years of experience in teaching answered to the questions more precisely they have better ideas in the area of teaching. They know what techniques and methods Used to keep students actively involved during a lesson; they can use different student learning styles. Experiences are a vital part of the teacher education. There's simply no better preparation for future teachers than observing how students react to different styles of instruction and how good teachers adjust in response.

The Results of the Correlational Analysis of Hypothesis

Two hypotheses were presented in this study, the results of data analysis of these hypotheses were provided here. The hypotheses included: There is no significant relationship between teacher creativity and teacher reflectivity of the EFL teachers in the language institutes, and there is no significant relationship between teacher creativity/teacher reflectivity of the EFL teachers in the language institutes and their experience. Regarding the first hypothesis, the next step after collecting the necessary data was to see if there is any correlation between different pairs of data that is, teacher creativity, and reflectivity. Table 4.3 indicates the results of this correlation.

Table 4. The Results of the Correlation between teacher creativity and reflectivity

	Cre
Pearson Correlation	.715**
Ref Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	80

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It can be seen in Table 4.3 that the correlation between reflectivity and creativity is .715 which is significant at the probability level of .000, which denotes a high correlation between these two variables. The reflective teachers are creative in the area of language teaching. Based on the second null hypothesis, there is no significant relationship between teacher creativity/teacher reflectivity of the EFL teachers in the language institutes and their level of experience. Table 5 represents the results in this regard:

Table 5. The Results of the Correlation R & C and teacher's level of experience

		Level of experience
R & C	Pearson Correlation	.728**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	80

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

R & C= Reflectivity and Creativity

According to Table 5, the amount of correlation between is ($r = .728$) and is significant at the probability level of .000. Once again it can be said that these two criteria are highly correlated. According to the results of correlational analysis presented above, it can be said that the null hypothesis can be accepted, and it can be claimed that there is a positive relationship between reflectivity and creativity. Correlation was found between teachers' degree of reflectivity and years of teaching education (experience) was significant. In other words, teachers with higher teaching years can be reflective on their own teaching as the experienced teachers can be. Young teachers with few teaching years cannot be reflective on their own teaching as the experienced teachers can be. Therefore, there is need to selecting teachers in English schools based on their teaching experience.

SUMMARY

The study of creativity and reflectivity has been of great interest to educationalists in general and language teaching practitioners in particular. In this study it was tried to find out if there is a relationship between creativity, reflectivity, and experience. The study also attempted to investigate the whether there is a significant relationship between teacher creativity and teacher reflection of the EFL teachers in the language institutes in Iran. The present study, likewise, aimed to measure the level of creativity and reflectivity in the English teachers to determine whether they have acceptable level of creativity and reflectivity or not. With all these, very little if any has been reported on the issue in Iranian EFL context. Having this in mind and drawing on the latest profile of creativity, effort was made to see how creative Iranian EFL teachers are. The primary objective of student teaching is to provide the opportunity for acquisition and demonstration of instructional competence experience has been carefully designed to be as realistic and as intensive as actual teaching. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between Teacher's Reflection and Experience on Their Creativity in Language Institutes. The participants were measured by standard tests during the study. They were asked to complete reflectivity, and creativity questionnaire. Data analysis and statistical calculations revealed that there was a significant relationship between the teacher reflectivity and creativity. The implications of the research hopefully could provide the empirical evidence for the teacher in order to improve their experience.

CONCLUSION

First of all, the outcome of the study showed that a significant relationship between teachers' degree of reflectivity and creativity which was consistent with previous theoretical and empirical studies. Indeed, reflection in teaching takes students out of educational ruts and makes them more motivated towards learning (Akbari, 2007). Through reflection, teachers can react, examine and evaluate their teaching to make rational decisions on necessary changes to improve attitudes, beliefs and teaching practices which lead to better student performance and achievement. These judgmental practices can impact positively the understanding of what is going on in our classrooms and in producing changes in methodology, assessment, and instruction, which would naturally bring in higher student achievement in the wake of itself (Pacheco as cited in Akbari, Kiany, Naeeni, & Allvar, 2008). The results of the study imply that teacher education programs should familiarize pre-service and even in-service teachers with the components of reflective approach to teaching if they want to educate effective teachers, who, in turn enhance student achievement gains. Furthermore, according to the results presented, it can be claimed that there are some underlying factors of the teacher reflectivity including affective, cognitive, meta-cognitive, practical and critical dimensions. Correlation was found between teachers' degree of reflectivity and years of teaching education (experience) were significant. Reflective practice is the thoughtful skill of thinking; in other words, it helps learners develop critical thinking skills thereby enhancing their learning performance and is seen as key on the road to professional growth. Teachers can identify their strengths, enhance them, and thus affect student learning in an even greater way. Reflective teaching is a paradigm that dominates teacher education around the world and most professional development programs include it as a way to improve teachers' practice. Creativity is present undoubtedly in many aspects of human life. It is the process of making connections and, sometimes, is about productivity, about making something new from those connections (Gardner, 1993). Creativity has been a subject of research to psychologists, sociologists and cultural theorists who are interested in studying the origins of the creative mind and creative activities particularly within the domains of the arts and culture.

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