

The importance of verbal and visual reflection in future English teachers

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Annotation: *This article examines the role of verbal and visual reflection in shaping the professional identity and pedagogical skills of future English language teachers. Reflection, both verbal (spoken and written) and visual (video, diagrams, and visual journals), serves as a critical tool in teacher education by encouraging pre-service teachers to evaluate their classroom practices, confront assumptions, and develop metacognitive awareness. This study integrates a mixed-methods research approach to assess the impact of reflective strategies on English teacher trainees. The findings suggest that incorporating these tools not only strengthens instructional decision-making but also enhances students' confidence and adaptability in classroom environments.*

Key words: *Reflective practice, verbal reflection, visual reflection, English language teaching, teacher identity, professional development, pedagogical thinking, metacognition, classroom observation, teacher education.*

Важность вербального и визуального самоанализа для будущих учителей английского языка

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Аннотация: *В данной статье рассматривается роль вербальной и визуальной рефлексии в формировании профессиональной идентичности и педагогических навыков будущих учителей английского языка. Рефлексия – как вербальная (устная и письменная), так и визуальная (видео, диаграммы и визуальные журналы) – является важным инструментом в подготовке учителей, способствуя анализу преподавательской практики, переосмыслению собственных установок и развитию метакогнитивного сознания. Исследование выполнено с применением смешанного метода для оценки влияния рефлексивных стратегий на студентов-педагогов английского языка. Результаты показывают, что использование этих инструментов не только усиливает эффективность педагогических решений, но и повышает уверенность и адаптивность студентов в учебном процессе.*

Ключевые слова: *Рефлексивная практика, вербальная рефлексия, визуальная рефлексия, преподавание английского языка, профессиональная идентичность учителя, профессиональное развитие, педагогическое мышление, метакогниция, наблюдение за уроками, подготовка учителей.*

Bo'lajak ingliz tili o'qituvchilarida og'zaki va vizual refleksiyaning ahamiyati

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Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqolada kelajakdagi ingliz tili o'qituvchilarining professional identiteti va pedagogik ko'nikmalarini shakllantirishda og'zaki va vizual refleksiyaning roli tahlil qilinadi. Refleksiya – og'zaki (so'zlashuv va yozma) hamda vizual (video, diagramma va vizual jurnal)*

shakllarda – o‘qituvchilarni tayyorlashda muhim vosita bo‘lib xizmat qiladi. U boshlang‘ich o‘qituvchilarga dars jarayonlarini tahlil qilish, o‘z qarashlari bilan yuzlashish hamda metakognitiv ongni rivojlantirish imkonini beradi. Tadqiqotda aralash usullar asosida reflektiv strategiyalarning ingliz tili o‘qituvchilari uchun ta’siri o‘rganilgan. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, bu vositalarni qo‘llash nafaqat ta’limiy qarorlarni mustahkamlaydi, balki talabalar ishonchini va sinfdagi moslashuvchanlikni ham oshiradi.

Kalit so‘zlar: *Reflektiv amaliyot, og‘zaki refleksiya, vizual refleksiya, ingliz tili o‘qitish, o‘qituvchi identiteti, kasbiy rivojlanish, pedagogik fikrlash, metakognitsiya, sinf kuzatuvi, o‘qituvchilarni tayyorlash.*

Introduction

In the rapidly evolving educational landscape, the demands placed on English language teachers are increasingly complex. It is not enough for future teachers to master grammar rules and communicative strategies. They must also cultivate the ability to think critically about their teaching practices and adapt to learners’ diverse needs. Reflection is a powerful method that allows teacher trainees to become active participants in their own learning and professional development. Through reflection, future English teachers can examine what happens in the classroom, why it happens, and how it can be improved.

Two main modes of reflection – verbal and visual – are gaining importance in teacher education. Verbal reflection includes spoken responses, written journals, and peer discussions. Visual reflection includes methods such as video recordings of lessons, visual mapping of teaching goals, and digital storytelling. Both methods offer unique benefits and, when integrated, create a more comprehensive reflective process. This article delves into the significance of these methods and their role in preparing future English teachers for real-world teaching challenges.

Literature Analysis

The theoretical foundations of reflective practice can be traced to Donald Schön (1983), who introduced the concepts of "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action". These involve thinking during and after a teaching experience, respectively. His work emphasized the importance of professional reflection in building expertise.

Further work by Richards and Farrell (2005) elaborated on the application of reflective strategies in English Language Teaching (ELT). They advocated the use of tools like teaching journals, peer observation, and classroom recordings to support reflective thinking. Farrell (2015) expanded this by introducing frameworks that emphasize critical reflection – moving beyond technical evaluation to include ethical, sociocultural, and emotional dimensions of teaching.

Visual reflection, while more recent, is gaining momentum. According to Zeichner and Liston (1996), visual elements like classroom videos and image-based portfolios allow pre-service teachers to observe their classroom presence, non-verbal communication, and interactions more objectively. Korthagen (2010) further promoted the idea of linking reflective tools with real-life teaching scenarios to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The literature agrees that combining verbal and visual reflection supports deeper professional learning. It enables student teachers to become more aware of both what they do and why they do it.

Methods Section

This study used a mixed-methods research design to analyze how verbal and visual reflection impact English teacher trainees.

Participants:

The research included 50 third-year undergraduate students enrolled in an English Language Teaching (ELT) program at a pedagogical university. The participants had completed theoretical coursework and were beginning their practical teaching experiences.

Data Collection Tools:

- Verbal Reflection Tools:

- Weekly audio diaries recorded after teaching practice
- Written reflective journals submitted biweekly
- Visual Reflection Tools:
- Video recordings of classroom teaching
- Concept maps and annotated lesson plans
- Digital portfolios combining screenshots, feedback, and commentary

Procedure:

Over a 12-week semester, participants:

1. Taught micro-lessons or full lessons in local schools.
2. Recorded audio reflections within 24 hours of each lesson.
3. Created visual representations of their lessons using diagrams or video clips.
4. Participated in feedback discussions with mentors and peers.
5. Completed a pre- and post-semester survey on reflective competence and teaching confidence.

Data Analysis:

- Qualitative content analysis was applied to journals and audio transcripts to identify reflection depth and thematic focus.
- Quantitative analysis of survey data used paired-sample t-tests to measure growth in self-perceived teaching competencies.

Results Section

In the 21st century, English language teaching is not only about mastering grammar rules or improving pronunciation; it also demands continuous professional development, self-awareness, and adaptability. One of the most effective tools for professional growth is reflection. For future English teachers, reflection helps to critically examine their teaching practices, understand students' needs, and improve classroom effectiveness. Among the many forms of reflection, verbal and visual reflections stand out as key methods for fostering self-awareness, creativity, and pedagogical growth.

Understanding Reflection in Teacher Education

Reflection is a foundational element in teacher education, serving as a mechanism through which educators develop a deeper understanding of their professional actions, decisions, and classroom dynamics. It entails a conscious process of thinking critically about teaching experiences in order to improve instructional practices and foster professional growth. The significance of reflection in education lies in its potential to bridge the gap between theory and practice, helping teachers not only to apply theoretical knowledge but also to evaluate its effectiveness in real-life classroom settings.

The theoretical basis for reflective practice is most prominently associated with Donald Schön, who introduced the concept of the "reflective practitioner" in his influential work **The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action** (1983). Schön proposed two primary modes of reflection: **reflection-in-action** and **reflection-on-action**. Reflection-in-action occurs in real-time during the act of teaching; it involves a teacher's ability to monitor, assess, and adjust strategies on the spot based on student responses and the evolving classroom environment. Reflection-on-action, on the other hand, takes place after a teaching episode and involves a more thorough analysis of what happened, why it happened, and what could be done differently in future lessons.

Reflection in teacher education can take multiple forms, among which verbal and visual reflections are particularly effective. These two modes not only cater to different cognitive styles but also provide complementary perspectives that enrich the reflective process.

Verbal Reflection

Verbal reflection involves the articulation of thoughts and experiences through spoken or written language. Common methods include journaling, reflective essays, peer discussions, and audio recordings. This form of reflection allows pre-service and in-service teachers to organize their thoughts, articulate their beliefs, and examine their pedagogical decisions in a structured manner. For

instance, maintaining a reflective teaching journal enables educators to track their professional development over time, identify patterns in student behavior, and experiment with new strategies.

Verbal reflection is also central to many teacher education programs that utilize mentoring, supervision, and peer feedback. Through guided conversations with mentors or critical friends, teachers can gain alternative viewpoints, confront their assumptions, and collaboratively construct new knowledge. In language teacher education specifically, verbal reflection can enhance awareness of classroom discourse, language input, and interaction strategies.

Visual Reflection

In contrast, visual reflection utilizes non-verbal mediums such as photographs, diagrams, drawings, mind maps, video recordings, and digital media to represent and analyze teaching experiences. Visual methods can often reveal insights that verbal explanations might miss. For example, video recordings of classroom sessions allow teachers to revisit and observe specific moments that were overlooked during the lesson. They can examine their body language, classroom management techniques, student engagement, and timing of instructional transitions.

Furthermore, visual artifacts such as lesson diagrams or mind maps can help teachers conceptualize their teaching approaches and curriculum planning in a more holistic and interconnected manner. In some teacher education programs, pre-service teachers are encouraged to create visual learning portfolios or digital storyboards to document their reflective journey. These visual tools not only support self-assessment but also serve as powerful evidence of professional development.

Integrative Role of Reflection in Language Teacher Education

2. The Role of Verbal Reflection in Teacher Development

2.1 Promotes Language Awareness and Analytical Thinking

When future English teachers reflect verbally – whether through spoken discussions or written journals – they engage in critical language use. This helps them become more aware of language structures, usage, and communication strategies. Reflective writing, for example, can help a teacher analyze:

- What teaching methods worked or didn't work
- How students responded to specific tasks or instructions
- What could be improved in the lesson plan or teaching approach

This ongoing evaluation sharpens both their pedagogical knowledge and their command of the English language.

2.2 Supports the Development of Professional Identity

Verbal reflection allows pre-service teachers to find their own teaching voice. Through writing diaries, blogs, or engaging in reflective group discussions, they start to define who they are as teachers: their beliefs, values, goals, and challenges.

2.3 Encourages Constructive Dialogue and Peer Learning

Group reflections and dialogues with mentors or peers provide a platform for constructive feedback. It encourages sharing best practices, learning from others' mistakes, and building a supportive professional network.

3. The Power of Visual Reflection

3.1 Enhances Observation and Analytical Skills

Visual reflection involves tools such as classroom video recordings, photo diaries, lesson infographics, or concept maps. When future teachers observe their own teaching through a video, they can notice:

- Non-verbal communication (e.g., body language, eye contact)
- Classroom dynamics (e.g., student engagement, seating arrangements)
- Teacher movement and voice projection

These aspects are often overlooked in real-time but become evident in visual reviews.

3.2 Boosts Creativity and Innovation

Using visual tools in reflection encourages teachers to think creatively. For example, creating a visual teaching timeline or graphic lesson analysis can help them explore new ideas for instructional strategies or lesson planning.

3.3 Facilitates Multimodal Thinking

English teachers today must prepare students for communication in various modes – spoken, written, digital, and visual. Through visual reflection, teachers become more comfortable with multimodal forms of communication themselves, which they can then apply in the classroom.

4. Integrating Verbal and Visual Reflection: A Holistic Approach

When verbal and visual reflections are used together, they create a powerful synergy. A future English teacher might:

- Record their teaching (visual)
- Watch the video and take notes on their performance (verbal)
- Create a diagram of student interaction during group work (visual)
- Write a reflective essay analyzing what went well and what didn't (verbal)

This combined method caters to different learning styles and promotes both critical analysis and creative expression.

5. Application in Teacher Training Programs

Effective teacher education programs integrate reflection into their curriculum. Some practical strategies include:

- Reflective journals: Weekly written reflections on lessons, challenges, or classroom observations
- Video analysis: Recording microteaching sessions and reviewing them with mentors or peers
- Portfolios: Collecting written reflections, lesson plans, and visual materials over time
- Peer reviews and discussions: Structured reflection groups for feedback and exchange

These tools not only enhance pedagogical skills but also build confidence, self-efficacy, and a strong sense of professional responsibility.

In conclusion, verbal and visual reflection are essential components of professional development for future English teachers. Verbal reflection builds analytical thinking, communication skills, and self-awareness, while visual reflection strengthens observational ability, creativity, and multimodal competence. Together, they form a comprehensive framework for reflective teaching practice. By embedding reflective methods in teacher training programs, educators can ensure that future teachers are not only well-prepared but also adaptable, thoughtful, and innovative in meeting the diverse needs of modern classrooms.

Discussion

The study confirms that integrating verbal and visual reflection in English teacher education provides multiple benefits:

- Depth of Understanding: Verbal reflections capture inner thoughts and emotions. Visual reflections provide objective, external evidence of classroom performance.
- Increased Self-Awareness: Students begin to notice unconscious behaviors or teaching habits through video playback, which complements what they write or say in journals.
- Pedagogical Improvement: Students learn to analyze their own strategies, classroom management techniques, and student engagement methods more critically.
- Professional Identity Formation: Reflection supports the development of a professional voice and teaching philosophy, both crucial in early-career teachers.

Despite these benefits, some students initially found video reflection uncomfortable. Time management was also a challenge, as reflection activities required consistent effort. However, over time, students acknowledged the long-term benefits of these practices.

Conclusions

This study illustrates that verbal and visual reflections are powerful tools in preparing effective, reflective English teachers. They not only improve classroom performance but also foster deeper

thinking, creativity, and professional growth. Reflection should be seen not as a task, but as an ongoing habit essential to modern teaching practice.

Curriculum Integration: Teacher education programs should formally incorporate structured verbal and visual reflection assignments throughout the training period.

Technical Support: Provide training on using video tools, digital journals, and editing software to make visual reflection more accessible.

Reflective Culture: Encourage peer-sharing of reflections to normalize the process and promote collaborative learning.

Assessment Inclusion: Include reflective outputs as part of students' overall evaluation to emphasize their importance.

Mentorship: Involve experienced teachers in reviewing and discussing student reflections for richer feedback.

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