EFL Teachers' Reflective Teaching Practices amid the Covid-19 Pandemic

İngilizce'yi Yabancı Dil olarak Öğreten Öğretmenlerin Pandemi Sırasındaki Yansıtıcı Öğretim Uygulamaları

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Abstract

Purpose: The current survey portrays English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' familiarity with the concept of reflective teaching and the extent that they carry out reflective teaching practices especially during their first experience with online teaching amid the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Design/Methodology/Approach: In the current descriptive study, a varied sample of Turkish EFL teachers (N=117) filled out the online survey at the end of the first academic semester with an emergency online education period induced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Findings: The study indicated that nearly forty per cent of the participants were unfamiliar with the concept of reflective teaching. While metacognitive and affective practices were more commonly performed by the participants, the critical, practical and cognitive practices were rather less preferred. The participants hardly ever think of writing articles regarding their experiences, asking their colleagues to observe their teaching and also, relatively less contemplate on the socio-political sides of their teaching and their influences.

Highlights: The notion of reflection and the reflective teaching strategies should be revisited, and accordingly, the scales or inventories should be reformulated by taking the premises of online education into consideration.

Öz

Çalışmanın amacı: Bu araştırma, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yansıtıcı öğretim kavramına dair farkındalıklarını ve özellikle Covid-19 Pandemisi sırasında çevrimiçi öğretimle ilk tanıştıkları dönemde yansıtıcı öğretim uygulamalarını ne ölçüde gerçekleştirdiklerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Materyal ve Yöntem: Mevcut karma desenli betimleyici araştırmada, İngilizce öğretmenleri (N=117) Covid-19 pandemisinin neden olduğu ani değişiklikleçevrimiçi ortamda yürüttükleri eğitim dönemininardından araştırmaya gönüllü olarak katılarak çevrimiçi ortamda yayınlanan bir araştırma formu doldurmuştur.

Bulgular: Araştırma, katılımcıların yaklaşık yüzde kırkının yansıtıcı öğretim kavramına aşina olmadığını göstermiştir. Katılımcılar tarafından üstbilişsel ve duyuşsal uygulamalar daha yaygın olarak kullanılırken, eleştirel, pratik ve bilişsel uygulamalar daha az tercih edilmiştir. Araştırmanın diğer sonuçlarına göre, katılımcılar, deneyimleriyle ilgili makaleler yazmayı, akranlarından öğretimlerini gözlemlemelerini istemeyi neredeyse hiç tercih etmemekle birlikte öğretimlerinin sosyo-politik yönleri ve etkileri hakkında nispeten az düşünmektedirler.

Önemli Vurgular: Yansıtma kavramı ve yansıtıcı öğretim stratejileri yeniden gözden geçirilmeli ve buna göre ölçekler veya envanterler çevrimiçi eğitimin öncülleri dikkate alınarak yeniden geliştirilmelidir.

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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 Pandemic has brought the challenge of sharp and dynamic changes in all areas of life. The field of education, in particular, the field of English Language teaching is not an exception. Educational environments were totally converted into online platforms within a few days. The unforeseen challenges behind this kind of innovation compelled teachers of English to use their abilities to integrate their competence with urgent decision-making skills and adapt their teaching to the new normal. In this challenging period of time, they have taken a high degree of responsibility to contextualize, de-contextualize, and re-contextualize their teaching. In these circumstances, EFL teachers might succeed through reflective practices which entail an internal or bottom-up view of teaching (Richards, Richards and Lockhart, 1994). In this respect, the current study aims to see if Turkish EFL teachers are familiarized themselves with the reflective practices and determine the extent that they carry out reflective teaching practices while teaching English online amid the Covid-19 Pandemic. It is also important to note that in spite of the huge number of the studies published in the pandemic process, no previously published research article with a similar focus has been detected.

The Notion of Reflection and Reflective Teaching

The notion of reflection and reflective practice has been discussed in various contexts from the 1980s to date. The arguments proposed by Dewey and Schön are regarded as two pillars upon which the idea of reflective teaching dwells. (Akbari, 2007; Collier, 1999; Eryaman, 2007; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Pacheco, 2005; Ryder, 2011). Reflection is defined by Dewey "as action based on the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it" (cited in Akbari, 2007, p.194). Dewey also defines three necessary attitudes in reflective practices as follows: open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness (Freeman, 1998, p.186). In the 1980s, Schön extended Dewey's consideration and coined two new conceptions such as "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action". Later, a new notion, "reflection-for-action", was proposed so that it was believed to guide teachers' future practical decisions to take by considering the outcomes of "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action". There claimed a close link between the notion of reflection and action research, as well. Based on their studies, Jay and Johnson (2002, p.76) offered their own delineation of reflective teaching as follows:

> "Reflection is a process, both individual and collaborative, involving experience and uncertainty. It is comprised of identifying questions and key elements of a matter that has emerged as significant, then taking one's thoughts into dialogue with oneself and with others. One evaluates insights gained from that process with reference to: (1) additional perspectives, (2) one's own values, experiences, and beliefs, and (3) the larger context within which the questions are raised. Through reflection, one reaches newfound clarity, on which one bases changes in action or disposition. New questions naturally arise, and the process spirals onward."

As Jay and Johnson (2002) suggest, reflective teaching practice has a cyclical nature. The same perspective is shared by Stanley (1998) who argues that "reflective teaching practice entails an ongoing examination of beliefs and practices, their origins and their impacts on the teacher, the pupils, and the learning process" (cited in Ogonor & Badmus, 2006, p. 3). Rising as a reactive solution towards the crisis in the method era, the notion of reflection led to begetting new perspectives attaching more value and giving more voice to teachers, as leading figures in the context and their expertise. The new perspective in relation to reflective practice created a new role for teachers as self-observers. By reflecting on their teaching practices and examining the influences of their teaching, "teachers shift their focus from merely observing relationships or feedback mechanisms within the classroom (or the school as institution) to include in their observations themselves as observers too" (Keiny, 1994, p. 237). In other words, reflective teaching brings about an "internal or bottom-up view" of teaching against an "external or top-down view" of teaching existing in the method era (Richards et al., 1994, p. ix). In Fat'hi and Behzadpour's words, reflective teaching is considered "as a response to call for a substitute for the concept of method" (2011, p.242). Reflective teaching practice allows practitioners "to question where educational theories and practices come from, what their social, political, and psychological dimensions are" (Zimmerman, 2009, p.50). In this process, teachers as practitioners are expected to be aware of their own self, to understand and contemplate their actions, and to be willing to question their own decisions and actions, to be evaluative about the consequences of their actions. Farrell (1998, p.16) highlights that "reflective teaching allows teachers to act in a deliberate, intentional manner and avoid the 'I don't know what I will do today' syndrome". Similarly, Collier (1999) emphasizes that reflective teaching begins with a teacher's attempt to inquire into his or her experience, knowledge. In this respect, Jay and Johnson (2002, p.77) formulate a number of guiding questions to be asked by the teachers in their reflective teaching processes and present a typology for the reflection process. Based on this typology, it is suggested that the reflection process has "descriptive", "comparative" and "critical" dimensions. In accordance with these dimensions, the questions to be asked by teachers, for instance; "Is this working, and for whom?" (Descriptive), "How can I improve what's not working?", "How do other people accomplish this goal?" (Comparative), "What are the implications of the matter when viewed from these alternative perspectives?" (Critical) (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p.77). In the same vein, reflective teaching refers to a "teacher-thinking movement" and "logical process" (Zeichner, 2005). This is a process requiring teachers to do both pedagogical and subjective reasoning regarding their teaching practices. The reflective teachers are supposed to try to gain a developmental perspective and go beyond doing what is required from them or implementing the educational objectives determined by authorities. Supporting the same view, Taghilou (2007) points out that reflective teaching necessitates "a stance, a state of mind, a healthy, questioning attitude toward the practice of profession" (p. 89) and accordingly, "a conscious attempt to think before, during, and -of course- after the instruction for the betterment of the

end product" (p.90). They need to take individualist steps in order to improve their teaching and themselves throughout their reflective teaching.

In the process of reflective teaching, teachers strive for expounding the assumptions and rationalizations behind their teaching practices. Thereupon, teachers are expected to evaluate themselves in this process. According to Thorpe (2004, p. 341), the teachers involved in the reflection process ought to be "constantly curious, systematic in analysis, constructively critical, diligent in making connections among conceptual patterns, and vigorously evaluative in determining the outcomes of one's practice". That is to say, the teachers are required to critically evaluate themselves as professionals and bring their own decisions into their practices (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). Evaluation in the reflective teaching process inevitably helps teachers to have a justification for their practices and to take informed decisions in the future. In this way, the reflective practice denotes an incessant process. Considering all, the following figure summarizes essentials of the reflective practice:
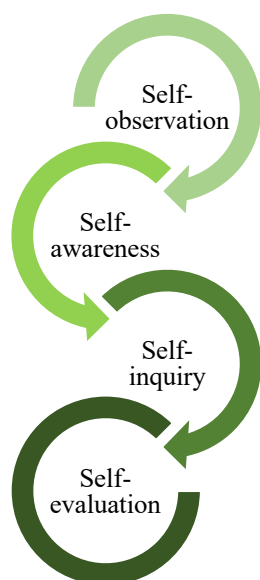

Figure 1. The essentials of the reflective practice

It seems that reflective teaching requires a commitment to change and development. This commitment is, in a way, a key to improving qualified practice or the professional identity in practice. Boud (2001, p. 10) maintains that reflection is a kind of "process of turning experience into learning" and a "way of exploring experience in order to learn new things from it". Lange (1990 cited in Farrell, 1998, p.17) argues for the close link between professionalism and reflective teaching:

"The reflective process allows developing teachers' latitude to experiment within a framework of growing knowledge and experience. It gives them the opportunity to examine their relations with students, their values, their abilities, and their successes and failures in a realistic context. It begins the developing teacher's path toward becoming an 'expert teacher'."

Similarly, the reflection process assists teachers to connect the associationsconcerningtheir theory and practice, and thus, linking theory and practice gives rise to professionalism which is considered "as a matter of promoting deliberate actions in planning, and as a way of implementing instructions and ongoing engagement with theory by assessing, revising and implementing new theories and practices" (Pacheco, 2005, p. 5). Therefore, reflective teaching might be beneficial for in-service and pre-service teachers. As Richards and Lockhart (1994) also confirm, reflective practice contributes to teacher development. Accordingly, reflective teaching is regarded as a fundamental way to train especially pre-service teachers, which is reflected in the abundance of the studies advocating the positive role of reflective teaching in training student teachers (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2010; Brandt, 2008; Collier, 1999; Dağkıran, 2015; Eryaman, 2007; Gün, 2011; Gordinier, et al., 2006; Kayaoğlu, et al., 2016; Lee, 2007; Leshem & Bar-Hama, 2008; Loughran; 1995; Ogonor & Badmus, 2006; Ryder, 2011; Vacilotto & Cummings, 2007). Collier (1999) also reminds that the development of reflectivity in novice teachers has been studied since the 1970s. All of these studies show that integrating and encouraging reflective teaching practices gives opportunities to pre-service teachers to become successful in-service teachers. It is suggested that "experience alone is insufficient for professional growth, but that experience coupled with reflection can be a powerful impetus for teacher development" (Richards, 1991, p.8). All in all, reflective teaching has "enriching, empowering and enduring" effects on educational environments and teachers (Pacheco, 2005), and leads to effective teaching practices.

The initial step into the reflective process is mostly taken when faced with a puzzling situation. "It is this entire process of reflection-in-action which is central to the 'art' by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict" (Schön, 1983, p.50). Since the in-service English teachers have gone through the Covid-19 pandemic which introduced an abrupt power-coercive innovation in the educational environments, it is assumed that in this process, they need to perform reflective practices, maybe much more than before, in order to own this innovation and cope with the requirements of the new online educational platform, and also, gain empowering effect on their practices. In this sense, the

present study is an attempt to determine the extent that Turkish Teachers of English involve in reflective teaching practices amid the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Purpose of the Study

The primary focus of the current quantitative study is to determine whether Turkish Teachers of English involve in reflective teaching practices amid the Covid-19 Pandemic resulting in an urgent shift in almost every side of life, including education, all over the globe. In line with this goal, the current study seeks to answer the two research questions:

(1) Are Turkish Teachers of English familiar with the concept of 'reflective teaching'?

(2) To what extent do Turkish Teachers of English involve in reflective teaching practices amid the Covid-19 Pandemic?

The following section introduces the details about the survey preferred to seek answers to the research questions raised in the current study.

METHOD/MATERIALS

Data Collection Instrument

The reflective teaching inventory designed and validated by Akbari et al. (2010) was employed as the main data collection instrument. Its validity and reliability were also tested by other researchers in different contexts (Noormohammadi, 2014; Moghaddam, et al., 2020) and in Turkey (Gözüyeşil & Aslandağ-Soylu, 2014; Korumaz, 2012). The inventory contains a total of 5 sub-components, namely, cognitive, metacognitive, affective, practical, critical, and the related items with a 5-point Likert-scale (N=29). After conducting exploratory and confirmatory data analyses on a sample of 300 ESL teachers, the Cronbach Alpha values for the sub-components were considered acceptable (above .70) as stated by Akbari et al. (2010). The sub-components and the regarding items are tabulated in the following section. In the current study, the last item was removed after the piloting process. Therefore, a total of 28 items from the inventory were used. Two items asking if the participants have ever heard about the concept of reflective teaching and inquiring about the meaning of the concept were added by the researcher.

Sample of the Study

In the current study, the criteria for sample selection was indeed based on accessibility, convenience and voluntary participation. Due to the measures taken against the pandemic, the researcher prepared an electronic survey form and kindly asked the interested parties to disseminate it on different social media. In other words, the researcher employed a chain-referral sampling technique, one of the non-probability sampling procedures. However, owing to the Internet facilities, the study achieved to include EFL teachers who are working for different levels in various regions across Turkey. Though its relatively small size (N=117), the sample reflects diversity in terms of EFL teacher profiles such as their location, school type, educational level, year of experience, and age. Among all the cities in Turkey (N=81), the participants from a total of 31 different cities in all (N=7) geographical regions of the country (Central Anatolia, Aegean, South Eastern Anatolia, Marmara, Black Sea, Mediterranean, and Eastern Anatolia) participated in the current study. Table 1 indicates the demographic data:

Table 1. Demographic Information of the participant EFL Teachers

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	90	76.9
	Male	26	22.2
	Prefer not to say	1	.9
Age	Under 25	2	1.7
	26-34	77	65.8
	35-44	33	28.2
	45-54	5	4.3
	Above 54	0	0
	Total	117	100

As it is seen in Table 1, female EFL teachers are constituting the majority of the participants (76.9% females whereas 22.2% males), which is commonly observed in EFL contexts. As for the range age, 65.8% of the EFL teachers is between 26-34, and 28.2% of them is between 35-44. It implies that the age range of the participants is largely between 25-45. The following table presents the educational background of the participants:

Table 2. Educational background of the participant EFL Teachers

		Frequency	Percentage
Educational Background	Bachelor	92	78.6
	Master's	21	17.9
	Doctorate	4	3.4
Prior training on online education	Yes	69	59

	No	48	41
Prior knowledge about the concept of reflective teaching	Yes	72	61.5
	No	45	38.5
	Total	117	100

The table above provides data regarding the educational degrees of the participants, their prior training in online education and their familiarization with the concept of reflective teaching. As shown in the table, 78.6% of the participants obtain a bachelor degree,17.9% have a master's degree and only 3.4% of them have a doctoral degree. When it comes to the data regarding any kind of prior training including workshops or seminars on online teaching or distance education, 59% of the EFL teachers stated to have while 41% of the EFL teachers reported that they did not have any kind of related training. It is apparent in the remaining part of the table that approximately 40% of the EFL teachers stated that they had never heard about the concept of reflective teaching although almost 62% of the participants reported being knowledgeable about the concept.

Table 3 summarizes the participant EFL teachers' teaching context by referring the school type and level where they teach English, and additionally, the teaching experience in their profession.

Table 3. Teaching context and experiences

		Frequency	Percentage
School Type	State	105	89.7
	Private	12	10.3
Level	Primary School	22	18.8
	Secondary	64	54.7
	High School	28	23.9
	Missing	3	2.6
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 Years	23	19.7
	5-10 Years	52	44.4
	11-16 Years	33	28.2
	17-22 Years	8	6.8
	23 Years and more	1	.9
	Total	117	100

Once the school types are compared, it is suggested that almost 90% of the teachers are working at a state school. As for the level, more than half of the EFL teachers are teaching English in secondary school, which is followed by high school (23.9%) and primary school (18.8%). It is seen that almost 45% of the teachers have 5-10 years of teaching experience, 28.2% of them have teaching experience between 11-16 years, and almost 20% of them have been teaching less than 5 years. A minority of EFL teachers have teaching experience of more than 17 years. The following section is concerned with the data collection and analysis procedures.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

During the data collection process, the participants were informed about the scope of the research, privacy, voluntary participation and confidentiality issues. This is ensured by the consent form placed at the very beginning of the online survey. It is also important to note that an approval was granted by the institutional Ethics Committee. The participants were also informed about the focus regarding their reflective practices during this online teaching period under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic. That is to say, they were asked to answer the questions by considering their reflective practices which they preferred to do specifically in this online teaching period, induced by the Covid-19 pandemic. The data obtained via the electronic survey was transformed into SPSS 26. As for the analysis part, essentially, descriptive statistics specifically percentages, frequency, mean and standard deviation were employed. As for the open-ended question asking the meaning of reflective teaching, recurring themes were determined and definitions were discussed accordingly.

FINDINGS

The current study set out with the aim of determining the extent that Turkish Teachers of English engage in reflective teaching practices during their online teaching amid the Covid-19 Pandemic. As previously discussed, their familiarization with the concept was also of concern. In this respect, two research questions were formulated by the researcher, as suggested previously:

Q1: Are Turkish Teachers of English familiar with the concept of 'reflective teaching'?
Q2: To what extent do Turkish Teachers of English involve in reflective teaching practices amid the Covid-19 Pandemic?

To find an answer to the first research question, two questions, an open-ended and a closed-ended, were formulated simply and introduced in the survey while the reflective teaching inventory developed by Akbari et al. (2010) served to find an answer to the second research question. Henceforth, the related findings are discussed in relation to the research questions formulated.

1. Are Turkish Teachers of English familiar with the concept of 'reflective teaching'?

As presented in the earlier table (Table 2), it was found that while approximately 40% of the EFL teachers reported that they had never heard about the concept of reflective teaching, almost 62% of the participants reported that they were familiar with the concept. The content analysis of the reports submitted in the open-ended question revealed that among 72 EFL teachers who stated that they were familiar with the reflective teaching as a concept, a total of 62 EFL teachers provided definitions for the concept of reflective teaching in their own words. Two of them reported that they merely recalled the concept but had no deeper idea about it.

The content analysis of this part revealed that there appeared several themes including criticizing, interrogating, observing, evaluating, assessing, developing, working with colleagues, action research, deep thinking, improved teaching, student-centeredness, and discovering new ideas, better learning, constructivism, action research and creative problem-solving. The most recurring themes are self-assessment /observation/evaluation processes (N=38). The following excerpts characterize the most frequent themes:

It is observing yourself as a teacher and your teaching process then if it is required, making needed regulations. (T116)

It is the assessment of what you do in the classroom, the way you teach. A kind of self-observation. (T95)

I think, reflective teaching is a quieter and more systematized look at the practices in the classroom and elaborates on the weak and strong sides of teaching. (T21)

Criticizing and evaluating our own teaching areas and abilities and trying to enhance those things. (T117)

To me, RT is a method of teaching that helps teacher develop herself or himself by observing tracing styles and making contributions. (T48)

Thinking about your own teaching style in a critical way, and trying to improve in the areas in which you are weak. (T23)

Reflective teaching is a term that defines teachers' reviewing their teaching process and by this way they may criticize and improve themselves. (T11)

It is a kind of deep thinking about your teaching practices and assesses them in order to improve the effectiveness of your classroom activities. (T12)

To reflect on your teaching as a process to be able to identify your strengths regarding your teaching strategies and methods and to identify areas that need revision. (T13)

As reflected on the ideas shared by the participant teachers here, the main function of reflective practice is considered to ensure quality teaching by detecting and analyzing weak and strong sides. The respondents also laid an emphasis on student-centeredness (N=) as it is presented in the following excerpts:

I think it is a beneficial way to get feedback from the students. By this way they can express feelings and ideas about their experience. (T19)

Considering the students and the ways that affect their learnings and finding creative and effective methods according to their situation. (T25)

Teach through students' emotions. (T80)

It is an efficient teaching method. It is student centered. (T92)

The more a teacher is eager to learn and teach, the more the students trust their teacher and enjoy the lesson. (T104)

Apart from the emphasis on students, several EFL teachers also mentioned collaboration with a colleague in the field, as shown below:

One of your colleague watch you in a lesson. And takes notes. At the end of the sessions you comment on the lesson with your friend both in positive and negative ways. (T26)

I am not sure, but, to me, it is learning together from each other. (T4)

It is a way of teaching by which teachers can share their own classroom experiences with each other and use its advantages in their own classes. (T1)

Another recurring theme was centered on problem-solving skills and action research. The following statements shed light on this perspective:

Looking for many solutions to a problem. (T105)

Producing and discovering new ideas and viewpoints through existing situations. (T54)

Solve the problems by taking into consideration the needs of students. (T46)

Creative problem solving method. (T16)

Reflecting on your pedagogies and integrating action research (T9)

It is a type of teaching with 'giving importance others' emotions and ideas; creative problem solving skills'. (T30)

As inferred from the statements, the EFL teachers moreover pointed out the significance of problem-solving skills in EFL teaching context upon they were asked about the meaning of reflective practice. Last but not least, one of the respondents referred to the issue of continuing professional development (CPD), as is seen in the following statement:

As an institution, we are paying more attention to CPD which enhances reflective teaching a lot. (T78)

Although it does not define the concept of reflective teaching, the awareness of its close link with CPD indicates the participant's engagement in the topic on agenda.

2. To what extent do Turkish Teachers of English involve in reflective teaching practices amid the Covid-19 Pandemic?

There is a total of 5 sub-components of English teacher reflection proposed by Akbari (2010). These sub-components are based on practical, cognitive, meta-cognitive, learner (affective), critical elements designating the various reflecting teaching practices of English teachers. The table indicates the findings regarding the first component of the inventory, the practical component.

Table 4. Practical elements of English teacher reflection

Component		Item	Mean	SD
Practical	1.	I have a file where I keep my accounts of my teaching for reviewing purposes.	4.02	1.02
	2.	I talk about my classroom experiences with my colleagues and seek their advice/feedback.	3.94	.95
	3.	After each lesson, I write about the accomplishments/failures of that lesson or I talk about the lesson to a colleague	3.10	1.21
	4.	I discuss practical /theoretical issues with my colleagues.	3.68	.99
	5.	I observe other teachers' classrooms to learn about their efficient practices	3.29	1.25
	6.	I ask my peers to observe my teaching and comment on my teaching performance.	2.62	1.36

Among all practical elements, the EFL teachers in the current research often prefer to have files to keep a log of teaching practices for further analysis (M=4.02). They do not hesitate to share their own experiences with their peers and get their recommendations or comments (M=3.94), and also, talk over theoretical or practical issues with their peers (M=3.68). However, when it comes to writing or talking about the accomplishments and failures of their lessons (M=3.10), their practices are on a moderate level. What is striking here is that the participants less seem to ask their fellows to observe their teaching performance and evaluate it (M=2.62) whereas they more prefer to observe other teachers' practices to learn more about their effective ways (M=3.29).

Table 5 presents the findings regarding the second part of the English teacher reflection inventory, specifically, the cognitive component.

Table 5. Cognitive elements of English teacher reflection

Component		Item	Mean	SD
Cognitive	1.	I read books/articles related to effective teaching to improve my classroom performance.	3.66	1.06
	2.	I participate in workshops/conferences related to teaching/learning issues.	3.51	1.18
	3.	I think of writing articles based on my classroom experiences.	2.62	1.36
	4.	I look at journal articles or search the internet to see what the recent developments in my profession are.	3.63	1.11
	5.	I carry out small scale research activities in my classes to become better informed of learning/teaching processes.	3.24	1.08
	6.	I think of classroom events as potential research topics and think of finding a method for investigating them.	3.44	1.16

In this part, as it is inferred from the mean values, the participant EFL teachers frequently prefer to read books, articles related to effective teaching (M=3.66) and to keep up with the developments by reading journal articles or conducting online search (M=3.63). They also in general participate in workshops or conferences regarding their field (M=3.51). It was determined that the participants sometimes consider their classroom events as potential research topics and try to find a way for exploring them (M=3.44) and less conduct small scale research activities based on their teaching context (M=3.24). Unlike all the cognitive elements discussed, as its mean value suggests, the participants are not so interested in thinking of writing academic papers about their classroom experiences (M=2.62).

Table 6 provides standard deviations and the mean values of the items regarding the learner/affective component of English teacher reflection.

Table 6. Affective elements of English teacher reflection

Component		Item	Mean	SD
Affective	1.	I talk to my students to learn about their learning styles and preferences	4.20	.86
	2.	I talk to my students to learn about their family backgrounds, hobbies, interests and abilities.	4.24	.83
	3.	I ask my students whether they like a teaching task or not.	4.26	.85

In terms of the learner/affective component of English teacher reflection, the mean values are relatively higher, which indicates the EFL teachers' greater concern for their students. Unlike the previous findings discussed previously, the answers obtained in the affective component are more homogenous (SD=.83, SD=.85, SD=.86). This might be also considered as an indicator of the teachers' common concern for their students. That means, the participant EFL teachers frequently ponder over their students' individual differences, family backgrounds, and ideas over teaching content.

In the next section, the findings regarding metacognitive elements of English teacher reflection are tabulated and elaborated.

Table 7. Metacognitive elements of English teacher reflection

Component		Item	Mean	SD
Metacognitive	1.	As a teacher, I think about my teaching philosophy and the way it is affecting my teaching.	4.27	.77
	2.	I think of the ways my biography or my background affects the way I define myself as a teacher.	4.03	.88
	3.	I think of the meaning or significance of my job as a teacher.	4.49	.67
	4.	I try to find out which aspects of my teaching provide me with a sense of satisfaction.	4.31	.77
	5.	I think about my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.	4.53	.63
	6.	I think of the positive/negative role models I have had as a student and the way they have affected me in my practice	4.42	.67
	7.	I think of inconsistencies and contradictions that occur in my classroom practice	4.03	.92

What stands out in Table 7 is the homogeneity of the responses under the title of metacognitive sub-component of the reflection inventory, which is observed in SD values ranging from .66 to .88. It means that the concern for metacognitive elements is common among Turkish EFL teachers who participated in the current study. Most of them regularly think about their strengths and weaknesses (M=4.53), the meaning or significance of their job as teachers of English (M=4.49), and similarly, think of the positive or negative role models they had as students (M=4.42). They further often make an effort to discover aspects of their teaching providing them with a sense of satisfaction (M=4.31), and often think about their teaching philosophy and its impact on their teaching (M=4.27). Relatively less, though, they think of the ways their profile affecting the way they define themselves as teachers of English (M=4.03).

In the last part of the reflective teaching inventory, the participants' reflective practices about the critical elements were asked. The data is presented in Table 8 as follows:

Table 8. Critical elements of English teacher reflection

Component		Item	Mean	SD
Critical	1.	I think about instances of social injustice in my own surroundings and try to discuss them in my classes	3.59	1.05
	2.	I think of ways to enable my students to change their social lives in fighting poverty, discrimination, and gender bias.	3.64	1.14
	3.	In my teaching, I include less-discussed topics, such as old age, AIDS, discrimination against women and minorities, and poverty.	3.03	1.18
	4.	I think about the political aspects of my teaching and the way I may affect my students' political views.	2.70	1.41
	5.	I think of ways through which I can promote tolerance and democracy in my classes and in the society in general.	4.06	1.02
	6.	I think about the ways gender, social class, and race influence my students' achievements.	3.80	1.19

The highest mean value in this part is detected in the item about thinking of the ways to tolerance and democracy in class and in society (M=4.06) whereas the lowest mean value is marked in the item about political aspects of teaching (M=2.70). Most of the teachers state that they occasionally cover less-discussed topics, such as old age, AIDS, discrimination against women and minorities, and poverty in their EFL classes (M=3.03). When it comes to the other critical sub-components, it is seen that the Turkish EFL teachers frequently think about the ways gender, social class, and race influencing their students' achievements

(M=3.80), the ways to enable their students to change their social lives in fighting poverty, discrimination, and gender bias M=3.64), and they moreover state that they often think about instances of social injustice and try to discuss them with their students (M=3.59).

Table 9. Total mean values of sub-components of English teacher reflection inventory

Sub-Components		Mean
1.	Practical component	3.44
2.	Cognitive component	3.35
3.	Metacognitive component	4.29
4.	Affective/Learner component	4.23
5.	Critical component	3.47

Taken together, the findings in this section suggest that Turkish Teachers of English who contributed to the current study regularly performed metacognitive (M=4.29) and affective reflective practices (M=4.23) relatively more as compared to the other sub-components. The reflective practices regarding critical (M=3.47) and practical components (M=3.44) are moderately performed by the participants. The cognitive practices are relatively less reflected upon by the participants of the current study (M=3.35).

Though a number of the participants reported being unaware of the concept of reflective teaching, the findings obtained via the reflective teaching inventory developed by Akbari et al. (2010) are assumed to shed light on the reflective teaching practices of the participant EFL teachers (N=117). The next section, hence, moves on to discuss the findings of the current study in relation to the other relevant results of similar studies.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study with predominantly quantitative research orientation attempted to determine Turkish EFL teachers' familiarity with the concept of reflective teaching and the extent that they carry out reflective teaching practices especially during their first experience with online teaching amid the Covid-19 Pandemic. To this end, a cross-sectional survey design was adopted. The participant Turkish EFL teachers (N=117) filled out the online survey via chain-referral sampling technique at the end of June 2020, which was the final of the first academic semester with emergency online education induced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite its small size, the sample provided diversity in terms of the Turkish EFL teachers' profile, as elaborated previously. Along with the demographic and educational background questions (N=8), the participants were asked to answer the questions on the reflective teaching inventory developed by Akbari et al. (2010), and two more questions on familiarity with the reflective teaching, formulated by the researcher. As aforementioned, approximately 62% of the participants were familiar with the concept of reflective teaching. The content analysis of the responses submitted in the definition part revealed that the primary focus was on self-assessment, self-observation and self-evaluation processes when the participants were asked about the meaning of the concept of reflective teaching. Furthermore, the themes student-centeredness and working with colleagues were detected among the most recurring themes in addition to the other popular key words such as discovering new ideas, better learning, constructivism, action research, and creative problem-solving. As for the components of reflective teaching practices, it was found out that the participant EFL Turkish teachers performed more often metacognitive and affective reflective practices during their first semester with distance education. The common reflective practices, metacognitive and affective, were followed by the critical, practical and cognitive practices, which were relatively less performed by the participants.

A closer analysis regarding the sub-components of reflective practice indicated that the participant Turkish EFL teachers further favor keeping a file for revision (the practical component), reading publications related to effective teaching to improve their in-class performance(the cognitive component), getting feedback from the students (the affective/learner component), thinking about their strengths and weaknesses as teachers of English (the metacognitive component) and similarly, thinking of ways promoting tolerance and democracy in their classes and in the society in general (the critical component). On the other hand, it is apparent that most of the participants scarcely think of writing articles based on their classroom experiences, which requires indeed a training on academic research and article writing, and asking their colleagues to observe their teaching and their comment on their own teaching performance, akin to the recent findings obtained by Hung and Thuy (2021). By the same token, they relatively less think about the political aspects of their teaching and its influence on their students' political views, which is unlike the results indicating rather more interest in socio-political aspects of teaching by Moghaddam et al. (2020).

As discussed previously, peer observation is not a common reflective practice employed by the participant teachers in the current study. This might be problematic because of the observer's function. The observer's function should be clarified and should not be more than gathering information. The observer should avoid generalizations or evaluations of the teacher or his teaching (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). Peer observation might pose problems for especially novice teachers or pre-service teachers since they might not feel at ease or they might feel anxious, therefore they might be reluctant to be observed and might behave differently. Gün (2011) also points out that observing teachers and providing feedback to teachers are inadequate in assisting teachers to reach a level of reflection. Gün (2011: 127) states that "simply asking them to complete a 'post observation reflection sheet' after a classroom observation and expecting them to think 'critically' about their teaching has resulted in no significant

change for the teachers". Here, the collaboration and exchanging the ideas between colleagues are really crucial in shaping the teachers' future practices in their teaching process. The observer should be aware of his vital position in facilitating effective reflective practices in the following phases of the teaching experience.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following suggestions and implications are also presented. The notion of reflection and reflective teaching should be given more focus in undergraduate and postgraduate programs in the field of ELT, applied linguistics and the like. Professional development should be encouraged in that in-service and pre-service programs including workshops and seminars should be organized for the EFL teachers who are working at different levels of education, by considering their needs and their teaching context. The EFL teachers could be informed and trained about reflective thinking, reflective teaching and the regarding strategies on both theoretical and practical levels. Both pre-service and in-service EFL teachers could be trained about various reflective teaching practices and should be supported by all stakeholders so that they should adapt themselves to teaching online and making most use of educational technologies in the new normal, as well. As Thorpe (2004) reminds, "reflective thinking requires a trusting relationship if one is to write about individual thoughts, feelings and experiences honestly; adequate time to consider ideas critically; active participation; involvement of self; and commitment" (p. 328). Therefore, the teachers on the way of being reflective should be honest towards themselves, try to be much more critical about their practices, and hence, should devote themselves to be reflective as much as possible for their professional development. Hence, a collaboration with all parties in the ministry of education, scholars in the field of educational technologies, applied linguistics and ELT, is crucial in order to contribute to Turkish EFL teachers to improve the quality of foreign language teaching and to continue professional development.

It is also significant to note that reflective teaching needs further reflection (Akbari, 2007). That is to say, EFL teachers should reconsider the extent that their efforts in the reflective teaching process have really led to be reflective. Since EFL teachers function both as a reflector and as an evaluator of themselves in the process, they might not be sure of any achievement in reflective teaching. In other words, there is no guarantee that doing reflective practices turn an unsuccessful teacher into a successful one or a novice one into a professional one. There is no objective assessor or an external rater who decides whether the teacher has achieved to be reflective. Assigning students as evaluators of this process or taking their learning outcomes as a success factor might remain insufficient. Although there are positive views established towards the idea of reflection and reflective teaching in theory, from a practical viewpoint there is still a gap in terms of the effectiveness of reflective teaching process both on the part of teachers and students. "A careful reading of the literature shows that there are major theoretical and practical flaws in the concept of reflective teaching as it is practiced today" (Akbari,2007, p. 193). Only a few studies have looked into the practical effectiveness of reflective teaching and no real sound evidence presenting the actual learning outcomes and improved teaching practice are available (Fat'hi and Behzadpour, 2011; Akbari ,2007). In Thorpe's words, "evidence is needed to document the effect of the reflection upon those involved" (2004, p.341). As it is implied, the literature remains insufficient to prove the impacts of reflective teaching processes on real teaching environments, teachers and students. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the impact of the frequent use of reflective teaching strategies on the quality of different dimensions of the EFL teaching and learning processes. Tajik and Pakzad (2016) designed a practice-oriented reflective teacher education course and detected positive changes in teachers' actual teaching within a limited period of time. Recent research carried out by Kaung (2020) showed that reflective teaching practices had a positive impact on students' achievement and observable academic competencies. With a similar scope, however, more comprehensive and longitudinal studies with mixed-method research design should be conducted since there has been still a need for rigorous empirical findings, as it was also argued by Cornford (2002) who examined the results of relevant empirical studies on reflective teaching.

The scope of the current study was limited to detecting the reflective teaching strategies employed by the EFL teachers throughout the online teaching induced by the pandemic. The study did not examine the differences in reflective practices within groups or between groups by considering the participants' characteristics including age, year of experience, degree and the like. As the researchers (Gözüyeşil & Aslandağ-Soylu, 2014; Moghaddam et al., 2020; Taghilou, 2007) conducted, considerably more comparative and experimental studies could be carried out to detect these differences in reflective practices. Further research could also assess the long term effect of this emergency online teaching period on different aspects of teaching and learning English online by making a comparison between the EFL teachers who are less and more reflecting on their teaching practices during the emergency online education. What is more, the notion of reflection and the reflective teaching strategies should be revisited, and accordingly, the scales or inventories should be reformulated by taking the premises of online education into consideration. It seems that confirmatory studies are deemed to be necessary to clarify the meaning of reflection and the nature of reflective teaching within the scope of online educational environments.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

Ethical approval for the current study was taken from the Social Sciences & Humanities Ethics Committee at the University of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (10/08/2021 – 2021/193).

Researchers' contribution rate

The study was conducted and reported by the aforementioned author.

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