

THE REFLECTIVE LEG OF AN EFL TEACHER'S JOURNEY*

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Abstract

Reflection has a crucial role in learning to teach as a long developmental process. This case study focuses on the engagement of a teacher of English as a foreign language (EFL) in reflection. The teacher was engaged in a 12-week reflection process which included two-phase procedures repeated five times. The first phase of each procedure involved reflection on lexical problems through journals and peer discussions. The second was for reflection on classroom practice through journals and interviews. With a sequential exploratory mixed methods design, the study involved analysis of the teacher's reflections first qualitatively and then quantitatively. The qualitative analysis was based on the taxonomies for descriptive and critical reflection presented in Ho and Richards (1993) and Farrell (1999). The quantitative side involved one-way goodness-of-fit chi-square test results. The results revealed that she referred to most of the topics in the taxonomy, and the top three were students' problems, an approach/procedure, and positive evaluations of lessons. Overall, her critical reflection outnumbered her descriptive reflection, and was mostly related to evaluating teaching. The teacher also displayed development in the sense of critical reflectivity. All the quantitative analyses had statistically significant results. Globally, her reflection in journals, discussions, and interviews enabled her to respond to the context, engage in conscious deliberation, and integrate knowledge into the teaching act. In this way, the study is expected to contribute to the participant's professional development.

Key Words: Reflection, Critical Reflection, Descriptive Reflection, Development in the Sense of Critical Reflectivity, Reflective Teaching



YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETME YOLCULUĞUNDA YANSITICI DÜŞÜNME: BİR DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

Öz

Öğretmeyi öğrenmek uzun bir gelişimsel süreç olarak ele alındığında, yansıtıcı düşünmenin önemli bir yeri olduğu görülür. Bu durum çalışması, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten bir katılımcının yansıtıcı düşünmesine odaklanmaktadır. Katılımcı, yazılı üretimdeki söz sorunlarını inceleyerek 12 haftalık yansıtıcı düşünme sürecine dâhil olmuştur. Bu süreç, beş kez tekrarlanan iki aşamalı işlemde oluşmaktadır. İlk aşama yansıtıcı yazılar ve grup tartışmaları yoluyla söz sorunları üzerine düşünmeyi, ikincisi ise yansıtıcı yazılar ve görüşmeler yoluyla sınıf uygulaması üzerine düşünmeyi kapsamaktadır. Keşfedici sıralı desene sahip bu

* This study presents the preliminary findings of the doctoral thesis that is being prepared.

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çalışmada, öğretmenin yansıtıcı düşünmesine dayanan veri önce nitel, sonra nicel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Nitel analiz, Ho ve Richards (1993) ile Farrell (1999) tarafından sunulan betimleyici ve eleştirel yansıtıcı düşünme sınıflamasına dayanmaktadır. Nicel analiz ise tek yönlü uyum iyiliği ki kare testine dayalı olarak yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar, katılımcının sınıflamada geçen konuların çoğuna değindiğini ve en çok değindiği üç konunun öğrenci sorunları, yaklaşım betimlemesi ve derslerin olumlu değerlendirmesi olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Genel bir değerlendirme, katılımcının eleştirel yansıtıcı düşünmesinin, betimleyici yansıtıcı düşünmesinden daha sık ortaya konduğunu ve bunun çoğunlukla öğretimi değerlendirmeye yönelik olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca, katılımcıda eleştirel yansıtıcı düşünme alanında gelişim de gözlemlenmiştir. Nicel analizlerin hepsinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı sonuçlar çıkmıştır. Genel anlamda katılımcının yazı, tartışma ve görüşmelerindeki yansıtıcı düşünmesi, ona bağlamına yanıt verme, bilinçli düşünme ve bilgisiyle öğretme eylemini bütünleştirme fırsatı vermiştir. Böylelikle bu çalışmanın katılımcının mesleki gelişimine katkıda bulunmuş olması beklenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yansıtıcı Düşünme, Eleştirel Yansıtıcı Düşünme, Betimleyici Yansıtıcı Düşünme, Eleştirel Yansıtıcı Düşünme Alanında Gelişim, Yansıtıcı Öğretme



Introduction

Learning to teach is “a long-term, complex, developmental process” (Freeman & Johnson 1998, p. 402). During this process teachers might be unaware of some incidents; however, reflection-on-action can help them realize what is happening and why by investigating their own context, integrating theory and practice, and thus enhancing teacher learning. With a sequential exploratory mixed methods design, this case study aims to investigate descriptive and critical reflection of an EFL teacher based on data from journals, peer discussions, audio records of lessons, student feedback, and interviews. The study aims to answer these research questions:

1. What type of reflection (critical or descriptive) does the participant commonly use?
2. What kind of critical reflection does the participant employ? What kind of descriptive reflection does the participant employ?
3. Does this process develop the use of critical reflection over time?

A. Background

Teachers have a vital role in language education as practitioners of programs. Thus, teacher development has benefits not only for the teacher but also for the institution and the students. Firstly, it brings senior positions, better performance and enhanced retention for the teacher. In the institution, it improves learning outcomes and its success and popularity. Finally, the level of student learning is enhanced (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Adopting either an outsider or insider approach, teacher development programs can help teachers to improve in specific areas. Outsider approaches value knowledge outside the institution, especially knowledge of experts based on general theories and principles (Richards & Farrell, 2005). These approaches have content-based pre-determined programs, ready-made solutions, and short-term results

(Yaman, 2004). On the other hand, insider approaches prioritize institutional knowledge in order to promote self-directed learning. They enable teachers to analyze their own contexts and construct their own knowledge and understanding of their classroom practices (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Reflection has a significant role in teacher development as it enables teachers to “integrate the two processes, ‘practicalizing theoretical knowledge’ and ‘theorizing practical knowledge’” (Tsui, 2009, p. 432). They can do this through investigation of their own practice based on data from their classrooms and the changes they make based on this investigation (Gün, 2010). In this way, teachers “can gain new insight of their practice” (Farrell, 2016, p. 224). Farrell (2011) reported how a novice ESL teacher benefited from moving from a “descriptive reflective phase” to “a more critical stance on her practice” since “she could now make an informed decision about certain aspects of her teaching ... and as a result there is more of a convergence of her beliefs and classroom practices” (p. 272).

Reflection is classified in different ways. Van Manen (1977) lists levels of teacher reflectivity as empirical-analytic paradigm, hermeneutic-phenomenological paradigm, and critical-dialectical paradigm. Schön (1983) distinguishes reflection-in-action from reflection-on-action. For Pultorak (1996) the three levels of teacher reflectivity are technical rationality, practical action, and critical reflection. Besides, Ho and Richards (1993) and Farrell (1999) presented subcategories of critical and descriptive reflection and explored them in teachers’ journals and group discussions respectively. Traits of development in critical reflectivity are also listed in Ho and Richards (1993) as

- a greater variety of types of critical reflectivity,
- being more able to come up with new understanding of theories,
- being more able to reflect across time span and experiences,
- being more able to go beyond the classroom to broader contexts,
- being more able to evaluate both positively and negatively,
- being more able to solve problems by the teacher, and
- being more focused on "why" questions (p. 35).

Farrell (2016) categorized reflective research between 2009 and 2014 in terms of their scope as well as participants and reflective tools. Overall results revealed that reflection on philosophy, principles, theory, or a combination of these had a positive impact on pre-service and in-service teachers. Common reflective tools in the body of research were found to be discussion, journal writing, classroom observations, video analysis, action research, narrative, and lesson study.

There are very few studies that analyze teachers’ reflection in terms of the two subcategories – descriptive and critical. For instance, using blogs to promote reflection among pre-service teachers, Yang (2009) found their descriptive reflection outnumbered their critical reflection and emphasized the role of facilitator intervention in critical reflection. Another research is a case study by Farrell (2001) of an EFL teacher. His findings showed that the participant’s reflections were mostly descriptive. A partial

replication of Farrell's (1999), Liou (2001) revealed that pre-service teachers were able to do more critical than descriptive reflection but failed to show development in critical reflection. However, none focused on investigation of reflection based on lexical problems. In Turkish context there are only studies that revealed the benefits of reflective teaching (Kuru-Gönen, 2012; Şanal-Erginel, 2006; Şire, 2004) for teacher development. Yeşilbursa (2008) and Yeşilbursa (2011) analyzed types of reflection but using categories she developed herself.

This case study aims to contribute to literature by investigating an EFL teacher's descriptive and critical reflection, specifically on lexical problems in written production, besides her development in critical reflectivity as part of her professional development.

B. Method

1. Research Design

This article presents preliminary findings of a PhD thesis in progress, which is designed as a multiple instrumental case study with five participants, and focuses on only one participant's reflection process revealed through her journals, peer discussions and interviews. A sequential exploratory mixed methods design helped to analyze the data first qualitatively and then quantitatively.

The study took place at a state university which runs two EFL preparatory programs: one for students of departments whose main medium of instruction is English, and another for students of various departments which provide 30 % of their courses in English. When this research was conducted in spring semester in 2017, the participant was working in the latter and teaching C-level (with reference to CEFR) students writing, listening, coursebook, and reading for 22 hours a week.

The method of participant selection was convenience sampling. In order to protect her privacy, we used a pseudonym, Süheyla, suggested by the participant. Süheyla, born in 1967, is a native speaker of Turkish. She graduated from English Language and Literature, and is now a PhD candidate in the same field. She started teaching English at her institution in 1998. She has also worked as the coordinator, the head of writing commission, and a member of various offices and commissions in her institution. She has been abroad once – she went to Austria for four days on holiday.

2. The Reflection Topic

The five participants, who participated in the research for the PhD thesis, were required to reflect on a common topic in order to keep them on the same track. For this reason, before the process started a meeting was held with these participants to specify the topic. Their first decision was to analyze students' written production as it would be more practical for the participants to observe than spoken data and could be improved through activities both during and after class.

During writing classes in the institution, the students are regularly given a common task according to their level and asked to write without consulting any materials or dictionaries. The teachers check students' texts, give written feedback on use of English, content, and organization using correction symbols, and then they grade the texts and return them. As a result, the students are supposed to take

the tasks seriously and produce texts rich in content. This is why the participants decided to obtain written data from these texts. Moreover, this process was expected to be practical for the participants as they would not have to do extra work to collect data.

The final outcome of the meeting was the focus of analysis. As they believe the students in the institution are provided with sufficient practice on grammar but not vocabulary, the participants agreed to focus on lexical competence in written production. They also decided to define lexical problems as those related to meaning, collocations, and word formation. These categories were derived from the three types of lexical feedback included in the correction symbols they use – inappropriate word, missing word / redundant word and word form.

3. The Reflection Process

Preceded by training and piloting, the 12-week reflection process included two-phase procedures repeated five times and involved a variety of reflective tools. Table 1 lists the deadlines set in accordance with the academic calendar. Due to spring holiday, there was a break in the second procedure.

Table 1 The Schedule for the Reflection Process

Procedure	Date
1	9-17 March 2017
2	23-31 March 2017 & 10-14 April 2017
3	20-26 April 2017
4	27 April-10 May 2017
5	11-18 May 2017

In the first phase, the participant diagnosed her students' lexical problems by analyzing their texts. First of all, she made a digital list of errors for each type of lexical problem (meaning, collocations, and word formation) to see what kind of problems occurred frequently. Then, she examined the lists to see the patterns, draw conclusions, and shape her teaching accordingly. Considering her analysis, the participant was asked to reflect on the causes of the problems and possible solutions in a journal in English (see Appendix A for the guiding questions) and then in a peer discussion (see Appendix A for the guiding questions). She held the discussions with two of her officemates in their office, as she preferred, in English and audio recorded them.

In the second phase the aim was to reflect on classroom practice. Süheyla was asked to audio-record classes in which she did an activity to overcome the diagnosed problems. She used her mobile phone to record the lessons. She was also recommended to take notes or extra copies while/immediately after the classroom practice just in case. At the end of each practice, she asked the students to give feedback on small cards. After examining the audio-records and the student feedback, the participant wrote another journal entry in English (see Appendix A for the guiding questions) focusing on what she had done to overcome the problems and what outcomes she had expected. Then, she was interviewed one-on-one (see Appendix A for the guiding questions) by the researcher on the same topic. With a semi-

structured approach and relevant probes for clarification and elaboration, the interviews were conducted in English in the participant's office as a familiar comfortable setting and audio recorded by the researcher.

The data were stored both by the participant and the researcher. At the end of each procedure, Süheyla gave the researcher photos of the texts written by students, digital lists of mistakes, audio-records of classroom practice, photos of student feedback cards, digital or handwritten journals, and audio-records of peer discussions. In this way, the researcher was also able to monitor the process. The audio-records of the interviews were only stored by the researcher.

4. Data Analysis

The taxonomies for descriptive and critical reflection presented in Ho and Richards (1993) and Farrell (1999) coincide closely with the content of the questions provided for the journals, peer discussions, and interviews; thus, they were adapted and coded for this research (see appendix B). Descriptive reflection is procedural in nature answering 'What do I do as a teacher?' (Ho & Richards, 1993, p. 32). Description of the content of a grammar lesson is an example of descriptive reflection. On the other hand, critical reflection refers to "evaluation, self-analysis, theory building, and planning" (Ho & Richards 1993, p. 32). Expressing an opinion about the value of classroom observation is an example of critical reflection.

The data from the participant's reflections in the journals, peer discussions, and interviews were entered manually on an SPSS 23 data set. As the main focus was how the participant reflects, the basis for reflection (i.e. texts written by students, lists of mistakes, audio-records of classroom practice, and student feedback) was not included in the analysis. Next, frequency counts and percentages were obtained using Descriptive Statistics.

For the qualitative part of the study, the results were examined to find out the patterns and reasons for them. First of all, the overall results were presented contrasting descriptive and critical reflection. Next, the results were analyzed in depth according to the topics for descriptive and critical reflection. Finally, we searched for the seven traits of development in critical reflection presented in Farrell (1999) and compared the percentage of each trait in the first and last procedure as Ho and Richards (1993) did (see Appendix C for calculation of these percentages).

o be able to generalize the qualitative data, to a certain extent, a statistical test, one-way goodness-of-fit chi-square, was used. The test showed if the results were statistically significant for the alpha level at .05, and explained the patterns found.

Reliability of data coding was improved by having 10% of the data coded by an independent researcher. The result of the reliability formula, number of agreements / total number of agreements + disagreements (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.64), revealed 92% concurrence between the two coders.

C. Results

A global look at Süheyla's reflection reveals that she referred to 24 different types of topics. The distribution of the topics is statistically significant according to one-way goodness-of-fit chi-square test results ($\chi^2= 734.609$, $df= 23$, $p=.000$). Constituting 69% of the total, her critical reflection outnumbered her descriptive reflection. According to chi-square results, nine out of these 24 topics were mentioned more frequently than the statistically expected level (19). The common topics, ranked in order of frequency, are listed in Table 2:

Table 2 Common Topics in Süheyla's Reflection

Topic	N	Type of reflection	Category
Students' problems	79	Critical	Evaluating teaching
An approach or procedure	75	Descriptive	Approaches and methods
Positive evaluations of lessons	65	Critical	Evaluating teaching
A belief/conviction	52	Descriptive	Theories of teaching
A personal opinion	28	Critical	Theories of teaching
Alternative ways of presenting lesson	27	Critical	Evaluating teaching
Teacher's problems	26	Critical	Evaluating teaching
The learners' background information	26	Critical	Approaches and methods
Deciding on a plan of action	21	Critical	Evaluating teaching

There are only two descriptive topics in this list, namely an approach/procedure and a belief/conviction; however, the former is the second most frequent of all. The others are all critical, and most of them are related to evaluating teaching: students' problems, positive evaluations of lessons, alternative ways of presenting lesson, teacher's problems, and deciding on a plan of action.

1. Süheyla's Descriptive Reflection

Overall, Süheyla did not engage in descriptive reflection very frequently (31%), but when she did, she used it mostly in interviews and journals on classroom practice. Out of nine types of descriptive topics in total, the teacher never mentioned

- an expert's view,
- solutions to problems by seeking solutions from experts, or
- asking for information.

However, Süheyla referred to six descriptive topics, which means that she used 67% of them. The distribution of these topics is statistically significant according to one-way goodness-of-fit chi-square test results ($\chi^2= 223.547$, $df= 5$, $p=.000$). Of the six topics, only an approach/procedure and a belief/conviction

occurred more frequently than statistically expected. The frequency and percentage of these topics are listed in Table 3:

Table 3 Descriptive Topics in Süheyla's Reflection

Topic	Journal on lexical problems	Journal on classroom practice	Peer discussion	Interview	Total	Total %
An approach/procedure	1	26	4	44	75	54
A belief/conviction	4	3	5	40	52	37.4
The content of the lesson	0	3	0	5	8	5.8
Questions about what should be done	0	0	1	1	2	1.4
Asking how to do things	0	0	0	1	1	0.7
How a theory was applied	0	0	0	1	1	0.7

Comprising 54% of Süheyla's descriptive reflection, an approach/procedure was the most common type of descriptive topic. Süheyla described an approach/procedure in her journals on lexical problems and classroom practice, peer discussions, and interviews. She used it to refer to the procedures in different phases of the class. For instance, in the second journal on classroom practice she referred to her preparation for the class stating "I planned this feedback session as whole class study. Before I entered into the class I had already finished keeping each student's vocabulary mistakes into the Excel file. I prepared a list of mistakes [that] appeared in the texts." An additional example is found in the first interview when she described how she started the class. She said "At the very beginning I always say 'Your writings are all very good, I thank you all', I always try to praise them." Then in the same interview, when she moved on to the description of the input phase, she told the researcher "I try to warn them that it's not always right to just translate directly." In another instance in the second interview, she mentioned the procedure in the practice phase saying "In this lesson I tried to make it more practical for them, I gave them the papers with symbols and I warned them that in a more detailed way vocabulary mistakes can be coped with using a dictionary." Finally, in the second interview, Süheyla also described how she ended the class saying "I asked them to use the dictionary in order to improve their writing in terms of vocabulary expansion in a way that adding adverbs, adjectives or I mean some extras into their writing."

Another recurrent type of descriptive reflection of Süheyla was a belief/conviction comprising 37.4% of the total. She expressed a belief/conviction in her journals on lexical problems and classroom practice, peer discussions, and interviews. The participant stated her beliefs about teaching and especially learning. For example, in the second interview when she referred to how an extra activity should be

handled, she said “If you start, you should go on doing it in order to make it effective.” Later, she referred to how vocabulary should be taught:

We should teach them in their context by production I think. If they don’t use it, if they don’t need it, and if they don’t use it, they just learn it till the end of the exam, but it is not their own vocabulary until they use it, it is the vocabulary.

In her second journal on classroom practice, she mentioned the importance of dictionary skills stating “They realized that dictionaries had more than they needed, so they had to choose (the correct word). This is a real dictionary skill that every language learner should have.” In the second interview, Süheyla’s focus was primarily on her beliefs about learning. First of all, she referred to language learning in general:

This is something not depending on only one thing. This is their language knowledge, and this is about their language practice, so our students need time in order to have better writing. This is not only related to vocabulary choice or correct use of vocabulary, but this is related to their perception, practice, and production.

Then, she highlighted the importance of students’ recognition of “their way of learning vocabulary”. Later, she continued saying “I realized that when they are on their own doing something in the class separately, they believe in themselves more.”

Süheyla also referred to the content of the lesson, which comprised only 5.8% of her descriptive reflection. She mentioned it in her journals on classroom practice and interviews. For instance, in the second interview she maintained that “it was a writing class” and later explained the focus of the lesson:

They write ‘*it’s a nice day*’ or ‘*she’s a teacher*’ for example, but what kind of a teacher she is or where [she works as] a teacher, so I ask them to improve their writing by adding some more vocabulary or lexical items from the collocation dictionary.

The rare types of descriptive themes found in Süheyla’s expressions were questions about what should be done, asking how to do things, and how a theory was applied. In her third peer discussion, after talking about how she attempted to solve lexical problems, Süheyla asked her peers what else she could do. During the fourth interview, she mentioned a problem related to the students, asked herself about improvement, and answered “But shall I try again? Yes I can try again but with more clear instructions.” During the second interview, while discussing ways to improve vocabulary teaching, Süheyla asked how we can teach vocabulary in context. In the fifth interview, she referred to “awareness raising” saying “In this sense we can realize that how the teacher guides the students also increases their attention on the topic the teacher has been concentrating on. It is a kind of awareness raising.”

2. Süheyla's Critical Reflection

Süheyla's critical reflection constituted 69% of the whole, and it could be observed in all types of tasks. In her critical reflection she mentioned 18 different topics. The distribution of these topics is statistically significant according to one-way goodness-of-fit chi-square test results ($\chi^2=490.241$, $df= 17$, $p=.000$). They are listed below according to their frequency:

Table 4 Critical Topics in Süheyla's Reflection

Topic	Journal on lexical problems	Journal on classroom practice	Peer discussion	Interview	Total N	Total %
Students' problems	18	4	23	34	79	25
Positive evaluations of lessons	5	17	4	39	65	20,6
A personal opinion	0	2	7	19	28	8,9
Alternative ways of presenting lesson	3	1	8	15	27	8,5
Teacher's problems	0	2	0	24	26	8,2
The learners' background information	5	2	4	15	26	8,2
Deciding on a plan of action	9	3	4	5	21	6,6
Recognition of personal growth	0	0	1	16	17	5,4
A justification	0	2	0	4	6	1,9
The teacher's knowledge and experience	0	0	0	4	4	1,3
Pedagogical knowledge	0	0	0	3	3	0,9
The relation between teaching and the school context	0	0	0	3	3	0,9
Their teaching style	0	0	0	3	3	0,9
Contradictions between theory and practice	0	0	0	2	2	0,6
Classroom interaction	0	0	0	2	2	0,6
Setting personal goals	0	0	0	2	2	0,6

Negative evaluations of lessons	0	0	0	1	1	0,3
Asking for reasons	0	0	1	0	1	0,3

Statistically, Süheyla mentioned seven of these topics more frequently than expected, and the top two were much more prevalent than the others. These are

- students' problems,
- positive evaluations of lessons,
- a personal opinion,
- alternative ways of presenting lesson,
- teacher's problems,
- the learners' background information, and
- deciding on a plan of action.

This result indicates that most of her critical reflection (69.8%) is related to evaluating teaching. Nevertheless, the topics she never reflected on were how theories changed and perceptions of her language proficiency.

2.1. Students' Problems

The most recurrent critical topic was students' problems, which comprised 25% of the total and appeared in journals on classroom practice and lexical problems, peer discussions, and interviews. Süheyla reflected on a variety of problems. Some of her reflections involved a general description of the problems with reference to their frequency or similarity to the ones in previous tasks. However, other problems addressed were related to more specific issues. For instance, in the third interview she shared one of her observations during an error correction session in class stating "While we were just correcting them on the board, not every student was active. They were following us but sometimes they couldn't create what it would be, so I thought that they need more help with rewriting the sentence."

Besides, Süheyla explored the three types of lexical problems identified for this research – meaning, collocations, and word formation. The problems related to meaning were, according to her, usually confronted as "inappropriate word use". The teacher also mentioned her students' incorrect collocations such as 'good information' and "extra wordings such as 'they effect to the students' ". An example of lexical problems related to word formation was found in her criticism of lack of "enough adjectives to make their paragraphs more descriptive".

The teacher reflected on problems related to lack of some learning strategies, too. For her, the students needed to discover their own learning style, balance their focus on grammar and vocabulary, and search for different ways of learning vocabulary rather than employing "only one direct method – learning Turkish and English version of the word". Having observed that her students used "some very simple dictionaries", the teacher even maintained that "it's not enough for them just to say they use it" because "the main problem is how to use the dictionary". To be more precise, "they don't search the correct form of the word" and thus spend too much time. Süheyla also noticed that her students had difficulty putting what they knew into practice. For example, she realized that although they had learnt

the word *'significant'*, they mostly used *'important'* in their writing. She also observed that they could correct errors under teacher guidance but not alone. In the last peer discussion she gave some details:

When you give feedback to them, they realize that there is a mistake with word formation, and they correct it, but of course during the timed writings we [give] them time to revise their writings, but they don't do anything throughout this period, they just read and finish, but they don't know how to search for a mistake.

One further issue that attracted Süheyla's attention was some students' negative reactions towards peer editing. They liked neither revising somebody else's text nor being revised. The students also criticized the language their partners used and their "discouraging" feedback.

When Süheyla stated a problem, she did not only describe it but also reflected on the root of that problem. For instance, during the second peer discussion, upon diagnosing the collocation mistake, the teacher considered why this happened saying "They don't know any other adjectives that might be used with the word *'information'*". Süheyla referred to mental aspects of her students' problems, too. For example, in the second peer discussion she reflected "These problems might have appeared because of that situation I think, because of their psychology, because these problems are not the problems that they normally have during the writing." Moreover, she mentioned "the gap in their conceptual performance", writing in English "directly after thinking and planning in L1", "resistance" to take risks, and the need to "break their chains". In the fourth interview she examined why the students avoided using vocabulary they already knew saying "They are afraid of making mistakes, and as you say they feel themselves safe perhaps just using the words they know, they are sure about it." The teacher also discussed other reasons such as "difficulty of the topic", low levels of students' motivation at the end of the term, or their readiness.

2.2. Positive Evaluations of Lessons

Süheyla's positive evaluations of lessons comprised 20.6% of her critical reflection. They were found in journals on classroom practice and lexical problems, peer discussions, and interviews. The teacher realized that some of her classroom practices proved to be effective, contrary to her predictions. For instance, one was "active" rather than "boring", and another one "worked" although it was "very traditional". At the same time, the teacher managed to remain positive despite some difficulties she faced. For instance, in the second interview she stated:

Of course this is not my ideal performance because it was also my first attempt to use a collocation dictionary in the class so that I can't also just predict some of the outcomes during the lesson, so it was not an ideal class, but in any way it's a beginning for me too.

Süheyla's positive evaluations of her practice involved such phrases as:

- "a good collocation study",
- "a good beginning",
- "keep their attention",

- “useful”,
- “interesting”,
- “motivating”,
- “very active”,
- “very effective”,
- “like an ideal”,
- “I have managed it”, and
- “it worked”.

Süheyla evaluated her practice positively based on criteria such as the students’ gain, their attitudes, or her own reaction. She mentioned them all in the fourth interview:

It was good for me. It was like an ideal because I can motivate my students, they accepted what I offered because this was something new, and they were happy, and they tried their best, and it was good, it was an ideal atmosphere.

Süheyla’s account of students’ gains included

- success in overcoming lexical problems,
- ongoing practice,
- permanent learning,
- collaboration,
- eagerness,
- self-belief,
- motivation to improve their vocabulary and writing,
- “fun”, and
- “increased intimacy”.

The teacher also referred to increased awareness of dictionary skills and “word choice” as indicated by their use of “some extraordinary words at their level such as ‘*schedule*’, ‘*to tackle the issues*’, etc.” The teacher’s reflection on positive attitudes of the students to what had been done was found in various cases. For instance, in her second journal on classroom practice she mentioned how she reacted to favorable remarks from students in another class:

By the way, my other class that I am mainly teaching listening and speaking besides a few main course hours criticized me in a manner that made me so happy. They said that they had heard about the collocation dictionary study in my writing class and they had felt a bit disappointed with my disregard. They wanted to learn how to use it too.

The students’ positive attitudes were observed when they:

- commented positively,
- found what had been done good, useful, enjoyable, “interesting”, “easy”, or important,
- “wrote quite creatively”, productively, or carefully,

- seemed glad, “enthusiastic”, “relaxed”, “satisfied”, attentive, interested, or cooperative, or
- did some further work related to classroom practice.

Süheyla’s positive evaluation of classroom practice based on her own reaction was signaled when she stated she “liked the lesson” or felt “surprised” or “happy”.

2.3. Others

8.9% of Süheyla’s critical reflection was expression of a personal opinion in journals on classroom practice, peer discussions, and interviews. The teacher presented her views on:

- the resources,
- the effectiveness of her practice,
- whether she thought an activity would work,
- the importance of such issues as self-editing, and motivation,
- students’ gains,
- the value of students’ production,
- the differences in students’ involvement,
- students’ mistakes, and
- how students felt.

In addition to these, Süheyla reflected on this research, too. In the last interview, she maintained her views on the difference between this study and seminars:

You know that in seminars mostly you are not active, you are the receiver, somebody is there telling you or suggesting you doing something or just conveying a piece of information, maybe an application, okay, but you are not involved if it is not a workshop. Still in the workshops you know you may just work in groups, but still some group members are active, but you are not an active one, so you have things to say, things to do, but you are a bit, I mean you are not involved much, so there might be such things. But here in this practice, it is only me and my application and my ideas and my imagination and me myself as a teacher, so it is the real professional development because I did it myself. So I mean I realize that I’m still a learner and I can learn, I can imagine, I can create, and I can apply, so this is the development I think.

Süheyla mentioned alternative ways of presenting lesson in 8.5% of her critical reflection in journals on lexical problems, peer discussions, and interviews. The alternatives included introducing an online collocation dictionary, improving time management, increasing the number of examples and organizing them. For instance, in the third journal on lexical problems, she stated:

So, this gave me the idea that it might be a useful way to write the problem sentence on the board and ask them to find and correct the mistake in it.

Found in journals on classroom practice and mostly in interviews, Süheyla’s reflection on teacher’s problems comprised 8.2% of her critical reflection. The teacher referred to such problems as

- “lack of time”,
- “time management”,
- keeping up with the “pacing” required by school management,
- “the need of preparation”,
- lack of experience in specific areas,
- being unable to guide students well,
- “the students’ attitude”,
- the teacher’s mood,
- lack of autonomy, and
- being unable to realize some students’ problems.

The teacher also mentioned the problems she had during this study. For example, she found the schedule intense and had difficulty writing the journals. In the last interview she added:

I would like to comment more clearly on my journals and I would like to just do some more extra applications in terms of vocabulary in my classes butwe have lots of things to do. Maybe I can say that I could not apply all the things that came to my mind.

Reference to learners’ background information comprised 8.2% of Süheyla’s critical reflection, and it could be observed in journals on classroom practice and lexical problems, peer discussions, and interviews. The teacher presented background information about her students in two ways. The first type of information she provided was related to her students’ academic background, which mostly involved what they knew, how they had been learning, and what they could do. For instance, in the third interview the teacher explained “They can deal with the sentences, they can deal with the word, I mean let’s say word formation, it’s ‘organize’ but it should be ‘organization’, they can find it easily.” Other examples included Süheyla’s reference to the students’ level of awareness and the content of the writing task. The second one involved the students’ mood. Such reflection was generally based on her observations at the beginning of classroom practice. In various cases the teacher found them “active”, “energetic”, “excited”, and “eager”.

Deciding on a plan of action comprised 6.6% of Süheyla’s critical reflection, and it could be observed in journals on classroom practice and lexical problems, peer discussions, and interviews. Her plans included:

- introducing collocation dictionary and assigning the students to use it,
- encouraging peer-editing and self-editing,
- involving smart boards during classroom practice,
- creating some situations for the students to practice vocabulary,
- creating a blog,
- using activities effective in one class in others as well,
- increasing the amount of “corrective feedback”,
- focusing on some grammar points,
- conferencing with “weak students”,

- being “more careful”,
- giving “more clear instructions”,
- giving feedback to “praise some good vocabulary use”, or
- providing “correcting mistake exercises”.

Nevertheless, the teacher sometimes needed to change her plans as she stated in the third journal on lexical problems “I have changed the idea of creating a class blog to share students’ texts since one of the other teachers of this class had already informed them about a blog and asked them to write for this blog.”

3. Development in Süheyla’s Sense of Critical Reflectivity

Table 5 contrasts the percentages of traits of development in Süheyla’s critical reflection in the first and fifth procedures. An increase is observed in:

- variety of traits of critical reflection,
- discussing theories of expert and own,
- being more able to reflect through teaching experience,
- being able to go beyond the classroom to greater context, and
- being more able to evaluate both positively and negatively.

Nonetheless, there is a decrease in being a better problem solver and asking more questions.

Table 5 Development in Süheyla’s Sense of Critical Reflectivity

Traits of Development in Critical Reflection	1 st procedure	5 th procedure
A greater variety of traits of critical reflection	55%	60%
Discussing theories of expert and own	8.5%	19.3%
Being more able to reflect through teaching experience	4.3%	5.3%
Being able to go beyond the classroom to greater context	0	1.8%
Being more able to evaluate both positively and negatively	12.8%	15.8%
Being a better problem solver	17.1%	8.8%
Asking more questions	2.1%	0

D. Discussion

Although observation is an important way of data collection in research in reflective teaching and its absence might be regarded as a limitation of the study design, during the meeting most of the

participants in the PhD thesis seemed to feel rather uncomfortable with classroom observation and to prefer to reveal their classroom practice through audio-records, journals, and interviews. As the focus of the research is how the participants see their practice rather than what they actually do or what they should do, classroom observation was not included in the design.

Overall, Süheyla referred to most of the topics in Ho and Richards (1993) and Farrell (1999) with statistically significant results. Her reflection was mainly critical, but descriptive topics were found in the list of frequent topics as well. This close connection between descriptive and critical reflection implies that teachers should not be expected to reflect completely critically.

The findings about Süheyla's descriptive reflection revealed that she frequently mentioned an approach/procedure and a belief/conviction, which is similar to the results in Ho and Richards (1993). The teacher also described the content of her lessons and how she applied a theory in addition to asking what to do and how to do things. In contrast to findings in Ho and Richards (1993) and Farrell (1999), however, no reference to experts was detected. These results lead to the conclusion that she employed descriptive reflection to set the scene or to introduce the basics for the listener or the reader. This is what makes descriptive reflection essential.

Süheyla's critical reflection outnumbered her descriptive reflection, which is parallel to Liou (2001) but in contrast with Yang (2009) and Farrell (2001). It was mainly about evaluating teaching with a focus on students and lessons. Although the teacher mentioned some problems, she also reflected, with a generally positive attitude, on the rationale behind her practice, the reasons for specific problems, and the range of possible solutions. Besides, personal opinions and teaching problems were among prevalent critical topics as in Farrell (1999) but there were few entries related to self-awareness as in Ho and Richards (1993) and Farrell (1999). Nonetheless, the teacher never mentioned how theories changed or perceptions of her language proficiency. As a final point, the increase in several traits of development in Süheyla's sense of critical reflectivity is similar to Farrell (2011) but in contrast with Liou (2001). In conclusion, Süheyla seems to be more concerned with practice than theory and, as a consequence, to bring knowledge and experience into the classroom.

Süheyla's experience in teaching, interest in academic studies, attitude towards learning and teaching, and motivation for professional development might have had an impact on the results. These could be used as a variable in further studies.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS FOR JOURNALS ON LEXICAL PROBLEMS

- Why do the students make such mistakes?
- What should be emphasized during vocabulary presentation to prevent these mistakes?
- What kind of practice do the students need? How can you provide opportunities for such practice?
- Do you need to prepare extra materials?

QUESTIONS FOR JOURNALS ON CLASSROOM PRACTICE (Adapted from Pultorak 1993; 1996; Şanal-Erginel, 2006)

- What were the essential strengths of the lesson?
- What, if anything, would you change about the lesson?
- Do you think the lesson was successful in terms of solving lexical problems? Why?
- How is your vocabulary teaching in this lesson different from what you did previously?
- Think about the product of the lesson, if any. What are the conditions that have an effect on this outcome? You can consider teaching techniques, feedback, error correction, and questioning techniques.
- Do you think that there were unplanned outcomes in this lesson? If so, what are they? Why do you think so?
- What did you think about student behaviors?
- Can you think of another way you might have taught this lesson?
- Do you think that if you teach this lesson with a different approach, the students' learning would be better? If yes, what approach?
- Do you think that the content of this lesson was of interest for students? If you were to explain the relevance and importance of the content, what would you tell to an administrator and/or student to prove that the content was right?
- Also compare and discuss how you view yourself ideally and your actual performance.
- Ask yourself 'What have I learned about myself as a teacher through this practice?' and 'How will I apply to what I have learned to my future teaching experiences?'
- What do you think about this research as a whole? Do you think that it contributed to your learning and development? How?

QUESTIONS FOR PEER DISCUSSIONS

- Why do the students make such mistakes?
- What should be emphasized during vocabulary presentation to prevent these mistakes?
- What kind of practice do the students need? How can you provide opportunities for such practice?
- Do you need to prepare extra materials?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

(Adapted from Pultorak, 1993, 1996; Şanal-Erginel, 2006)

- What were the essential strengths of the lesson?
- What, if anything, would you change about the lesson?
- Do you think the lesson was successful in terms of solving lexical problems? Why?
- How is your vocabulary teaching in this lesson different from what you did previously?
- Think about the product of the lesson, if any. What are the conditions that have an effect on this outcome? You can consider teaching techniques, feedback, error correction, and questioning techniques.
- Do you think that there were unplanned outcomes in this lesson? If so, what are they? Why do you think so?
- What did you think about student behaviors?
- Can you think of another way you might have taught this lesson?
- Do you think that if you teach this lesson with a different approach, the students' learning would be better? If yes, what approach?
- Do you think that the content of this lesson was of interest for students? If you were to explain the relevance and importance of the content, what would you tell to an administrator and/or student to prove that the content was right?
- Also compare and discuss how you view yourself ideally and your actual performance.
- Ask yourself 'What have I learned about myself as a teacher through this practice?' and 'How will I apply to what I have learned to my future teaching experiences?'
- What do you think about this research as a whole? Do you think that it contributed to your learning and development? How?

APPENDIX B

TOPICS FOR DESCRIPTIVE REFLECTION

1. Theories of teaching

- A. A belief/conviction - e.g., what constitutes good language teaching
- B. An expert's view - e.g. referring to Krashen's views about language
- C. How a theory was applied - e.g. trying out a questioning strategy described in a lecture

2. Approaches and methods

- A. An approach/procedure - e.g. the teacher's approach to the teaching of reading skills or the procedures used during a listening lesson
- B. The content of the lesson - e.g. a description of the content of a grammar lesson

3. Evaluating teaching

Solutions to problems by seeking solutions from experts - e.g. asking for ways for overcoming particular difficulties

4. Questions about teaching

A. Questions about what should be done - e.g. asking whether the teacher should spend more time on grammar

B. Asking for information - e.g. asking what is meant by good questioning skills

C. Asking how to do things - e.g. asking how to motivate the students

TOPICS FOR CRITICAL REFLECTION

1. Theories of teaching

A. A justification - e.g. describing a theory to justify something the teacher did

B. A personal opinion - e.g. expressing an opinion about the value of classroom observation

C. Contradictions between theory and practice - e.g. describing why a classroom incident does not support a theory

D. How theories changed - e.g. how classroom experience changes the teacher's theories

2. Approaches and methods

A. The teacher's pedagogical knowledge - e.g. knowledge about the demands of class task

B. The teacher's knowledge and experience - e.g. pointing out how his or her teaching has become more student-focused

C. The learners' background information - e.g. pointing out that students have little opportunity to practice English outside classroom

D. The relation between teaching and the school context - e.g. how administrative constraints or school policies affect teaching

3. Evaluating teaching

3.1. Evaluating lessons

A. Positive evaluations of lessons - e.g. commenting that the lesson went well because all students were active in it

B. Negative evaluations of lessons - e.g. pointing out that the lesson failed to achieve its goals

3.2. Diagnosing problems

A. Students' problems - e.g. difficulties student had with particular grammar items

B. Classroom interaction - e.g. a planned grouping arrangement did not work because of problems students had interacting with each other

C. Teacher's problems - e.g. the teacher did not have time and energy to mark the students' homework

3.3. Solutions to problems

- A. Alternative ways of presenting lesson - e.g. beginning a lesson in a different way
- B. Deciding on a plan of action - e.g. deciding to use role play activities more often

4. Questions about teaching

Asking for reasons - e.g. asking why planned lessons may be no more successful than unplanned ones

5. Self-awareness

- A. Recognition of personal growth
- B. Setting personal goals
- C. Perceptions of their teaching style - e.g. describing the style of teaching s/he feels more comfortable with, such as a teacher-centered style
- D. Perceptions of their language proficiency - e.g. saying that they do not speak English fluently

APPENDIX C

Table 6 *Analysis of Development in the Sense of Critical Reflectivity*

Traits of Development in Critical Reflection	Calculation Used for the Analysis
A greater variety of traits of critical reflection	number of types of critical topics used / total number of critical topics
Discussing theories of expert and own	total frequency of C1A, C1B and C1C / total frequency of critical reflection
Being more able to reflect through teaching experience	total frequency of C2A and C2B / total frequency of critical reflection
Being able to go beyond the classroom to greater context	frequency of C2D / total frequency of critical reflection
Being more able to evaluate both positively and negatively	total frequency of C3A and C3B / total frequency of critical reflection
Being a better problem solver	total frequency of C3F and C3G / total frequency of critical reflection
Asking more questions	frequency of C4 / total frequency of critical reflection



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