

Exploring EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Attitudes of Reflective Practice: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The research on implementation of three attitudes of reflective practice in the field of pre-service teachers is still rarely written. Thus, this study aimed at exploring pre-service teachers' attitudes of reflective practice. Designed with case study, this study explored four pre-service teachers at private university in Central Java Indonesia who were enrolled as tutors in an English Tutorial Program of the same university. The data were gathered from pre-service teachers' reflective journals, interview, and observation. Analyzed using thematic analysis, the findings of this study revealed that all pre-service teachers were captured to possess all virtues of reflective practice namely, open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and responsibility. This would be a provision for them in developing their professional careers in the future. The implication of this study on language education program is also provided.

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1. INTRODUCTION

To gain their professional development, teachers are encouraged to continually shape and reshape their knowledge of teaching and learning [1]. One among many ways to achieve the purpose is by practicing reflective practice. Reflective practice is considered as an ability of teachers to look back at what, why, and how they do inside or outside their classroom [2].

As teachers are involved in reflective activity, they are believed to possess numerous benefits of reflective practice such as rising their conscientiousness and their awareness about challenges and weaknesses in teaching and learning [3]. Moreover, Houston [4] stated that by involving in reflective practice teachers will be able to assess the effectiveness of their teaching and modify their instructional behavior. In response to this, several studies revealed that to maximize teachers acquire such positives, reflective practice should be taught to teachers since their early phase of education in teacher training and education program [5].

Introducing teachers with reflective attitudes in their early education will have long-term effects on their future professional development [6]. Since attitudes are non-physical object that located inside the teachers, reflective attitudes function as guides for teachers to continually reflect themselves even if they have become professional teachers.

Reflective attitudes are initially proposed by Dewey [7] in which he stated that to be reflective practitioners, teachers should have three attitudes of reflection: open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and responsibility. Open-

mindedness is a virtue in which teachers should possess open mindset toward what they see related to their teaching practice. This virtue requires teachers to welcome any different ideas coming from others, be able to consider problems in diverse points of views, be prepared to contradictive opinions, and be able to admit that their beliefs of teaching is wrong when it is wrong. By welcoming those different thoughts, Farrell [8] believed that teachers will have ability to see possible alternative solutions of any problems. Thus, if they faced such problem, they would have experience to solve them.

In addition, wholeheartedness [7] is considered as an attitude that requires teachers to be totally involved in their teaching practice. The teachers' involvement is construed with their enthusiasm to numerous ideas that support their teaching activities. Thus, those who own this virtue will try to always maintain their classroom active and ensure that their students are able to maximally acquire the materials.

The final attitude constructed by Dewey [7] in order to consider someone as reflective practitioner is responsibility. The virtue of responsibility requires teachers to be responsible of every action they opt in their classroom. They must realize that every single action done in their classroom must lead to consequences. Thus, they should consider whether the consequences are good for students and themselves [8].

Considering the implementation of reflective attitudes in early phase of teachers' education is important and research on reflective attitudes on English language teaching in Indonesian context is still limited [6], this study is conducted to fill the gaps. By means of exploring reflective attitudes of EFL pre-service teachers, it is hoped that many will consider the importance of reflective attitudes, thus reflective activity will take its right place in Indonesian education context.

2. RESEARCH AND METHOD

Implementing case study design, the data of this research were gathered from four EFL pre-service teachers at a private university in Central Java. The four pre-service teachers are enrolled as part-time English tutors in English Tutorial Program (ETP). ETP is a program that officially designed by the university in order to improve university students' English skills. The program is an obligatory for students from every single department in their first and second semester. The program is held once every week, 14 meetings in total per semester. In practice, this program is supervised by the institution of language development of that university.

In ETP, university students are groped based on their origin major and taught by a tutor who is at least in semester 3 from various departments (not only English education department) having high level of English proficiency. To consider whether or not a student can join the program as a tutor, a systematic selection is implemented by the Institution.

In the academic year 2021/2022, around 600 tutors from diverse departments have been involved in this program. They are responsible for about 10 university students. Initially, the ETP program was conducted every Saturday in campus. However, since Covid-19 pandemic, the program was conducted in online. Until the time this data was collected, the activities of ETP were still online.

As involving pre-service teachers who are basically have less experience in teaching and even some of them are basically not from department of English Education, the institution provides them with assistant teachers. Assistant teachers are those who are responsible to guide tutors in conducting ETP. Every before their meeting of ETP, tutors are given enrichment by the assistant teachers about what the materials they are going to teach and how to teach the students those materials. In line with their qualification, assistant teachers must at least hold bachelor degree from English education department.

The illustration of distribution and relation between university students, tutors, and assistant teachers are as follows:

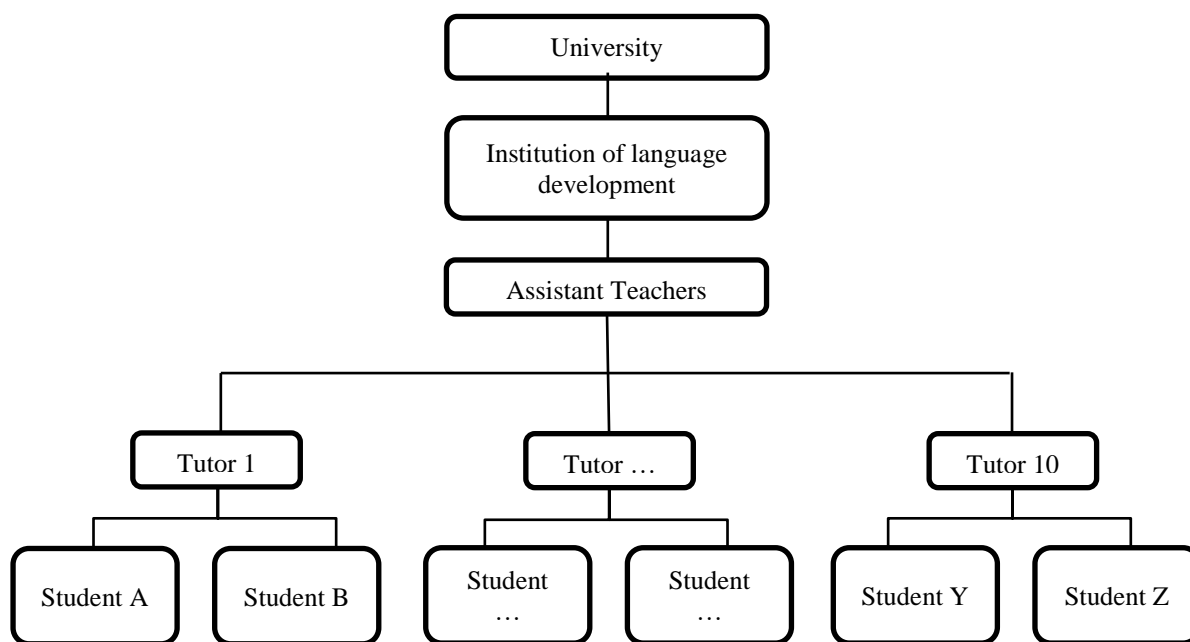


Figure 1. Structure of Organization

In addition, on behalf of this research, the tutors involved as participants are those who study in Department of English Education.

To collect the data, as suggested by Lee [9], multiple systematic aids such as online reflective journal, observation, and interview were applied. Reflective journal was written by tutors right after finishing their meeting every particular week. In total, 6 entries of journals have been collected and analyzed in this research. To avoid misunderstanding and ease them write the reflection and based on empirical evidence found by Nurfaidah [10], the tutors were asked to write the reflection in their first language, Bahasa Indonesia. In addition, observation and interview were implemented to make the data more valid.

In analyzing the data, a proposed analysis method by Abdul Hamied [11] was employed. After breaking down the data based on their sentences, the repeated ideas were, then, categorized based on the theory of attitudes of reflective practice proposed by Dewey [7].

3. RESULT AND DUSCUSSION

Implementing reflective attitudes theory by Dewey [7] as the framework of this research, the results will be displayed based on three sections, open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and responsibility.

a. Open-mindedness

Open-mindedness is the reflective virtue that requires teachers to think openly and welcome any ideas or contrary views against their thought. This virtue is very significant in line with teachers' development. To be professional, teachers must be able to transform to be better teachers. Ones cannot merely lay and believe in their own selves, but they must also look at what other professionals do. If there is different perspective between them and other professionals, teachers are required to consider which one works best (not merely rejecting the other ideas). If the open-mindedness does not remain in teachers, their development will be hampered because any ideas will be rejected.

The data in this study revealed that all pre-service teachers had the virtue of open-mindedness (see Table 1). They were open to various problems, especially when facing contradictive views with their own selves as well as their students. The following examples illustrate how pre-service teachers thought openly toward others' ideas.

"Thanks, God. Yesterday's 5th ETP meeting went smoothly, although there were 2 participants who were not allowed to participate in the ETP activity for some reason. But I think, my technique of teaching was too monotonous so that it made them less active as before." (PST 1 – Entry 5)

In this example, pre-service teacher 1 showed her awareness about her weakness in teaching. This was considered as being open-minded as she was able to confirm that her own teaching was less perfect, thus her students were not too active.

Table 1. Distribution of Open-mindedness

Reflective Journal	PST 1	PST 2	PST 3	PST 4
Entry 1	-	-	1	2
Entry 2	-	-	-	3
Entry 3	1	-	-	-
Entry 4	-	-	-	-
Entry 5	1	1	-	1
Entry 6	-	-	-	-
Total	2	1	1	6

Another participant also evidenced that she was being open-minded. The following example represents the way she welcomed any ideas.

“This week's ETP was held on Saturday, 19.30 WIB because the participants had another schedule, namely mentoring, so the ETP was held at night according to mutual agreement.” (PST2 – Entry 5)

This example illustrates how pre-service teacher 2 being open to any ideas. As her students had another important schedule, she and her students had discussion in order to determine the day of meeting. If not being open-mindedness, the pre-service teacher 2 would force the students to have the meeting as usual and would not accept any suggestion from her students. This point was in line with the statement of Baehr [12] that in that position, anyone should have the state of open-minded.

In addition, pre-service teacher 3's example of being open-minded was:

“I wanted to convey the material clearly and in detail, but because I was too nervous, I conveyed quickly and the details of the material were not conveyed optimally.” (PST 3 – Entry 1)

In this example, pre-service teacher 3 was considered open-minded as she admitted that she was nervous. The nervousness became her barrier in explaining the materials of teaching. If not being open to her weakness, she would not try to solve her problem of nervousness.

Different from three previous pre-service teachers, the last pre-service teacher seemed to have more level of the attitude of open-mindedness as her quantity of open-mindedness tripled (see Table 1). Example of her virtue of being open-minded is as follows:

“ETP participants complained that my voice was jammed and could not be heard clearly. But, for the next meeting I convinced myself that it would not happen again (I immediately asked to be connected to a strong wi-fi signal).” (PST 4 – Entry 4)

In the example, it is clearly stated that the pre-service teacher 4 was open to any contrary views. When the students were complaining about her voice that was not clear, the pre-service teacher 4 did not reject the complaint. Even she immediately looked for another stronger internet connection to make sure that such problem would not happen anymore.

Moreover, this pre-service teacher explained explicitly that she welcomed any suggestion as she wrote:

“In the future, pre-service teachers will listen more and more to suggestions in order to make this activity better.” (PST 4 – Entry 1)

In sum, as being open-minded is one of three important keys of being reflective practitioner, all participants on this research showed their awareness to have that attitude. It is hoped that such attitude would help them to be reflective teachers in the future, thus their professionalism as teachers would always develop.

b. Wholeheartedness

Wholeheartedness is the next attitudes to be explored in this study. Based on Dewey's [7] explanation, the virtue of wholeheartedness must be possessed by any reflective practitioners. This virtue requires pre-service teachers to be totally involved in their teaching practice.

Based on the data of this study, all pre-service teachers owned the attitude of wholeheartedness (Table 2). It was indicated from the way pre-service teachers managed the class. They tried to apply the best techniques in order to make the class more active as well as interact their students in learning English. The following examples illustrate how participants in this study revealed their attitudes of being wholehearted.

"Some of them are fluent in making live stories/open mic, and some of them need help on what they should discuss according to the theme they got." (PST 1 – Entry 1)

Pre-service teacher 1, in her reflective journal, explained that she was aware of her students that were less difficult to acquire the materials she gave. Thus, she provided them with the help to make them understand the materials.

Table 2. Distribution of Wholeheartedness

Reflective Journal	PST 1	PST 2	PST 3	PST 4
Entry 1	2	1	1	-
Entry 2	-	-	2	1
Entry 3	-	1	2	1
Entry 4	-	-	1	1
Entry 5	-	-	-	-
Entry 6	-	-	1	1
Total	2	2	7	4

In addition, pre-service teacher 2 also wrote a reflection that indicated her attitudes of wholeheartedness. In her explanation, she tried to make students feel comfortable in learning English. She asked them to assume that she was their friend. Thus, they did not need to feel shy to act in the classroom meeting.

"... and I also try to invite them to study like when studying with friends (not with a pre-service teacher) so that our ETP atmosphere is more fun." (PST 2 – Entry 3)

Like what two other pre-service teachers did, pre-service teacher 3 was also captured to have the virtue of wholeheartedness. To be totally involved, pre-service teacher 3 gave additional suggestion for students to improve their pronunciation by learning it from various resources as well as giving example of proper pronunciation in real context when teaching.

"I advise them to pay attention to pronunciation in English from various sources. In the future I will emphasize again on pronunciation by applying it to the English words that I speak." (PST 3 – Entry 3)

"A week before the second week of ETP, several ETP participants told me that they were attending an activity on Saturday. So, I decided to discuss with them the day and time of the event while considering their schedule of activities. I do this so that all participants have the opportunity to take part in the ETP." (PST 4 – Entry 2)

While the last pre-service teacher tried to give the materials to all students. Thus, she discussed to reschedule the day of meeting as students were not able to join the class in prior agreed time. She worried that there was any student could not have same opportunity to learn English. This also indicates that the pre-service teacher 4 possessed attitudes of wholeheartedness.

In a nutshell, the data of reflective journals revealed that all participants experience the attitudes of wholeheartedness. This, of course, will be very beneficial for them in their future careers as teachers. The wholeheartedness attitude will help them become reflective practitioner. Thus, they are hoped to always develop their careers as teachers.

c. Responsibility

The last attitude to be explored is responsibility. The virtue of responsibility requires teachers to be responsible of every action they opted in their classroom. The data taken from pre-service teachers' reflective journals revealed that responsibility is the least attitude appeared among two others (Table 3). However, it does not merely mean that pre-service teachers are not responsible for their classroom. In detail, examples of attitude of responsibility owned by pre-service teachers are as follow:

"Thank God, ETP went smoothly even though the meeting hours were always delayed due to signal problems and could not be on camera during the meeting, so I decided to have a meeting, but I didn't turn on the camera, similarly I told the participants not to turn on the camera either." (PST 1 – Entry 6)

"I also had to turn off the camera because I wasn't at my best, I asked the ETP participants for understanding, nor could I get them to turn on the camera as a form of equality." (PST 4 – Entry 4)

Table 3. Distribution of Responsibility

Reflective Journal	PST 1	PST 2	PST 3	PST 4
Entry 1	-	-	-	-
Entry 2	-	2	-	1
Entry 3	1	-	1	1
Entry 4	-	-	-	2
Entry 5	-	-	1	-
Entry 6	1	1	-	-
Total	2	3	2	4

Pre-service teacher 1 and 4 showed their attitudes of responsibility by allowing students not to open their camera when having the class. The pre-service teachers did the allowance since they also could not open the camera. On behalf of equality, the pre-service teachers thought that so should their students do.

The attitudes of responsibility represented by pre-service teacher 2 in the form of her understanding about students' leisure time. Right before the meeting would end, pre-service teachers were required to take a screenshot of the meeting which should be displaying all faces of participants. The screenshot was then used to be a proof that the ETP has been conducted. For some reasons, only view participants who could open their camera. After waiting for some while, the others still had not opened their camera. Finally, she decided to take screenshot with the existing participants. This action was taken by the pre-service teacher for she did not want to disturb her students' leisure time.

"... and the time has come for the meet to end, as usual before I end the meeting I will first screenshot for proof of the meeting, but when I want to screenshot the disturbance comes again, namely the participants who have been on-cam are not visible on my screen, there are only 2 participants that can be seen, I've been looking for a solution but it still doesn't work and finally I was forced to take screenshots of the existing participants because I didn't want to buy time and as a result I could disrupt their leisure time." (PST 2 – Entry 6)

Misunderstanding is somehow becoming a problem in teaching and learning. Pre-service teacher 3 experienced misunderstanding when she gave students instruction for their assignments. However, instead of blaming her students, the pre-service teacher 3 tried to make more detailed and repeated instruction. This indicated her responsibility of giving clear instruction in teaching.

"The problem today is that students do not understand the assignment orders, even though I have given instructions correctly. In the future, detailed and repeated instructions will be given." (PST 3 – Entry 5)

"I tried to provoke the participants with some questions, but not all of them were answered. Maybe confused or thought it was some kind of rhetorical question. In the end I call out their names one by one." (PST 4 – Entry 3)

The attitude of responsibility of pre-service teacher 4 was also implemented in the form of the way she made the classroom active. To make students engaged in the learning process, she finally asked every single student to speak up by mentioning his/her name one by one.

In summary, all examples of the attitude of responsibility can be considered as proof that pre-service teachers are aware to become responsible for every action they underwent in their classroom. By being responsible, it is believed that pre-service teachers could become more professional in their future careers.

To come to the point, to be professional, teachers are required to continually shape and reshape their knowledge (Farrell, 2019). One among many proper ways to develop teachers' knowledge is by involving them in reflective practice. Reflective practice is believed to be best taught since teachers' early education program for they still need 'guidance' [5]. By planting three reflective attitudes proposed by Dewey [7] inside teachers, it is hoped that the three attitudes will fossilize in their thought. Thus, they will guide teachers to develop their knowledge continually.

In line with the findings of this study, all participants were captured to possess all attitudes of reflective practice. This result is in line with the findings found by Nurfaidah [6] in which all pre-service students involved in her research had three attitudes of reflective practice. She stated that as pre-service teachers owned three reflective attitudes, they will tend to be reflective practitioners. Thus, teachers would be able to facilitate their students with the best technique of teaching.

Farrell [8] stated that having knowledge of the method and strategies of reflective practice is not enough. He added that reflective practitioners must have reflective 'disposition' (p. 3). By having reflective disposition, ones will have desire and willingness to employ both methods and strategies of reflective practice. According to the findings of this study, all pre-service teachers have already showed all three virtues of reflective practice. It means that, they will most likely implement reflective practice in their real teaching.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed that all participants have showed three attitudes of reflective practice. This will be a provision for them in developing their professional careers in future. Moreover, the findings could become a trigger for the department of English education where the pre-service teachers study to equip its students with the knowledge of reflective practice.

In addition, for the lack of participants in this study, the result of this study could not be generalized. However, as limited amount of empirical evidence about three attitudes of reflective practice, the findings of this study could become a reference.

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