

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study explores reflective teaching practices, concentrating on the affective and meta-cognitive reflection used by an experienced English foreign language (EFL) teacher. This chapter summarises the research context, scope, questions, and goals. It also underscores the study's importance, defines critical terms employed, and details the structure of the thesis. The chapter wraps up with a concluding statement.

#### **1.1 Background of Study**

Reflective practice has emerged as a fundamental element in the professional growth of educators, especially in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching (Mu'in et al., 2018). Teachers' engagement in reflective practice improves teaching methods and enriches their comprehension of affective and meta-cognitive reflection. These reflections are vital in the EFL setting, where students' emotional and meta-cognitive involvement significantly impacts their language learning and overall educational experience.

Akbari et al. (2010) introduced reflective teaching for language educators. These reflections include five components: cognitive, affective, critical, meta-cognitive, and practical. The cognitive component involves teachers engaging in activities aimed at professional development. The affective component pertains to teachers reflecting on their students' emotional responses. The meta-cognitive component involves teachers assessing their characteristics and activities. The

critical component focuses on reflecting on the socio-political reflections of teaching. Lastly, the practical component encompasses actionable reflection practices such as lesson reports, journal writing, observations, and teaching portfolios (Farrell, 2016).

Reflective teaching is a crucial attribute of an effective educator, a central feature of teacher training programs, and a critical factor in enhancing teaching practices. It involves carefully considering classroom dynamics, evaluating what practices work or do not, and assessing instructional materials' effectiveness. Through this reflective process, teachers become more aware of their classroom environment and use the insights gained to analyze their methods and practices. This cycle of reflection and action fosters teaching improvement. According to Akbari et al. (2010), a reflective teacher thoughtfully evaluates their teaching practices, makes informed decisions based on past experiences, and systematically implements their objectives.

Greene (as cited in Stanovich, 2011) describes reflective action as a process that extends beyond logical and rational problem-solving. It incorporates intuition, emotion, and passion and cannot be reduced to a mere set of techniques for teachers. Schon (as cited in Craig, 2010) emphasizes that reflection is deeply connected with action. Instead of applying scientific theories and concepts directly to practical issues, he argues that professionals should learn to frame and reframe complex and ambiguous problems, experiment with different interpretations, and adjust their actions accordingly.

Reflective teaching impacts teachers and students. Literature suggests that when teachers engage in reflective practice, it has a reciprocal effect on students' understanding of reflection (Rezaeyan & Nikoopour, 2013). Teachers who have acquired skills in reflective practice are more likely to pass on these reflective behaviours to their students (Larrivee, 2008b).

Affective reflection encompasses the emotional factors that influence both the teaching and learning processes (Kelchtermans & Deketelaere, 2016). For EFL teachers, this means recognizing and addressing students' emotional needs, fostering a supportive classroom atmosphere, and building positive teacher-student relationships. Emotions are crucial in language learning, as they can either motivate or impede a student's engagement with the material (Kelchtermans & Deketelaere, 2016). Teachers sensitive to their students' affective needs can create a more effective learning environment, enhancing student participation and success.

Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of reflective practice at both pre-service and in-service levels of teaching (Pedro, 2005; Schon, 1987; Arslan, 2019). Perspectives on reflective thinking draw from various fields, including psychology, education, philosophy, and the arts. Early philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and Locke explored and discussed concepts related to reflection and meta-cognition, or the process of thinking about one's thinking (Maarof, 2007).

Meta-cognition involves awareness of and regulating one's learning processes (Padmanabha, 2020). It refers to teachers' capacity to reflect on their instructional methods, assess their effectiveness, and make informed adjustments to enhance student learning outcomes. For EFL teachers, cultivating meta-cognitive strategies

is crucial as it enables them to critically evaluate their teaching practices, identify areas needing improvement, and make changes that address the diverse needs of language learners.

Reflective practice enables an experienced EFL teacher to incorporate affective and meta-cognitive reflection into her teaching. Through reflection, teachers can gain valuable insights into their instructional methods, interactions with students, and the emotional atmosphere of their classrooms (Freese, 2006) this ongoing process involves regular self-assessment, critical analysis of teaching experiences, and the application of reflective insights to improve future teaching practices.

This study is significant as it investigates how an experienced EFL teacher utilizes reflection to understand and incorporate affective and meta-cognitive reflection into her teaching practices. It also explores the impact of reflective practice from the students' viewpoints, especially regarding their perceptions of the emotional components of teaching. Gaining insights into these dynamics can offer valuable information on effective teaching strategies, aid teacher professional development, and enhance student learning outcomes.

Professional development is crucial for staying up-to-date, addressing potential challenges, building teacher confidence, and effectively meeting student needs. Murphy (2001) outlines several methods for English teachers to advance professionally, including gaining teaching experience, engaging in teacher development courses, reflecting on scholarly work, attending conferences, consulting with colleagues, and learning more about students. Reflection is critical

to identifying the need for and benefiting from these professional development activities.

Often regarded as the current grand idée (Lovejoy, 2017) Reflection is acknowledged as a crucial element in teacher education (Clarà et al., 2019; Mortari, 2012; Schon, 1987; Valli, 1992). However, the concept of reflection remains ambiguous and lacks a clear definition. Furthermore, teaching reflection itself is challenging (Jay & Johnson, 2002), as research reveals considerable variation. For instance, some studies focus on the content of reflection—what teachers reflect upon (Brubacher et al., 1994; Marcos & Tillema, 2006; Mortari, 2012; Orakci, 2021; Valli, 1997), while others examine the process of reflection—how teachers think about their practice (Choy et al., 2019; Dahl & Eriksen, 2016; Postholm, 2008; Richert et al., 1994).

## 1.2 Research Questions

Based on the research background, this study aims to address:

1. How does an experienced EFL teacher understand and reflect on the affective and meta-cognitive reflection promoted by the Akbari et al. (2010) framework within her reflective practice?
2. How does the student's perspective of an experienced EFL teacher on affective reflection?

### **1.3 Research Purposes**

Following the research questions, the primary objectives of this study are:

1. To acquire the understanding of an experienced EFL teacher and reflect on affective and meta-cognitive reflection promoted by Akbari et al. (2010) framework within the context of her reflective practice.
2. To discover the students' perspective of an experienced EFL teacher on affective reflection.

### **1.4 Scope of Study**

This study investigates the impact of reflective practices on teaching, mainly focusing on affective and meta-cognitive reflection, in an EFL classroom at an Islamic Junior High School in Bandung, West Java. The research aims to explore how the experienced teacher addresses students' emotional and meta-cognitive reflection using Akbari et al. 's (2010) reflective teaching framework. Data was collected through interviews, questionnaires, and reflective practice analysis involving the experienced teacher and her students.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Theoretically, this study enhances the reader's understanding of how reflective practices can be effectively incorporated into teaching methodologies. Practically, it provides EFL teachers with insights and guidance on implementing reflective practices in their teaching. The study offers specific strategies and tools

teachers can use to improve their instructional methods and address their students' needs.

1. The results of this study provided lecturers with empirical data and information about the EFL teacher's understanding of reflection and affective and meta-cognitive reflection in her teaching.
2. To other researchers, it could help them further explore and contribute to the broader discourse on reflective practice in education.

## **1.6 Clarification of the Key Terms**

Several key terms describe how this research operates. Determining these terms is crucial to preventing confusion and miscommunication.

**Reflective Practice:** In this study, reflective practice involves teachers engaging in self-assessment, critical analysis, and reflective thinking regarding their teaching methods. This process includes evaluating instructional strategies, assessing their effectiveness, and making informed adjustments to enhance student learning outcomes. Activities associated with reflective practice encompass journal writing, peer observations, lesson reports, and teaching portfolios.

**Affective Reflection:** In this study, affective reflection refers to the emotional factors influencing teaching and learning. This involves teachers' awareness and management of their emotions and their sensitivity to and responsiveness to students' emotional needs. For example, teachers who recognize and regulate their emotions can foster a more positive classroom environment. Additionally, by being attuned to students' emotional needs, such as providing support when students feel

anxious, teachers can strengthen teacher-student relationships and enhance students' motivation and engagement in learning.

**Meta-Cognitive Reflection:** In this study, meta-cognitive reflection involves teachers' awareness and regulation of their instructional processes. This includes planning, monitoring, and evaluating their teaching strategies. Meta-cognition in teaching refers to the ability to reflect on and assess the effectiveness of one's methods, making adjustments to improve student learning. It also encompasses understanding how students learn and adapting teaching approaches to address diverse learning needs.

**Experience EFL Teacher:** In this study, an experienced EFL teacher is an educator who teaches English to students whose first language is not English. EFL teachers work in various educational settings, such as primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. Their primary focus is developing students' English language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—within a context where English is not the dominant language spoken outside the classroom.

## **1.7 Thesis Organization**

This research is organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduces the study, covering the background, research questions, objectives, scope, significance, key terms, and the paper's structure.

Chapter II provides a theoretical review of the study, focusing on three key themes: Reflective Practice, Affective Reflection, and Meta-Cognitive Reflection.

Chapter III details the research methodology, including the research design, context, participants, data collection, and analysis techniques.

Then, Chapter IV presents the research findings, supported by tables, graphs, and interview quotes. The findings, relevant theories, and previous research are analyzed and discussed.

Lastly, Chapter V concludes with the main findings of the research, discusses the implications for theory, teaching practices, and educational policies, and offers recommendations for future research.

## **1.8 Concluding Remarks**

In conclusion, this chapter has offered a thorough overview of the research background, scope, questions, and objectives. It has underscored the study's significance, clarified vital terms, and outlined the thesis structure. By emphasizing the crucial role of reflective practice in the professional development of EFL teachers—particularly concerning affective and meta-cognitive reflection—this chapter lays the groundwork for the research.