

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Reflection in EFL Context

Reflection refers to one's way in making decision of solving problem he/she is supposed to deal with. In addition, it can be done through 'active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends' (Dewey, 1933, as cited in Toom, Husu, and Patrikainen, 2015). The reflection requires him/her to spend their time and energy through "a complex and rigorous enterprise" process to get it well done. Thus, he/she can take the reflection to help him/her find necessary solution for his/her problem.

Reflection implemented in education field is called 'reflective practice' (Farrel, 2006). The reflective practice is defined as the process of examining "values and beliefs about teaching and learning so that teachers can take more responsibility for their classroom actions (Farrell, 2004, as cited in Farrell, 2006). They can start to do reflective practice by examining their attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs about language learning and teaching, thus being better positioned to make critically reflective decisions about their teaching (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, as cited in Farrell, 2006).

Reflective practice should be relevant with context in which a teacher teaches. Additionally, it is "a process where teachers examine their values, beliefs, and approaches to teaching and learning within their own

teaching contexts” (Farrell, T. S. C., 2013, para. 1). When they can engage themselves in the reflective practice, they can be “aware of problems and possibilities in their own teaching and thus be able to make informed decisions about their teaching” (para. 1). Hence, the teachers should make use of the reflective practice in order to get their teaching skills developed.

Based on the previous explanation, it is constructed that reflection in this research is the process of considering and examining a teacher’s values, beliefs, and approaches to his/her own teaching and learning in EFL. When a teacher has desire to do reflection on their teaching context, he/she however should engage in “evidence-based reflection” in which the teacher can be sure what really happens in his/her classroom (Farrell, 2013, para. 2). Farrell (2007, as cited in Farrell, 2013, para. 3) has arranged the three questions in an evidence-based reflective cycle which a teacher can ask him/herself, as follows:

1. What do I do?
2. Why do I do it?
3. What is the result?

Answering the first question is the first step of engaging in an evidence based reflection because sometimes a teacher is not sure about something happening in his/her classroom during teaching and learning process. In addition, the teacher may think that “what we think we see going on in our classes and what is actually going on may not be the same” (Farrell, 2013, para 4). Moreover, he/she also may realizes that “what we

think we do in class and what we actually do may also not be the same" (para. 4). Therefore, in order to get the right answer, the teacher must get evidence by writing about his/her teaching practice and recording it.

Writing about teaching practices can help a teacher "have an ongoing record" about how he/she makes plans for his/her lessons and how he/she thinks the plans run at the end of the lesson when he/she writes the lessons and all the details of it (Farrell, 2013, para. 4). This action helps him/her "...ccumulate information that on later review, interpretation, and reflection can assist them in gaining a deeper understanding of their work" (para. 4).

Besides having to write about teaching practices, a teacher is suggested to have recordings of his/her practices in the form of audio and/or video (Farrell, 2013). In addition, it can ease the teacher to "... get an accurate picture of everything that transpires..." (para. 5) when his/her teaching practice is running.

When a teacher gains enough evidence from answering the first question through writing about his/her teaching practice and recording it, the teacher, then, can move to the next question, "why do I do it?" (Farrell, 2013, para. 3). The teacher may answer this question depending on what he/she believes in regarding his/her teaching practices. It can be done by articulating his/her beliefs, assumptions, and values in relation with his/her teaching practices in the form of journal. Then, the teacher can decide whether he/she wants to hold on to the articulated beliefs or improve it.

Here comes the third question of an evidence-based reflective cycle, “what is the result?” (Farrell, 2013, para. 3). This question is connected to evaluation process about how a teacher’s practice has gone. The answer of the question will help the teacher determine decision whether he/she has to re-teach any part of that lesson or consider suitable follow-up lessons. The answers of the third question can also be articulated in journals in order to ease the teacher accumulate necessary answer for the full circle question, “will I change anything based on the answers to the three questions above?” (para. 12).

B. Reflective Journals and Photovoice as Reflection Means for EFL Teachers

Most of teachers have their own means to reflect their teaching practices. Some of them may use reflective journal and photovoice since they are considered as a means to help them “...construct meaningful knowledge; practice what they have learned; improve their practices by analysing them constantly; organise their thoughts; realize what they know or do not know about the subject; solve problems; and reduce stres (Cengiz & Karatas, 2013; Kozan, 2007; Lowe, Prout & Murcia; 2013; Moffitt, 2000, as cited in Cengiz and Karatas, 2015). In addition, writing a good reflective journal and photovoice will ease the teachers to develop their practices. As a consequence, the teachers should make use of it as good as possible.

A simple definition of reflective journal has been provided by a researcher. Reflective journal refers to a means for teachers to “...put their

thoughts, ideas, feelings and reflections...” (Göker, 2016) on papers and/or books. When teachers realize that there is something wrong in their practices or there is something he needs to improve, reflective journal can help them save their ideas of solving the problems which is accessible for them to re-read it. Furthermore, it can help them recall what they did in their classroom and evaluate whether they need to change their teaching methods or media. As a result, reflecting through the reflective journal will boost their practice development.

Another researcher stated another definition of reflective journal. He said that reflective journal is “... a systematic way of documenting learning and collecting information for self-analysis and reflection (Cottrell, 2003, as cited in Jado, 2015). In making learning documentation, teachers can capture phenomena occurring during their practices in the form of pictures and notes. Afterwards, collecting all the documentation can be useful information which can be put together in their reflective journal. Thus, writing reflective journal will provide them necessary information to help them analyse any possible solutions and decide by themselves the right solution.

By considering all those three definitions of reflective journal, the researcher constructed that reflective journal meant in this research is a means of reflection including teachers’ documentation about their teaching practices in the forms of pictures, video recordings, and notes covering their

practices which can help them analyse and decide possible solutions in order to have better teaching practices.

In addition, photovoice functions as one of means of reflection for EFL teachers. Scholars support that a major aim of photovoice is to promote critical dialogue and reflection (Wang & Burris, 1997 as cited in Dickey, 2014). The teachers produce photographs capturing their activities during teaching. Then, the photographs are used by them for reflection purposes, so that they can improve their professional development.

Photovoice refers to a process by which teachers can identify, represent and enhance their practice through a specific photographic technique (Wang & Burris, 1997). It requires camera capturing phenomena in the classroom. Then, photographs produced will be potential evidences for them to consider, so that they can generate better change in their practice.

Another definition of photovoice is that it is a form of qualitative research that utilizes documentary photography and storytelling (Graziano, 2011). Images of activities during teaching activities obtained by camera of teachers will be portrayed by the teachers themselves. It can be done by analysing what the images tell them about, so that they can decide whether they need to change something related to their teaching.

Photovoice is a participatory research method in which community members, facilitated by a researcher, take pictures in their community and collectively analyze the issues that the images represent (Strawn &

Monama, 2012). The teachers taking photovoice as their reflection means can make use of it to help them solve their classroom problems and improve their weakness in teaching by analysing the images, what it tells about, why it happens that way, and how the teachers should deal with it. Scholars affirmed that the photovoice can be a way to engage communities, EFL teachers in this case, to identify and solve problems from their local perspective (Wang and Burris 1997, McIntyre 2003, Lykes 2006). Hence, in the line with previous explanations, it is constructed that photovoice is a means of reflection by analysing images capturing phenomena in the classroom during teaching activities for development purposes of the teachers.

C. Teacher Professional Development in EFL Context

Teacher professional development is a complex process including cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers both individually and collectively, learning how to learn and transfer their knowledge into practice (Avalos, 2010; Bautista, A. & Ortega-Ruiz, R. 2015). This process does not only focus on improving students' achievement, but also focus on improving the teachers' dexterity, attitudes, and understanding about teaching (Fullan, 1999, as cited in Marcelo, C. 2009). Consequently, every teacher needs to undergo this process, so they can be a qualified teacher for their students.

In developing professionalism as a teacher, there are four key elements the teachers should notice (Borko, H., 2004). The first element is

the professional development program itself. For gaining the best program, it should be able to create an existence proof which shows that the program has positive impacts on teacher learning. It also has to be a specified professional program with well-designed. The second element is the teachers, who are the learners in this process. It happens because the teacher is the main actor in this process. The third one is the facilitators. They have a huge responsibility to guide the teachers as they construct new knowledge and process. The last element is the context in which the teacher professional development occurs. When those elements are executed well, the teachers will be able to improve their professionalism as a teacher based on the experiences they found during the process. It happens because experiences can lead them think and rethink about their concerns during teaching learning process (Kolb, 1984).