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Critical Issues in Reflective Teaching Practices: A Case Study of Twelve Korean In-Service English Teachers*

Seongwon Yun
(Hanyang University)

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This study attempts to explore how twelve Korean in-service EFL teachers applied the theories that they had learned into their classroom practices while participating in their teaching practicum for a TESOL MA program. The major data were derived from the collection of the teachers' teaching philosophy statements as well as their reflective discussion materials based on their reflective journals. The data were used to examine the beliefs of the teachers and the critical issues addressed in their process of teaching practices. This case study used qualitative content analyses to identify the most frequent and significant themes. The findings reveal the teachers would apply the basic principles of communicative language teaching into their teaching practices; however, they struggled to implement their lesson plans based on the approach. The most significant issues in their teaching practices had to do with appropriate ways of guiding and managing students' task completion. In particular, they involved the areas of 1) classroom management techniques, 2) giving clear directions, and 3) leading groups. The skills and ways to reduce the gap between their beliefs and actions mostly relate to making decisions on-the-spot and raising interactional competence between teachers and students vital to successful language teaching. The major findings indicate the importance of developing teaching skills in the process of experiential learning through experience and socially constructed reflective discussions about their teaching practices. Moreover, this study addresses more attention should be paid for improving teacher' classroom management skills as part of teacher competence and pedagogical knowledge.

[Teachers' beliefs/Teaching practices/Reflective teaching/Teaching skills]

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I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth in demand for English as a global language in a global society has prompted a great demand for competent English teachers and thus has created a strong need for English teacher training and their professional development. The professional development for English language teachers has undergone considerable change over the past years in the 21st century. The major issues that have been investigated in the field of English language teacher education center around the questions about the ways in which language teaching is learned and how formal teacher training programs may contribute to the learning processes. Traditional approaches based upon behavioral views of language teacher training focus on transmissive pedagogy which aims to pass on prescribed and established knowledge from teacher educators to practice teachers and thus to change in teachers' behaviors in teaching (Breen, 1991; Britten, 1985; Freeman, 1989; Lewis & Hill, 1992; Richards & Crookes, 1988). These traditional approaches to developing teachers' rational and technical expertise based on measurable learning outcomes were problematic because they could neither explain learning processes and ways of developing and constructing teacher knowledge nor prepare them to teach in the various classroom contexts. As a result, there has been a paradigm shift in the professional development for language teachers from transmissive to experiential, constructed, and socio-cultural pedagogy (Farrell, 2007; Hawkins, 2004; Johnson, 2006; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Schön, 1983; Tsui, 2003; Wallace, 1991; Woodward, 1991). In this new trend of teacher education, teachers are no longer passive recipients but active agents whose knowledge is socially and culturally constructed through interactions and participation by engaging in teaching in a professional teacher community.

In this sense, reflective language teaching in a professional teacher community is an essential attribute of English teachers who try to develop their professionalism by narrating their experience and sharing their voice with other trainees and trainers under learning to practice as part of communities of practice. Reflective learning and teaching empowers teachers to learn critical thinking skills and develop and acquire insights (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Through the processes of reciprocal reflective discussions between teachers and teacher educators during professional practice, teachers become aware of what they do, think, know, and believe, understand different perspectives from feedback, be autonomous agents, and thus take ownership of their teaching practices sensitive to the challenges of various contexts. Various methods and activities can be used for teachers' professional involvement in critical reflection upon teaching, such as keeping reflective journals and engaging in reflective discussions, observing classrooms, developing professional portfolios, conducting action research, surveys, or questionnaires, etc. The characteristics of these methods are developmental and collaborative rather than directive and judgmental (Wright, 2010). Among these reflective procedures and practices,

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developing reflective journals has several benefits that provide teachers with opportunities to explore their values and beliefs, enhance their awareness about their performance, and deepen their theoretical knowledge associated with their practice (Farrell, 2007). While a higher level of reflection involves reflecting on reflection such as reflective discussions on reflective journals, relatively little research has been done to examine what actually happens to in-service teachers when applying theory to practice in formal institutional-based training sessions through reflective discussions on reflections about their actual teaching practices.

Therefore, the present study would seek to explore how twelve Korean in-service English teachers applied the theories that they had learned throughout a TESOL MA program in a Korean university into their teaching practices while participating in their teaching practicum. In particular, this study will attempt to explore the issues the teachers have in the process of their reflective teaching practices applying their beliefs through their reflective discussions based on their reflective journals. The present research addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the beliefs of the in-service teachers about English language teaching?
2. What are the significant issues addressed in the process of reflective teaching practices and how are they resolved?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Teachers' Beliefs and Teaching Practices

In-service English teachers' beliefs in teaching English have received a lot of attention in recent years (Breen, 1991; Horwitz, 1988; Jung & Chang, 2009; Kim, 2009; Peacock, 2001). Teacher beliefs are defined as the various psychological constructs about what teachers know, believe, and think (Borg, 2003). When teachers implement lessons, teachers' beliefs influence teaching practices and are also influenced by teachers' practices, which are also interconnected with contextual factors. Some scholars contend that teachers' beliefs and practices are instructionally congruent (Beach, 1994). For example, English teachers who think and believe that language learning means communicating with others might spend most of their time on communicative activities in the classroom. In contrast, other scholars argue that the complexities of real classroom may result in discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and practices (Borg, 2003; Chang & Jung, 2011). To understand the relationships between teachers' beliefs and practices, beliefs should not be examined in isolation with practices (Donaghue, 2003); however, there has been little research on the interactions between teachers' beliefs and practices in the context of professional development of in-service teachers and in relation to some factors such as the goals of

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teacher training programs, course contents, learners, and institutional contexts (Wright, 2010).

As teachers' beliefs are greatly associated with their actual classroom practices (Breen, 1991; Horwitz, 1988), in-service teachers guided by unsound beliefs have to attempt to check their mistaken beliefs first before they start to teach classes (Peacock, 2001). Not only sound beliefs but also several skills are required for English teachers to manage classroom teaching based on their beliefs. They often meet situations in which they need to change their directions based on significant or unexpected classroom incidents. Teachers do not simply apply their beliefs into classroom teaching. Rather they engage in various and complex cognitive processes of decision making, which are influenced by various factors such as "the classroom context, the teacher's general and specific instructional goals, the teacher's beliefs and values, the learners' motivations and reactions to the lesson, and the teacher's management of critical moments during a lesson" (Richards, 2011, p.10).

According to Richards and Lockhart (1996), teachers perform three kinds of decision making at different stages: planning decisions, interactive decisions, and evaluative decisions. First, planning decisions are the decisions teachers make for their lesson plan. Second, interactive decisions are required for the actual classroom teaching time. Finally, evaluative decisions are connected with reflections. These three types of decision making situations may differ from institutions. For example, if an institution or a teacher believes that communicative language learning and teaching works best to develop students' communicative competence in English, teachers are required to make appropriate decisions each stage on the basis of communicative language teaching. Teachers play different roles corresponding to their beliefs at different stages of their decision making processes. Different roles teachers play in the class reflect institutional policies as well as teaching approaches, methodologies, and beliefs that they are holding onto. These roles also create their responsibilities for students' learning and construct a part of their teaching styles.

Not only making decisions and playing roles appropriately, teachers also require develop various classroom teaching skills and thus learn how to adapt their beliefs into specific classroom contexts. Teachers need to acquire and hone their classroom teaching skills as part of the core of expert teacher competence and performance in language teaching. According to Richards (2011), the basic skills following a task-based approach involve several techniques such as "opening the lesson, introducing and explaining tasks, setting up learning arrangements, checking students' understanding, guiding student practice, monitoring students' language use, making transitions from one task to another, and ending the lesson" (p.9). The ways of using these teaching skills are entirely affected by contexts and depend on different types of situations, learners, subject matters, etc. In addition to the basic teaching skills, several relevant skills necessary for English teachers in Korean contexts involve general English communication skills, classroom English skills, lesson planning skills, second language teaching skills, and interaction skills (Chang & Jung,

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2011; Jung & Chang, 2009; Kim, 2009). General English communication skills mean the ability of the teacher to communicate in English while classroom English skills relate to the ability to provide explanations, instructions, and feedback in English in the classroom. Furthermore, lesson planning skills, second language teaching skills, and interaction skills are all connected to teacher's pedagogical competence, the ability of the teacher to build and teach a lesson and to interact with students. Among these skills, in-service English teachers perceive that they need more training for developing the pedagogical competence area including their language teaching skills and interaction skills (Kim, 2009).

2. Reflective Language Teaching

Discussions about reflective language teaching have been expanded since the time English started to have its status as a lingua franca (a common language). Due to the processes of globalization, there has been a growing need to learn English and thus to more train English teachers. The expansion of second language teachers' professional development has brought the issues about how to effectively train and develop English teachers (Richards & Farrell, 2005). There has been a great paradigm shift in second language teacher education from a transmission model to an experiential and constructional model as discussed in the introduction section. More traditional view of teacher training such as a transmissional model places an emphasis on the knowledge transmission between theory and practice and pays attention to transmitting prescribed knowledge and developing teachers' competence. In contrast, more recent views such as an experiential and constructional model under sociocultural approaches are concerned with knowing-in-action and learning through experience and thus with developing understanding of how teachers learn and how they learn to teach. According to these recent views of teacher development, teachers construct their knowledge in the process of participation and reflection in their teaching practices as part of social practices in specific social contexts.

As a result, reflective language teaching has become one of the essential ways to understand teaching deeply. According to Richards and Lockhart (1996), reflective teaching means "an approach in which teachers and student teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching" (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p. 1). The basic assumption is that reflective teaching empowers teachers to be aware of their own actions in the classroom (Farrell, 2007; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Wallace, 1991). In the process of taking various on-the-spot actions, teachers learn to be equipped with pedagogical knowledge and skills. As a result of these processes, they are able to become autonomous about and responsible for their decisions. Furthermore, Richards (2011) contends that a key to the professionalism of English teaching is the ability of

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teachers to consciously and critically reflect on their teaching experiences and practices in order to make meaningful change.

In Korean EFL contexts, there have been several recent studies about the effects of reflective teaching and learning for teacher training and professional developments (Chang, Joo, & Min, 2013; Chang & Jung, 2011; Jung & Chang, 2009; Kim, 2009; Kim, 2010; Kim & Yi, 2012; Lee, 2012). As Kim (2010) examined how teachers adapt their beliefs about teaching and make changes in their classroom teaching practices, teachers' reflection is a key to success for making a difference in their classroom teaching. To bridge the gap between theory and practice is to learn by doing how to resolve tension between theory and practice (Kim, 2010). Reflective teaching is also effective to reduce the gap between teacher's linguistic knowledge (subject matter knowledge) and pedagogical knowledge (knowledge about how to teach the subject matter) (Chang & Jung, 2011). An experienced teacher in Chang and Jung's study was able to develop pedagogical knowledge through reflective discussions with his supervisor and understand that he also needs to develop contextual knowledge about how to teach linguistic knowledge in a specific context where his teaching occurs. In this study, his professional growth has been attributed to reflective, developmental, collaborative, and interactive discussions between the trainee and the trainer. Through critical reflective teaching and learning, the teacher was able to be more aware of teaching and how to make effective decisions and finally identify and solve problematic areas on his own. A study of in-service English teacher training program for language testing professionalism conducted by Chang et al. (2013) also provides useful insights into trainees' experiential learning through reflection upon their practice. They argue in line with Chang and Jung's assertion (2011) that the traditional knowledge transmission is also part of trainees' experiential learning through reflection upon their practice. Furthermore, what Korean teachers of English need for their effective professional development is having opportunities for teaching practice rather than developing language competence (Lee, 2012). As discussed above, much literature suggests reflective language teaching facilitates teacher development; however, there is little documentation with respect to how teachers actually teach based on their beliefs and makes changes in their teaching through collaborative reflective discussions with other teachers.

III. METHODOLOGY

The current research is a case study of a practicum course that twelve Korean in-service teachers attended and the author of this research taught. The course was one of the final requirements of a TESOL MA program.

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1. Participants and Context

The twelve in-service teachers and the instructor of the practicum course participated in this study to explore the beliefs of the teachers about teaching and the critical issues addressed during their reflective teaching practices. The twelve teachers' teaching experiences ranged from two to seven years, with the average of 3.9 years. The teachers ranged in ages from 28 to 38 years old, with the average age of 31. Six teachers majored in either English education or English language and literature and obtained English teacher's licenses approved by Korea Ministry of Education. The other six teachers majored in various academic disciplines other than English relating majors. The demographic information about the teachers, including gender, age, years of teaching, majors, and schools and grade levels of their teaching experiences are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Teachers' Profile

T	G	A	Y	Majors	Schools, Students
L	F	28	2	English education	Public, Middle School
K	F	30	2	Sociology	Private*, Middle School
C	F	31	3	Philosophy	Private, Elementary School
S	M	33	3	English language & literature	Private, High School
Y	F	29	3	German language & literature	Private, Elementary School
P	F	29	3	Political science	Private, Adults
B	F	30	4	English language & literature	Public, High School
J	F	29	4	English education	Public, Middle School
N	F	32	5	Education	Private, Middle School
A	M	34	5	English language & literature	Public, Middle School
G	F	38	6	Biology	Private, Adults
H	F	33	7	English education	Public, Middle School

T=Teachers, G=Gender, A=Age, Y=Years of Teaching
*Private refers to Private English Institutes (Hagwon)

The objective of the practicum was to give the in-service teachers an opportunity to teach a freshman course throughout one semester as well as reflect on and evaluate their performance in their teaching in a controlled environment. English was the working language of the practicum course. The practicum encompassed multi-faceted and collaborative aspects of the basics and design including two separate but interconnected courses. Practicum 1 focused on the teaching component including developing lesson plans and materials for a freshman speaking course, General English Program (GEP). The teachers in Practicum 1 had to design integrated sets of tasks in a task-based framework based on clear goals lined to specific linguistic functions to teach the GEP class. Practicum 2 dealt with the reflection component that was designed to enhance performance of the teachers in the GEP class. This study focuses on Practicum 2 in which the twelve teachers assessed their teaching practices and attempted to improve

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their teaching skills after they actualized their teaching plans created in Practicum 1.

The knowledge that the teachers were expected to use in their lesson planning, teaching, and reflection had to be in accordance with what they were supposed to have learned in their coursework as MA TESOL students. In the practicum, the teachers attempted to implement what they had already learned and develop new skills and strategies in addition to those they had already known. Practicum 2 endeavored to provide the teachers with the reflective skills (Farrell, 2007; Richards & Lockhart, 1996) that they needed to become more autonomous teachers capable of assessing themselves and guiding their own further development. In terms of developing teaching techniques, the teachers who were assigned to lead the classroom teaching needed to handle all aspects of classroom management and provide effective introduction and feedback to the tasks which they had set for the GEP students. They also needed to move around the room and make sure to provide on-the-spot feedback as well as guidance for the freshman students in performing tasks. When not fronting the class, each teacher functioned as a group leader. As group leaders, they needed to learn how to manage their freshman students well in the group so that they led and fostered good personal relationships with the students.

2. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were mainly derived from the collection of the twelve in-service teachers' teaching philosophy statements part of their teaching portfolios as well as their weekly reflective journals. The individual teaching portfolios were developed in the practicum course and were also required for the completion of the MA program. The twelve teachers were asked to write their self-reflective statements of their beliefs about English teaching and learning in their teaching philosophy statements. The reflective journals (Appendix A: Sample journal) were part of regular assignments in the practicum course, which were written every week after the in-service teachers taught the freshman course. In order for the participants to gain collective insights about their teaching, the instructor led the in-class reflective discussions as a main weekly activity in the practicum in the following week of teaching. The weekly reflective discussion materials based on the teachers' reflective journals were developed by the instructor in the form of either handouts or PowerPoint slides to foster the reflective discussions between the teachers and the instructor. They included thematic incidents most frequently or significantly addressed in the journals as well as the instructor's evaluative comments. Both the teaching philosophy statements and the in-class reflective discussion materials were used as the major data sources for the content analysis. In addition, the instructor's field notes about the practicum course were written before during and after the reflective discussions. Other documents were also referred to when interpreting students' reflective

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journals. They include: 1) weekly reading responses based on the main textbook (Richards & Lockhart, 1996) which provided a basis of reflective thinking and 2) class policies and syllabuses for the MA practicum and the freshmen GEP course.

For data analysis, the main data sources were analyzed qualitatively. First, the teachers' beliefs described in their teaching philosophy statements were categorized into major themes which emerged from the qualitative content analysis to find out the in-service English teachers' beliefs about English language teaching. The categories emerged from the data were based on topic sentences in the philosophy statements. The topic sentences from each paragraph in each teacher's statement were collected and then categorized into similar approaches and other aspects of teaching. Each category was labeled using umbrella terms and then sample descriptions were selected to illustrate the main points of each category. Second, the reflective journals were categorized by the instructor on a weekly basis and were used as the discussion materials for the in-class reflective discussions between the in-service teachers and the instructor over the semester. The instructor's discussion materials were member-checked every week by the in-service teachers to make sure the instructor's interpretations were not biased. The instructor kept the records of the teachers' different opinions and suggestions in her field notes after the reflective discussions. The reflective discussion materials mainly involved four major parts: 1) descriptions of each week's class theme, functions, forms, and activities and tasks, 2) good aspects of teaching the GEP class, 3) problematic areas that need to be improved, and 4) focused discussion issues. The third and fourth parts of the reflective discussion materials were selected for this study and categorized into problematic areas and relevant issues. Finally, the excerpts of the relating descriptions were selected from the individual reflective journals to highlight the ways in which the main issues in their teaching practices were addressed and resolved.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Most of the in-service teachers believe that the currently popular communicative approaches to language learning and teaching are promising methods to teach English. Nonetheless, they had struggled to implement their lesson plans based upon the beliefs. The complexities and uncertainties which resulted in discrepancies between their beliefs and practices mainly were attributed to their lack of several teaching skills and techniques required for them to manage classroom tasks. However, collective reflective processes and experiences in their practicum enabled them to reduce the gap between what they believe and what they actually do. As teachers got involved in teaching practices and considered student learning, they developed several pedagogical skills to teach specific contents. As Woodward (1991) points out the importance of understanding

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process in teacher training, the in-service teachers developed their teaching techniques and skills for how to manage classroom tasks and facilitate cooperative and collective learning through reflective discussions and teaching practices in a new teaching context.

1. Teachers' Beliefs about English Language Teaching

The findings for the first research question to examine the in-service English teachers' beliefs are categorized into teaching approaches and teachers' roles and responsibilities. Their beliefs about teaching approaches are presented in Table 2 according to the order of increasing frequency with sample descriptions in each category. Their beliefs about teaching approaches are based on the current popular approaches such as task-based, learner-centered, and cooperative learning approaches under the communicative language teaching approach. These are the major aspects of theories and approaches based upon which the MA program and curriculum had been designed and taught to the teachers but this does not mean that the teachers have directly acquired their beliefs only through the MA coursework. It is possible that the sources of teachers' beliefs were derived from their own experience as language learners and language teachers before and during the participation in the program. Moreover, other factors such as personality and individual preferences may also influence their beliefs. The question about the source of their beliefs is not addressed in this study but the teachers were expected to develop their lesson plans and practice their teaching on the basis of the basic tenets and principles following the communicative approach.

TABLE 2
Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching Approaches

Categories and Percentages	Samples of Descriptions
1) Task-based Approach (75%)	Task-based learning is very helpful for learners to practice and produce the language in real situations
2) Learner-centered Approach (58%)	Learner-centered approach promotes students to solve problems, ask and answer questions on their own, and discuss things based upon their interest. Thus, students can have ownership about their learning.
3) Cooperative Learning Approach (50%)	Cooperative learning can be very beneficial for the learners. This helps students to be exposed to processes that they can learn from each other. They can compare and develop different learning strategies and language skills while they are participating in a group work.
4) Skill-based Approach (17%)	Teachers need to help students develop various skills including not only language skills but also creative, critical and logical thinking skills.
5) Flexible Approach (8%)	Knowing students' needs and applying flexible methods for teaching lead students to achieve their goals better.

* Percentages refer to the percent value of ratio (no. of teachers' responses per category out of total no. of teachers)

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In addition to their beliefs about teaching approaches, most of the teachers described their beliefs about teachers' roles and responsibilities which also follow the tenets of communicative language teaching. Six teachers (50%) described their roles and four teachers (33%) explained their responsibilities as exemplified in the following sentences in italic: *Teachers should play roles as a facilitator and a mentor to help students develop communicative competence*; *Teacher's main responsibilities are to create fun and stress-free learning environment and raise student's motivation*. In contrast, there were several problematic areas that are not closely linked to their beliefs while the teachers were implementing their lessons as discussed in the following section.

2. Resolving Significant Issues in Reflective Teaching Practices

Although most of the in-service teachers believed that they would apply communicative language teaching methods involving task-based, learner-centered, cooperative learning approaches, they had difficulties in implementing their lesson plans in some areas of their teaching. The problems that they experienced in their practicum mostly relate to how to implement each stage of a language lesson which can be either similar or different from one's original lesson plan. In running the class, there were several potential problems which the in-service teachers faced and which acted as serious performance variables. The significant issues in their teaching practices as to the second research question were addressed in the collection of their reflective journals and the instructor's reflective discussion materials. As Breen (1991) points out the importance of evaluating teachers' beliefs on the basis of actual classroom events through the promotion of teacher reflection, the participants of this study were encouraged to make connections between their beliefs about teaching and their classroom action. The findings through the reflective thinking processes reveal that the most repetitive and significant problematic areas and relevant issues addressed are all related to how to guide and manage a task completion as presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Problematic Areas and Relevant Issues

Problematic Areas	Relevant Issues
Opening and closing	• How to motivate students at the beginning
	• Connecting the class with previous lesson
	• How to finish each class effectively
Timing	• How to manage time well
	• Interactive decision making to control time
	• Giving proper wait-time

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Giving clear directions	• Providing tasks that required students to produce target expressions • Sequencing form-focused tasks toward function-based tasks • How to show good modeling to let students know how to do the given task • Providing useful chunks and vocabulary • Task integration such as connecting a task with real-life experience, meaningful interaction in realistic contexts, and giving meaningful and practical purposes into the situation
Leading groups	• Group formation • Giving clear purposes for the group task • Teacher's roles during group work

For the most part, these problematic areas in their teaching practices revolve around the issues of how to better implement their lesson plans with respect to 1) classroom management techniques, 2) clarity of giving directions, and 3) leading groups.

1) Classroom Management Techniques

The in-service teachers have had teaching experience in their institutions, but the teaching context was new to them in that they had never taught undergraduate freshman courses before and also needed to practice their teaching on how to apply the theories that they had learned over the coursework of the MA program into practice. The new teaching situation drove them anxious about how to open and close each class. First concern was to take a proper action for how to motivate students at the beginning of class and connect the class with previous one. Another issue was to consider how to have an effective closing of a class to bring all aspects of learning together at the end. Here are some sample comments of the teachers who had difficulties with beginning and ending the class:

> It wasn't very easy to draw students' attention at the beginning of the class. Moreover, it became another issue to get ready on time because there were students late for the class or some students weren't ready for the class. How to motivate students at the beginning of a class has become really challenging. (Teacher S, reflective journal week 2; hereinafter *reflective journal* omitted)

> I have often felt that in our GEP class, we have never considered much about our closing. Whenever the class was finished, I felt something was missing because students often wonder when they can leave the class and so finally most of us said, "This is it. See you later." Well, this closing utterance isn't good enough. We have to talk about how we can effectively finish our class with facilitating

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> students to see what has been covered and why they have been doing it. (Teacher K, week 3)

The issues of effective opening and closing were one of the biggest concerns for the teachers, especially at the beginning of the semester. The established classroom practices had not been made enough and thus both teachers and students had to go through difficult times at the beginning and at the end. The instructor and the in-service teachers had to spend great amount of time discussing things to be checked and effective ways to begin and end classes during the reflective discussion sessions. Later on, the issues of effective opening and closing had become less burdensome; however, when the class often went overtime, it was not easy for them to have effective closure. Timing issues frequently emerged during the reflective discussions.

Since the GEP class was a task-based class, it was often difficult to determine in advance how long a particular task may take. The teachers not only needed to design the task well but they also needed to make sure that the task was progressing according to the time constraints which they had tried to establish in their lesson plan. This required both trust and excellent communication between class leaders and group leaders as well as class leaders and individual students. Timing was a common problem which occurred throughout the GEP class. First of all, performing tasks usually required more time than expected and thus resulted in going overtime. Second, there were also some effects of concerning time too much such that the in-service teachers tended to hurry up and pace too fast and/or not to give enough directions or feedback on students' performance. Thus, several actions needed to be taken to adjust time and manage time well through interactive decision making processes by controlling how much activity and task should be done within time constraints and make an adjustment on-the-spot. Some teachers mentioned about the ways they adjusted time as follows:

> The class leaders cut down the number of students that the students needed to meet when surveying and thus they were successful in managing time. (Teacher L, week 9)

> When we did activity 3 and left one activity behind, I was making a decision on how I should manage time dealing with the rest part of the activity 3 because we were running out of time for activity 4. It was the moment that I felt I should decide whether I change something or not as fast as I can. Since the class goes with a variety of incidents and unpredictable events, in order to make good and fast interactive decisions, teachers must be equipped with the ability to check and control what should or shouldn't be eliminated and added for the more effectiveness. (Teacher B, week 12)

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Another aspect of timing is connected to how much wait-time should be given to students when teachers ask some questions to students. Wait-time is a significant element of enhancing teacher's questioning skills as well as developing students' cognitive skills. When teachers ask questions to students, whether they are convergent or divergent ones, students need some time to pull out an appropriate answer from their brain. However, it is sometimes doubtful if teachers give wait-time even more than a second. One of the big reasons for not giving enough wait-time might be that teachers feel afraid of getting no reactions or responses from students. As a result, some teachers do not wait but answer questions right away on their own. Here is a sample comment from one teacher who has become aware of the importance of giving students proper wait-time:

> Wait-time is really necessary if we teachers really want students to develop cognitive skills and so to make students' outcome and benefit maximized through a question. Long et al. (1984) mentions "when wait-time is increased to three to five seconds, the amount of student participation as well as the quality of that participation often increases." This comment helps me realize that a small difference of our teaching skill can have a greater effect on our students' learning. Thus, whether I may feel embarrassed or not, I will try to offer a few more seconds for students to roll their brain and bring out the idea or information through their mouth. (Teacher Y, week 13)

These two areas of difficulties, opening and closing in addition to timing issues closely relate to how to organize a language lesson (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). During opening, teachers could ask questions to stimulate students' attention, review assignments, tell students the brief ideas of today's lesson, or connect the lesson with the previous lesson. The entry of a teacher is significantly important because it establishes a proper framework for learning. In other words, it helps students to prepare and warm up their brain for the class. Furthermore, teachers should set up and manage time in a clear way. When teachers plan a lesson, they need to make decisions on how much time is required for students to complete each activity and what kinds of tasks should be given to students under a certain amount of time. Not only in their lesson plan, but also even during the lesson, they have to carefully look at the students' task completion and involvement in a task so that they can make appropriate interactive decisions to manage and control time. Moreover, giving appropriate wait-time helps students to maintain their interests, have a chance to think on their own, and interact with teachers. Finally, closing is the last crucial point of structuring a lesson. Effective closing plays an important role in assisting students' learning as well as regarding the lesson as an integrated whole. This means that even though all separate activities are implemented in a lesson, the activities finally may represent the big goal of a lesson if teachers close the lesson with

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summarizing, reviewing, or pointing out the key points of the lesson.

2) Giving Clear Directions

As Pasternak and Bailey (2004) put it, effective teachers should have two types of knowledge: declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. According to them, declarative knowledge is defined as knowing about things whereas procedural knowledge means knowing how to do things (Pasternak & Bailey, 2004). Another frequently occurred problem in the teaching practices was a lack of clear explanation about not only what the students were supposed to do but more importantly how they were supposed to do it. Many of the freshman students, not to mention some of the teachers, were not familiar with task-based approaches where students are expected to perform to meet a concrete and meaningful goal. Providing the right types of instructions both orally and visually, which require teachers' procedural knowledge more than declarative knowledge, is an important aspect of running the class and making sure that the lesson plan works. The most frequently mentioned aspects of the problem was that the in-service teachers assigned too many tasks at a time not considering carefully how much information should be given to students and how much students can handle the directions under time constraints. Later, the practicum students identified the importance of giving students appropriate guidelines on not only what they are supposed to do but also how they can make it happen, as presented in the following excerpt:

> I found that the class leaders really guided the class well with clear directions, different ways of comprehension checks, and supportive feedback. I was very amazed and learned from them that when class leaders have clear ideas of what outcomes they want from students, they assist students better. They were giving directions very simply but sufficiently and then they checked students comprehension of the activity by asking them what they had just said, or showing them what could be good or bad examples of presentations. (Teacher C, week 14)

Besides, before the students started to do the given tasks, it was greatly important for the teachers to check first whether the GEP students understood what they were supposed to do or how they would perform. In addition, teacher's modeling and providing students with examples were necessary and supportive before and during the ongoing task. When the students performed the given task, teachers' proper feedback helped the students evaluate what they had done, as illustrated in the following two excerpts:

> Class leaders supported students' presentations with modeling and useful

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> feedback. After they gave directions, they talked about transition words students could use in their presentation to make it more formal as it was the given function. From their modeling, students tried to make use of the transition words, so the presentations were better and more organized than before. In addition, whenever each student finished the presentation, class leaders commented the presenters' posture, eye contact, organization of the content, etc. in a supportive way, so it helped the next presenter not to make the same mistake and to have better attitude and performance. (Teacher H, week 14)

> The class leaders gave very specific feedback for each group's presentation. They gave feedback not just about the structure of the presentation but about the contents – expressing opinions and supportive ideas which was the function of the class – and thus, students were able to have more concrete idea about how they can give their opinions with strong supportive ideas. (Teacher G, week 14)

Guiding students' tasks require giving clear directions which involve several skills on how to do the right things: 1) state directions clearly and simply, 2) show modeling, 3) give appropriate examples, 4) check students' understanding, and 5) give supportive feedback on student's performance. Then students may know what they are supposed to do and how they are supposed to do it as well as how they may accomplish the given task. They can also have clear understanding of goals for each task and stay focused while completing a task so that their confusion can be decreased and their participation can be enhanced.

3) Leading Groups

Another difficult area related to how to effectively lead groups. The teachers acted as group leaders when they did not lead the class. Some group leaders tended to dominate their groups either providing too many answers for students in a feigned competition to get their group done first or by simply acting as a super student and not as a group leader. The super student simply did most of the work by taking extremely valuable opportunities away from the GEP students who actually needed to do the work. On the other hand, there were group leaders who were too passive in their group not providing enough feedback and facilitation when necessary. It was important for the group leaders to remember their role as a group leader and a facilitator. The goal of the group leaders was to get the GEP students to each perform to the best of their ability while completing the tasks. This job entailed a wide range of skills and, above all, knowledge of the students, each person's role, and the purpose of each task. The first following excerpt illustrates the problem of handling with a dominant student during group work and the

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second excerpt presents a teacher's view about how to effectively lead groups when students work in groups.

> I believe that everybody should have an opportunity to say something and express an opinion but it frequently can be seen that a student answered the most of the questions. (Teacher J, week 6)

> When we arrange group work for certain activities, we need to consider three factors such as group size, purpose, and roles. I am certain that usually we teachers take into account for group size, however we do not seemingly care for purpose of the group work. That is when activities are to be focused and productive, group work needs a goal, procedures, and a time frame. Since most students in Korea have not experienced group work much before they enter university, they probably do not have knowledge about how to proceed as much as western students do. Thus, for our students, I believe, they should be informed of the purpose of group work and be guided through the given goal, procedures, and time frame particularly in the beginning stage of a task. (Teacher A, week 13)

When leading groups, teachers' job is to help students make great efforts to follow directions and use target expressions. Students in a group should get a great chance to equally participate in turns and feel intimate with each other. To maximize the opportunity, facilitating group work requires teachers to make proper decisions on each group member's role on the basis of equal amount of contribution and participation, the purpose of a task, and the appropriate group size. Group size can depend on types of tasks students carry out. Each task to be focused and productive should have a clear goal, procedures, and a time frame. When teachers make sure every student should contribute to completing a given task, teachers should decide and clearly explain roles of each group member. If there are dominant students in a group, teachers should intervene so that other students can get opportunities to equally participate during group work.

To sum up, the major findings about the second research question indicate the importance of developing teaching competence in the process of experiential learning through experience and reflection, which is supported by Chang and Jung (2011). In relation to the nature of classroom, developing teaching competence lies in developing interactional competence of both teachers and students vital to successful language teaching. Interactional competence involves the interaction patterns between teachers and students and among students typical of language classrooms as well as ways in which teachers can affect these patterns. Classroom interaction involves teacher's appropriate roles and behaviors to make the interaction more effective, considering students' advantages and disadvantages from the interaction. In line with the argument

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made by Lee (2012), what the teachers needed was to experience, practice, and hone their teaching skills appropriate for particular contexts in order to implement their lesson plans based on their beliefs with the help of their self-reflections and socially constructed reflective discussions about their teaching practices. Therefore, reflective language teaching practices empowered the teachers to raise their awareness about the gap between their beliefs and their practices and thus reduce the gap between their subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge by developing their interactional competence at various stages and aspects of teaching in the classroom.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Many researchers contend that teachers learn by doing, reading, and reflecting as well as by looking closely at students and their actual work. As Liou (2001) puts it, "critical reflection raises teachers' awareness about teaching, enables deeper understanding of variables related to teaching, and triggers positive changes in their practice (p.197)." Although much literature suggests reflective language teaching facilitates teacher development, there is little documentation as to how teachers actually teach based on their beliefs and makes changes in their teaching through collaborative reflective discussions with other teachers. Thus, this study aimed to seek for understanding the significant issues that were not closely linked to teachers' beliefs but repeatedly discussed in the process of reflective teaching practices and the ways of resolving the issues. The findings indicate that the teachers held the beliefs that communicative approaches broken down into task-based, learner-centered, and cooperative learning approaches are the theoretical orientations they would apply into practice. However, the most repetitive and significant problematic areas and relevant issues addressed in their reflective discussions were all related to how to effectively guide and manage students during the whole process of task completion in the classroom.

While the traditional approach focused on developing teacher's skills and competences so that effective teachers could understand the working rules of teaching, the current trend in English language teacher education places more emphases on collaborative and reflective teaching (Britten, 1985, Richards & Nunan, 1990). Despite the current trend, the present study claims that teacher's effective teaching and interactional skills and competences suitable for a specific context are still essential for managing classroom tasks and activities in association with their collaborative and reflective skills. Both developing various teaching skills and improving their reflective thinking on their actions should be considered as complementary concepts rather than contradictory or dichotomic ones. Even experienced in-service teachers in the context of

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professional training are required to hone their teaching and classroom management skills in a specific context. Collaborative and reflective teaching practices enable them to have opportunities of modifying and deepening their beliefs and thus making a difference in the classroom. As a result, the teachers can learn how to develop their teaching skills and pedagogical knowledge matched well with their subjective knowledge and beliefs.

In particular, what required the teachers in this study to do was not to abandon their beliefs but to know how to adjust their actions incongruent with their beliefs when interacting with students. Language teachers need to play a multitude of different roles during each stage of planning, implementing, and evaluating their teaching plans. To do so, the teachers during the practicum course were asked to play many roles such as curriculum developers, teachers, group leaders, coworkers, analysts, commentators, theorists, practitioners, etc. During the course of a series of teaching phases, the teachers experienced how preplanned decisions were taken a shape in the classroom by playing various roles. While the issues of effective opening and closing were one of the big concerns at the beginning of their teaching practices, efficient time management was a common problem throughout the semester. Interactive decision making was a key skill that teachers needed to develop to manage time on-the-spot. Furthermore, in order for the students to benefit more from group work, the teachers had to understand how to foster group work by giving clear directions about how each student is supposed to do the work and encouraging each student to participate. As a result, the teachers learned how to adapt language teaching theories into real-world classroom teaching practices and make connections between theory and practice.

The present findings can be used as a basic resource to train teachers to discuss how to face classroom challenges. The results have several practical implications for teacher training program. First, knowing students' needs and applying flexible methods for teaching lead both teachers and students to achieve their goals better. A language teacher should be able to understand their students' needs and properly adjust their techniques and approaches in a way that best helps their students become successful and motivated communicators. In this regard, the teacher's first responsibility is to consider their own classroom circumstances and then employ the most effective teaching techniques that are practical and effective in that context. A teacher must provide both opportunities for communication in authentic contexts and thorough practice with the structural elements of language. Teachers can negotiate between their personal beliefs and those of all the other players to develop an approach that satisfies the most needs. Essentially, the success to this type of practicum for both teachers and students of English lies in our collaborations with others that determine the long-term effects of our efforts.

Second, the findings of this study readdress the significance of collaborative teacher

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reflection for professional development. Reflective teaching practices helped the teachers to reshape their beliefs. Reflective journals and reflective discussions made it possible for the teachers to adapt their superficial beliefs for substantial and realistic guidelines in their actual teaching practices. The teachers recognized learner-centered and cooperative approaches as negotiations and modifications between teachers and students as well as between theory and practice during interactive decision making processes. Therefore, this study claims that teaching practices through collective reflective discussions empower teachers to be flexible and context-specific when actualizing their lesson plans and in turn deepen and reshape their knowledge and beliefs about teaching. Third, teacher trainers should encourage in-service teachers to get involved in guided reflection processes as an integral part of teacher training courses for professional development. Even experienced English teachers always need to practice several things, especially, in the actual and different classroom situations. Although they develop lesson plans greatly in detail, more important matter is their proper decision making on-the-spot and raising their interactional competence vital to creating effective and successful language learning environments. Furthermore, classroom management skills should be flexible and improved depending on a specific context; otherwise, what they believe, think, and plan cannot be actualized in a real classroom environment.

Due to the relatively small number of participants and some drawbacks of case studies, the findings of this study may have limitations in being generalized to broader populations and contexts. This study also has some methodological limitations. Despite various methods and activities used in the studies of reflective language teaching, the current study used a part of them. Other methods such as classroom observations, interviews, and surveys should be supplemented to help us to draw a complete picture for understanding the issues of critical reflective teaching. In particular, longitudinal classroom observations can address various issues about the long-term impact of reflective teaching practices in teacher training on teachers' beliefs and classroom practices, supported by actual data with linguistic behaviors as well as social interactions between teachers and students in the classroom. Moreover, interviews and surveys may qualitatively and quantitatively highlight the perspectives of both teachers and students about changes of teacher beliefs over time through reflective language teaching at various stages of their participation in classroom tasks and activities. Future studies need to be done to answer those questions through several complementary methods.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE JOURNAL

Week 13

This week, my group led the class with the theme of food and the function was giving well-supported opinions. There were four activities; Express and Sort, Speed Arguing, Best donut, and Debate.

Above all, students needed to learn more about how the rebuttal works, but I forgot giving them the tips in my direction. I prepared for a PPT slide to explain how they could start their rebuttal and what was necessary in their rebuttal speech, but I did not provide that direction. Thus, as professor pointed out when he gave students feedback at the end as a judge, first two or three students did not know how to rebut the counterpart so they delivered their speech as their normal presentation in the previous tasks. Thus, I tried to let them look at the counterpart, not the whole class and so they could be aware they argued with the opponents. Fortunately, I guess students learned from the first two presenters, so when the second and third presenters rebutted the counterpart, they mentioned directly what the other side stated in the constructive speech and then appealed their opinions more strongly. Consequently, not only students learned from experience, but also I did, which Korean students were not still familiar with the process of debate as much as I expected, so it was really essential for them to learn how to do a debate well and support their ideas with experts' opinions, statistics or so.

Furthermore, I think this time we class leaders had a problem with our interaction zone. When I recalled the class last night, I felt not many people from three groups on the right side make the whole class presentations throughout the class. I remembered that after Speed Arguing, I made two students to talk about who they voted as the strongest arguer and why they chose that person. The two students were all from left side. Also, when Yoonjung asked one student to present her food review, the student was also from the left side. Thus, I felt our interaction zone was slightly weighted toward left side by accident. Even though we tried to balance both sides to equally have chances to interact with a teacher, I guess as we learned from the previous readings, teacher's interaction zone could be focused on a certain spot so other students might not have equal chances.

However, one thing I think we did well was that, as we planned, we guided the class from form-focused tasks toward function-based tasks. Although we didn't have much difficulty in designing the tasks for the first session, we were very concerned if we could do well with the debate in which students were required to hopefully use their learned chunks from the first session and refer to the given articles to back up their opinions. But, since students did well in their constructive speech bringing out different opinions and various sources to support their ideas, I guess we prepared well with the materials and guided them in the right track. Also, we found that during their speech, students used their learned chunks such as, "in my opinion", "it is generally accepted that", "I disagree" etc. It represented that students made well use of the forms they acquired from the first session. Lastly, I and we felt great since we led the class well overall with big siblings' great help and students' enthusiasm. Also, I would like to point out that if Yoonjung was the great model for week 11' fashion show, Hyewon was the awesome role-player for this week's speed arguing. She really made me and students laugh a lot but she also helped students to know how to vigorously argue!

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: College

Seongwon Yun
English Communication, Division of Performative Humanities
Hanyang University
#309, College of Humanities, 17, Haengdang-dong, Seongdong-gu,
Seoul 133-791, S. Korea
Tel: 02-2220-2474 Fax: 02-2296-8557
Email: seongwony@hanyang.ac.kr

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